

THE
POWYS
NEWSLETTER

ONE
1970

Seven of the eleven children of Charles Francis
and Mary Cowper Johnson Powys published books.
The POWYS NEWSLETTER will review annually Powys
scholarship in America, and will present
unpublished works, primarily by

John Cowper Powys, 1872-1963
Theodore Francis Powys, 1875-1953
Llewelyn Powys, 1884-1939.

On Naming the Powyses

The *Newsletter* will make use of initials for the various Powyses. First names only are too familiar; full names burden the pages with the repeated surname; and the surname alone--even within an article on one of the authors--brings ambiguity. The brothers themselves used initials in their correspondence-- J.C.P., T.F., and on occasion, L.I.P., although Llewelyn's childhood name, Lulu, was more frequent. L.C.P. for Littleton Charles had some currency, as did A.R.P. for Albert Reginald--but he was usually Bertie. Philippa was called Katie, Eleanor (who died in her fourteenth year) was Nelly, Marian became May, and throughout the family letters the youngest son, William Ernest, is Willie. Only Gertrude and Lucy seem to have retained their given names.

R.L.B.

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by Heraclitus (Theodore Francis Powys)

A previously published story. . . but only *one* copy of the magazine that carried it in 1902 was manufactured.

"I AM A BORN ORATOR "

by Clayton Hoagland

"I am a born orator & that's the truth," John Cowper Powys wrote. Clayton Hoagland records-- through words and sketches made in the lecture hall in 1925--J.C.P. the orator.

JOHN COWPER POWYS: A MEMOIR

by Clifford Tolchard

In his tribute, Clifford Tolchard draws extensively on the letters he received from J.C.P. from 1942 to 1946. The *Memoir* will be continued in the next issue.

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A where-to-find listing for states west of the Mississippi River, plus Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. The next issue will cover the rest of the country.

EDITOR'S NOTES

POWYS WORKS PUBLISHED BY COLGATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE POWYS FAMILY MAGAZINE

In 1902, the Christmas number of the *Victoria Magazine* carried stories by two of my Uncles, signed with pseudonyms but each in the handwriting of the author: "The Hamadryad and the Demon" by Roderick Mawr (John Cowper Powys) and "The Child Queen" by Heraclitus (Theodore Francis Powys).

The *Victoria Magazine* was a family monthly edited by my Mother, Dorothy Powys, from the age of about fifteen (c. 1897) until soon after her marriage in 1905. The magazine appeared in manuscript, and was sent on from one member of the family to another (about ten addresses are listed), until it was returned to Meanwood where my Mother's parents lived. Today there are only two numbers still existing, the Christmas issue of 1902 and the final issue dated October, 1905. In the last one there is part of a story by my Aunt, Philippa Powys, and it is very likely that my Father, A.R.P., contributed to others, now lost.

My parents were brought up in very similar circumstances--in late Victorian Vicarages--Montacute in Somerset and Meanwood in Yorkshire. They were cousins in the seventh generation, my Mother's being the younger branch, but until her Father, the Rev. H.A. Powys, noticed (sometime prior to Xmas, 1902) that University Extension lectures in Leeds were to be given by another Powys--John Cowper--the two branches of the family had not met for a very long time. He invited J.C.P. to visit Meanwood.

The Common Ancestor was Sir Thomas Powys (1648-1719). He was Solicitor General in 1686, and later became a Judge of the Queen's Bench. His ancestry can be traced back eleven generations to William Powys of Ludlow, born about 1250.

J.C.P. accepted the invitation to visit Meanwood, and so started a series of visits between the two families to and from Montacute and Meanwood--resulting in my parents' marriage in 1905.

Isobel Powys Marks, the daughter of Albert Reginald Powys--the sixth of the eleven Powyses and author of *The English Parish Church* and other books on architecture--lives now in Mappowder, Dorset, where her uncle T.F. spent his last dozen years. Also in Mappowder today is Lucy Powys Penny, the youngest of the eleven.

beginning to cry, and did not want his mistress to see, for he loved her very much.

The young Queen had been thinking, and her heart was troubled. As one of her maids combed her hair that morning, she had asked her about the angels. But the maid could not tell her anything about them, and so she was unhappy and did not want to eat the grapes.

There was a law in the kingdom that any question must be answered and so a great soothsayer called the answerer was employed. The young Queen sent for him, and he knelt down and kissed the tip of her toe. She felt inclined to kick him, but she did not, for she was a good little girl although a Queen. "Are there any angels?" she said. The answerer looked so foolish, that she almost laughed.

"What?" he gasped.

"Are there any angels?" she asked again.

"Pardon, Madam," said the answerer hurriedly, "I have forgotten my pocket handkerchief," and he ran away.

He went at once to the professor, who was smoking a cigarette and trying to make rings with the smoke. "Are there any angels?" shouted the answerer.

"Dear me," said the professor, "what a question to ask! It would do for an examination paper because everything the children answered must be wrong."

"What do you think yourself?" said the answerer.

"No clever person believes in angels," said the professor. "I never heard of them in Rhetoric, and science does not like short words. Hurrah! there's the dinner bell," and the professor and answerer walked into the Great Hall.

But the young Queen was sad, and though she wore her best pearl necklace that evening, it could not make her happy; and she did not even smile when the little page boy gave her the golden cup. And the little page boy began to cry quite hard, and had to be taken out of the Hall by the answerer.

It was a melancholy evening. And that night the Child Queen dreamed a dream. And this was the dream.

The south wind passed her window and called her three times, and the third time she went to him, first trying a red silk sash round her beautiful night dress, and the south wind carried her away in his arms for she was very light and he was so strong. And the south wind carried her away till they came to the sea, and great white cliffs shone in the moon light. The sea was very rough, for it was holiday times with the waves and they were playing games and splashing up against the white cliff. The south wind quieted them and sent them all to sleep, for the little waves were really getting very tired, and their mothers were getting quite anxious about them.

The gulls rose and circled about the Child Queen and she watched them and

listened to their strange cries. They came quite close to her and she asked them about the angels, but they only kissed her with their wings, and uttered their strange cries.

And the south wind carried her away until they came to the gates of a large city, the largest city in the world. And she went into a Noble palace, the house of a great Lord. The rooms were lit with a thousand candles, and a thousand golden goblets were filled with wine, for the great Lord was giving a grand Ball, and the King himself attended it. There was much dancing and the golden cups were filled to the brim with sparkling wine.

The Child Queen asked one of the sagest and most beautiful ladies if there were any angels at the Ball.

"Don't speak of them," said the grand lady. "We believe in nothing now, not even love," and she went on talking to a young gallant.

The south wind led the Child Queen away, and he led her into a dark alley, where the flaring gas in the gin shops was the only light, and where poverty and vice, famine and fever danced alone. And he led her into a little room damp with rain, there was no glass in the window, and the bitter north wind had made his abode there for there was no fire. A little boy lay covered with some old clothes upon the floor, and his weary mother lent against the cold wall with his head upon her lap. The light in the child's eyes was fading.

"Why did you bring me here?" said the Child Queen.

"Ask this dying boy about the angels," replied the south wind.

The little Queen bent over him. "Are there really angels?" she whispered.

"Look" he answered.

And the Child Queen saw that the poor room was changed. She seemed to be high up among the clouds where the gay palace and golden cup faded. And forms of intense beauty that dazzled the eyes of the young Queen gathered up the love that was between the poor mother and her boy, and changed it into a being more rare than anything upon earth.

And this was an angel.

It is was an angel .
The End. ~~Very~~ ~~The little girl~~
~~Theodore Poe~~
~~Written By Heracles~~

“I AM A BORN ORATOR”

In the winter of 1925-1926, John Cowper Powys was in New York City and gave a series of three lectures for the People's Institute at the Cooper Union, on Astor Place at Fourth Avenue, near the old Bowery. The Institute was a privately supported adult education group headed by Everett Dean Martin, author, lecturer and former clergyman. For many years the Institute offered programs of free lectures several nights a week. Most of these were given in what is still known as the Great Hall, a semicircular auditorium with tiered seats, in the basement section of Cooper Union. Abraham Lincoln gave a famous address there, one credited with advancing his election.

The Institute programs featured well-known speakers on social subjects, the arts, and philosophy, who were well paid. The lectures commonly drew 500 to 700 people, and famous-name speakers (H.L. Mencken, for instance) brought capacity attendance of about a thousand. For all these free lectures the audience was unique, predominantly workers from the garment factories, from the building trades, craftsmen, school teachers, some college students, the majority evidently foreign-born, living on Manhattan's East Side, or within a subway ride of Astor Place. They included numerous fairly elderly people eager for self-education, many well-read. Even in bitter cold weather, they came out, as they did for Powys.

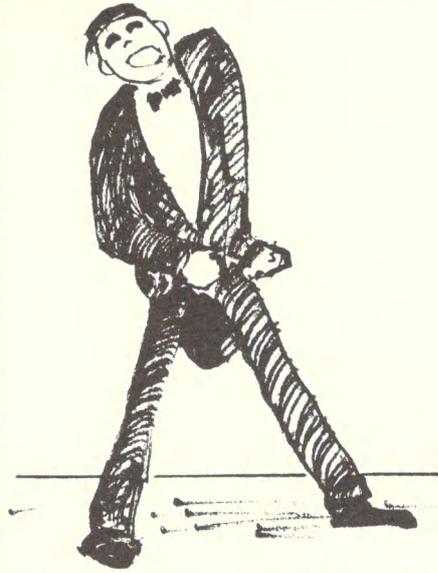
The Powys lectures on “Three World Poets” were given on the successive Tuesday evenings of December 22 and 29, 1925, and January 5, 1926. I was an art student in my early twenties attending Cooper Union from New Jersey, after work, and heard Powys talk on Homer and on Dante, but missed the third, on Shakespeare. Powys wore formal attire, a black bow tie, and a coat hanging long at the back. He gave an impression of ungainly stature, and for a New York audience his very distinctive and beautiful accent was part of his powerful personality. As I recall, his voice was strong, and peculiarly full-rounded, and, as it was a time before microphones were commonly used, he had to fill the large hall with the sound of it. I should say the hall was well over half-occupied, perhaps 700 or so. Powys was then fifty-three, and seemed older, but strode about with vigor, to and from a lighted lectern, with Dr. Martin sitting to the rear at one side.

Clayton Hoagland, formerly on the editorial-page staff of the *New York Sun*, has written reviews and articles for literary quarterlies, and now writes and edits a bulletin on business and the economy for a New York City firm. He lives in Rutherford, New Jersey.

In the journal I kept then, I noted it as “an instructive lecture delivered with great originality of manner and gesture, and impressive force.” I have no recollection that he read from anything, or even appeared to use notes, but he could be described as “orating.” He had a large, elastic mouth, deep-set eyes, and began his peripatetic movements usually from a stance in which his legs were spread, and his hands behind him. He had broad shoulders, held the left higher, and made remarkable use of his long arms. He would bend one, with fist clenched, and swing the other, as he strode across the broad stage, tilting his head, one shoulder thrown up. He spoke slowly, and struck his poses for emphasis. He undoubtedly won the interest and attention of his audience, for I noted in my journal that the applause was “long and loud, after an hour of *intense* listening.”

My quick sketches were made at the first talk, on a pocket pad, with a black pencil. I have never heard any other speaker whose movements and postures so well deserved a graphic record.







JOHN COWPER POWYS: A MEMOIR

I first became aware of the Powys family through the chance discovery of T.F. Powys' "Innocent Birds" in Timothy White's library at Plymouth. Immediately involved, I read every available book of his, and then, in 1929, I discovered John Cowper by way of "Wolf Solent." The only comparisons I could make were with Tolstoy and Dostoievsky. Later I learned that Dostoievsky had had an admitted influence on his work: Dostoievsky and Sir Walter Scott, and perhaps Dickens. Many years later when I enjoyed the privilege of knowing John Cowper Powys personally I asked him if he had indeed been influenced by Dostoievsky, and he replied simply, "I hope so."

But that was a long way ahead. Meanwhile I was his most ardent disciple. I well remember the physical labour involved when for three weeks I carried with me everywhere a copy of that *chef d'oeuvre*, "A Glastonbury Romance." Opinions are divided as to which is Powys' greatest work, "Glastonbury," "Wolf Solent" or the astonishing "Autobiography." Myself, I have a pronounced leaning towards the less profound and slightly lesser known "Maiden Castle," but even after innumerable re-readings the "Autobiography"-- which Henry Miller believes "to be the greatest, the most magnificent, of all biographies"--still has the power to enchant and excite. But surely, there can be little doubt, that but for a few minor exceptions, tributaries of the main stream, each of Powys' books is the work of a formidable genius.

A chance meeting with Mr. Beckett-Williams, organist and composer, was responsible for beginning a correspondence with John Cowper Powys. He gave me the address and advised me to write to him. Powys would love it, he said. I hesitated for several weeks before approaching Mr. Powys and then finally *did* write, but very diffidently and carefully, so that he should not feel obliged to enter into a correspondence uninteresting to him. But so courteous and kindly was his reply that I was encouraged to continue writing to him at carefully regulated

Clifford Tolchard, who lives and writes now in Chatswood, New South Wales, Australia, has previously published excerpts from this *Memoir* in *World Review* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

intervals. And I maintained a correspondence with him up to within a few years of his death when he became too weak, and his eyesight too poor to allow him to write to other than his immediate family.

John Cowper Powys' ancestor, the poet, William Cowper, said that letters to a friend should be of the "true helter-skelter brand." And this is how Mr. Powys *did* write; with multi-underlinings, dashes, brackets, and even drawings. And it was rare for one of his letters to end conventionally on the last page. But they were always a great source of joy and delight. "What letters you can write!" his brother Llewelyn wrote to him in 1926.

This was the first letter I ever received from him. The destruction of a novel referred to is of a book I had written and rewritten three or four times and then burned with subsequent regrets.

Sunday, July 16th, 1942

Dear Mr. Tolchard,

Nothing could please me better than your words about Louis Marlow's book (Louis Wilkinson's) (for 'Marlow' is his pen-name only) for Louis Wilkinson is the one! as you note and discern.

Heron Ward idealized John and didn't really get Llewelyn's Number and quite got side-tracked by Master T.F.--but I have great respect for Ward and so had Llewelyn...only the point is that Louis is a *born* biographer.

My sister-in-law Alyse Gregory has now got Louis Wilkinson I am glad to say to edit for her a vol. of Llewelyn's letters...

I don't at all like to think of your *destroying* a Novel. It is always painful to me to think of manuscripts destroyed. How one of the wickedest biblio-infanticides of those sort was Gogol destroying (*burning*) his sequel, well, his end of *Dead Souls* that *curious & rare masterpiece* which is the favourite book *of all books* of my American friend here: & she has taught me the secret of its peculiar and unique Russian humour.

Yes of course send those *Spectators* & you'd better *register* them eh? I feel nervous about only copies.

Yrs most sincerely
J.C. Powys

I sent to Mr. Powys, presumptuously perhaps, but at his request, three stories that had been published in the *Spectator* and one in MS. As I knew how he disliked short stories--although he has written, not very successfully, one or two himself--and spat them out as it were--"MORCEAUX!" he wrote in one letter, "how I *hate* them"--I appreciated the more the trouble he took in reading and commenting, generously on them.

Aug. 28, 1942

Dear Mr. Tolchard,

I have been reading & indeed 'studying' as carefully as it is possible to me your excellent short stories & sketches. 'The Dole Queue' is very real and natural because there is no exaggeration in it at all and no carefully worked over poignance. It is just the thing itself--anyone can see that; and feel it as they read it too; you get the exact feeling--I mean *you* the general reader do--that *you*, the writer are describing as what you felt. Then 'Everybody is so kind.' I think this is much more interesting, well it is to me more interesting anyway--because the 'I' of the story is more clearly portrayed as a character with peculiarities of his own though he is still a type and he is a special type too--he is this 3rd generation from my point of view aged 70. Aldous Huxley etc etc wd be the 2nd generation--(Mr. Wells etc must count, tho' a bit older as mine) The 2nd generation went in for a savage hit back--their pessimism was *active* pessimism and full of active analysings of the various simple Idealisms (as they thought) & crafty hypocrisies (as they thought) which they were 'counterpointing' & 'barren leafing.'

But the third generation is different altogether--and is another turn of the wheel.

He is a reaction from the Aldous Huxley barren leaves; but *not* a return to Mr. Wells, still less to Shaw or Chesterton.

If the Wells people were far distance painters & if the Aldous Huxleys were for middle-distance, this 'character' of yours (not necessarily of course yourself) is a foreground person. And I think his desire not to be crowded and possessed by other figures of the foreground which is of course *inevitably* by far the most *crowded* level or 'line' or 'plane' or 'latitude' or point-appui or degree of distance in this possible picture of all of them--inevitably the most crowded to the particular *type* of nervous egoist who wants most solitude or at least quiet.

'One Room' is my favourite of all. I think it is very *good*. For in this one not only is the hero's character and temper revealed but the surroundings (and especially the Inanimate portions and indeed *portents*) are very well described.

My American friend notices a striking resemblance between you and Saroyan. She has read me snatches at different times but I don't care for him myself. In fact to be honest with you I do not *really* get any pleasure or really care for any short things. What I really like are long novels--I like to read them & I like to write them too!

This overpowering tendency among you (Number 3 generation) towards SHORT WORKS and the whole lot of you, my dear Mr. Tolchard, do it--I mean show it--is (to me) the most trying and unappealing thing about you! *Morally* I profoundly respect & honour and marvel at you all--because you all have (I know only One exception & a perfectly

horrible 'kid' *he* was)--a Fascist or Nazi *born*. He was like that awful Captain, on the Franco side, descended from Alva that Virginia Cowles describes in this thrilling book my American friend is reading aloud in snatches to me called 'Looking for Trouble' & (listen Tolchard) don't you think that the job of Newspaper Reporter or Correspondent or whatever they call them suits a certain type among your *generation 3* better than anything else except being an Air-man lets say, but I can't say quite that to you being a Signalman.

Think of the Reporters of Generation 2 in the last war--what Pessimistic Parti-Pris eh? What grave concentrated aiming at being broad-minded men of the world! God! I could tell you about *them* the generation that might be my son's just as yours might be my grandson's eh?

No, I approve of your generation's perfectly amazing *humility*--humility as an organism of philosophical research, better than any devilish, conceited scientist varmint--see how my hand shakes with fury! humility the greatest of all virtues...but my quarrel with you all is an *aesthetic* one, an artistic one-- for you *burn your long novels!!* and I cannot *really* enjoy, no no not really & truly, not as a pleasure your sketches & articles & short stories & poems. I learn from you all as quick as light...this humility...another thing too...I learn from you all in your *spontaneous naturalness!* this suits me down to the ground. Yes it suits grandpa pantaloons to a T.

Yes, and *my* generation used (in our heavy way) to be like that too. Mr. Wells is still like that. Arnold Bennett always was. But can you imagine anyone of those self-conscious, feverish, desperate, conceited, angry, cynical, disillusioned, de-bunkers who are your parents & our sons writing so charmingly & naively and naturally as you do in your note of today??--exactly as I would do myself & have always done--'Joy! Joy! I've just got it' etc. etc. yes and that goodbye in the Cafe in MS. I think *that* really is far the best of all these 4 Imps of Fame or whatever they are, for there I am reminded--& suppose she could be your grandmamma (& what a lovely one to stay with for a vacation eh?) Guess of whom before you turn this page? of Miss Gertrude Stein. Yes that Saroyan chap & Granny Stein are the influences I note most in these Bubbles or Bagatelles or Dew Drops or whatever you people call them!

No, Mr. Tolchard my friend I have never heard of C.E. Vulliamy before--but I can assure you that up here in North Wales we resemble the West of Ireland...We are *all* descended from Bards & Princes...just as they are from Bandits and Kings.

Well I may not get around today or tomorrow, for I am not very quick at getting round, to returning your 3 papers & the 4th but I shall be a bit fussy till you've got them safe back.

Yrs very sincerely
J.C. Powys

He was of course quite right in discerning the influence of Saroyan in my writing; quite a few of the short stories written in the thirties owed a good deal to him. And a bad influence it was too. But I continued to defend the writing and reading of short stories, and also corrected Mr. Powys' underestimation of my age.

Sept. 10, 1942

... I went to Aberystwyth to lecture to his literary class there on King Lear for Prof. Gwyn Jones a great writer of short stories & a lecturer at the University on them--& when he introduced me he said that Theodore's short stories (especially "The Only Penitent") were as good as any; but that brother John was a shameless & combustible Heretic on the short story--but we remain good, fast & great friends for all this difference of opinion, & so must you & I!

No I wish I did know a 2nd hand book shop where there was a 'Wood & Stone' or 'Ducdame' but I don't alas! 2nd hand book shops are the only places to look.

God! Tolchard my friend you do thrill me so with your words about that Glastonbury book. *Damn* my weak & carefully hoarded & yet tired eyes! I *could* write pages to you.

Yes I *did* think you were younger, my dear Sir. No, you belong nearer to my son's generation who is just 40.

O no! I implore you *not* to take my free and easy expression of any prejudice that first comes to my head too seriously--I am a mass of prejudices and most of them are *pure ignorance*. But I think I *am* a born orator *rather than* a born writer and I am a long-winded writer and *not* an artist. You have your own art your own fate your own ideas.

No, No I fully see your point about Miniatures etc. etc. and I feel rather ashamed of myself for having launched out so violently on what after all are only my *pure prejudices* & ignorant & reactionary ones too. I confess it and I beg you, my dear sir, to forgive me. I certainly didn't write to you in the manner (tho' I *talked* about the 3 generations) of an older writer to a young one, but rather as if we were the same age!

Good luck with that sketch of the good-bye in the cafe--it is v. good.

Yrs most sincerely
J.C. Powys

By the time I got the next letter I was soldiering in North Africa, and through Mr. Powys' letters I was able to enjoy the agreeable experience of watching the growth of his novel, *Porius*, which was begun in January, 1942 and finished in 1949. And what his letters meant to me, coming as they did into the boring dreary waste of war in a foreign land, only those who have been in like case can realize. I

thought of them as pockets of sanity in a crazy world.

The following letter will recall to readers of Powys' "Autobiography" the section headed "Southwick" when he was lecturing to girls' schools in and around Brighton.

Feb. 1st. 1943

My dear Tolchard,

No I've got the address safe--it's only that I've been hoarding my eyesight for writing pot-boilers to keep up with my family obligations for my funds got alarmingly low & I was scared lest I should have to go around visiting GIRL SCHOOLS in this District of the Midlands & Marches of Wales as I did in Sussex before by first marriage when I'd just left College nearly half a century ago!

God! I used to earn my living by lectures at Girls Schools in a *couple of days* & have all the rest of the time to *write* & what my dear friend did I write in *them days*? Such imitative banal cliché--silly 4th form school boy sentimental stuff as ever you did see! (any 3rd form boy at my school would do 1000 times better today!)

How on earth those Brighton & Hove & Eastbourne school mistresses ever took me on God knows! But once they did I was awfully good at lecturing girls on English literature.

The truth is I am *not* a born writer and am the opposite of a born scholar but I *am* a born orator & that's the truth. I have never known once what it is to be scared, even in the *faintest degree*, by having to stand on my feet & make a speech...& few could say that I fancy; even among great & famous orators.

But it's my eyes have had to be hoarded for pot-boilers and *pro-tem* my thousand page Romance about the Dark Ages 480 to 525 A.D. has had to be (aye what a shame!) postponed & laid aside. But I hope to come back to it at least one hour a day in a week or two, when I've finished for 'Staples & Staples' a little 2/6 paper covered book on Dostoevsky of 40,000 words. After this parallel with my Romance about which like yourself about your long novel I often meditate & ponder on my walks & sitting over my fire when eyes have given out for the day 'My eyes are my fortune sir--he said' & thus I've tended to hoard them up & rather (I am sorry) tended to neglect my friend in the Forces.

I earned six guineas for an article of about six thousand words on *Finnegan's Wake* for Reginald Moore's experimental magazine called (I think) *Modern Reading* or, perhaps, but I *think* the former it was *Modern Writing* but whether it has appeared yet I doubt and it may of course have come to grief under the weight of such an *anti-mascot* as your aged friend.

I have just noticed how my handwriting tends to rise to the right. Isn't this a sign of incurable Optimism? I think it is.

We've had the warmest winter (so far--Touch Wood!) that I can recall

in my whole life. Every morn before breakfast I walk on an absolutely empty stomach for two hours--thro' the huge larch & fir forests of small trees between Berwyn Range & the Valley of the Dee, Glyn-Dyfrdwy, of which my Owain Glyn-Dwr was lord: and which was harried by Henry V as a boy of 16 long before Agincourt.

Well--to work, to work!

I loved to hear of your French friends & to read your praise of the French.

Yrs as heretofore
John Cowper Powys

March 2, 1943

... But God! Tolchard my friend I have been hard at it over these *pot-boilers* but now at last I have really brought back on deck out of a deep buried hold my book on the Dark Ages. This thousand pages hist. novel I have been reading for so long & *began* to write on Jan 18th 1942, over a year ago! I've only writ 100 long hand (very long!) pages of it so far--but it thrills me.

I start here in the *prehistoric encampment* on our actual Corwen hills above this little town with a Welsh hero & shall take him to Italy & to Athens by sea as described by St. Luke in the 'ACTS.'

My pot-boilers have been a 5000 word article on *Finnegan's Wake* wch took me nearly 2 months, for Reginald Moore, a 40,000 2/6 book on Dostoievsky now being typed for Staples & Staples. Do you know that Publishing House? Then a book which I'll be beginning now & it must be finished by July 1st entitled 'Introducing Rabelais' with Bodley Head & I'm to struggle with the old French till I can produce 15,000 words (in addition to my discourse) of my own translation direct from Rabelais & more literal than Sir T. Urquhart's which is (as we know) the best translation in the world but the Scotchman really *adds* to the text here & there.

All is pretty well with my family & my relatives & friends.

Good luck betide you & yours.

Yrs ever
John C. Powys

For a writer of his classical background and critical temper he had an extraordinary *penchant* for comparatively light fiction and a positive appetite for the work of modern women authors: I remember his praise of the books of Norah Lofts. And at that time he conceived an extravagant liking--amounting almost to mania--for the work of Georges Simenon, illustrated in the next two letters. Whether that admiration would have been retained to the present time when

Simenon, with dangerous facility seems to be able to throw off a slender *opus* every other month is another matter, but I doubt it.

June 27, 1943

Dear Tolchard,

. . . Our new favourite writer here is Georges Simenon, a French writer of that rare and admirable form of tale the long short story. Just two stories there are in every volume. And the difference between these and that *bête noir* of mine the ordinary short story is terrific & absolute.

I seem to think that Henry James has written long-short stories of this length. Anyway I think it is an excellent form of fiction. Simenon's tales (I pray he is alive & will write on & on) have a touch (but it's only quite an external touch & not the best part of any of these stories) of the Detective type. Certainly I never thought to live to read 'Detective stories,' but the detective element in Simenon's stories is the worst element in them, and as a rule a bit unconvincing...but as for the rest...the atmosphere and the settings and narrative & the characters are wonderful--they are to me. I haven't come upon an author for years that pleases me so--not I mean with such a lot of books--all equally pleasing.

I say, Tolchard, how quick your letter came, in less than a week.
Well good luck.

Ever yr faithful & recognisant
J.C. Powys

Sept. 1943

My dear Tolchard,

. . . . Listen! Ask your friend of the cafe you frequent if he has read our present--I speak of Phyllis & myself--our present *favourite* of *all* modern authors, English, American, or French--I refer to the great, the humane, the wise, the noble, the Balzacian & Dostoievskayan & Dickensian and Rabelaisian and Gorki-ish writer of French Detective stories & creator of the French Sherlock Holmes (only he is *far* superior to him) 'Inspector Maigret.' I speak of SIMENON. He is not good at all at the detective part of his long-short stories, 2 in each volume--no, his crimes are his weak and clumsy part. But for atmosphere, character, pathos, humour & above all for *Humanity* & knowledge of the pathetic unhappy mass, especially boys, none can touch him, none.

Yrs as ever
John C. Powys

Then there was a gap of some months in our correspondence due to his being ill. The wonder was that he kept so well as he did, considering the number of serious operations he had undergone, and the ever present ulcers from which he suffered cruelly all his life, sustained only by what Mr. Priestley referred to as "mournful diets of bread-and-milk and the like."

Rambling one day round the meagrely stocked bookshops of Algiers I came across a little book, *Souvenirs de James Joyce* by Phillipe Soupalt, and remembering his article on *Finnegan's Wake* I sent him a copy.

June 10, 1944

My dear Tolchard.

Here I have got before me balanced on my writing board for I lie on a couch on my back to work so as to better distribute my enemies the gastric acids that my perverse nerves engender--in fact the morbid and mordant off-spring of Master Gaster and Miss Nerves. But by taking my mountain walk on an empty stomach & very early--(I fancy earlier than even your Reveille) I can lie on my back for the rest of the day with a free conscience as far as air & exercise and mountainous ascents go, & do my writing so.

But I have to cut down on correspondence alas! For I like it dearly --for the sake of my eyes wch along with gastric acids are my chief psychic-physical concern--but, thanks be to all the Powers I am getting on not only far better than I deserve but ever so much better than I sometimes have expected.

How can I thank you enough my dear Clifford for this thrilling book about Joyce especially about *Finnegan's Wake* which I like 20 times better than *Ulysses* tho' I understand it 20 times less well! I think it is *far* superior; and shows a much wiser mellower kindlier more friendly & genial mood.

I wish I'd had this excellent French point of view before on this topic. Well, thanks to you I have it now anyway.

I do so enjoy and so does my friend Phyllis your descriptive letters on gardens and fountains & children playing in them.

But I do not think you need worry *one bit* about not having time or the urge to write for it is clear you are absorbing impressions fast fast fast all the time & I doubt if we can ever do both at the same time. But the time will come--you'll see & so will we.

Well, I must stop. Good luck be to you with you & *around* you (for others to share)

Yrs as ever
John C. Powys.

LIBRARIES WITH POWYS MANUSCRIPTS

[Arranged alphabetically by states. When the city is not a part of the library's name, it is given parenthetically.]

University of Arkansas (Fayetteville): T.F.P. letter to John Gould Fletcher, 24 April 1928.

University of California (Berkeley): J.C.P. letter to Noel Sullivan, n.d.

University of California at Los Angeles has an important collection including 185 L.I.P. letters to Louis Wilkinson and the extensive (but restricted, at present) J.C.P.—Henry Miller correspondence. The *Newsletter* hopes to have a description of the UCLA holdings in a future issue.

Huntington Library (San Marino, Calif.): two L.I.P. letters to Gregg Anderson, 13 March 1928 and 15 August 1928.

Stanford University (Stanford, Calif.) J.C.P. letter to Will Solle, n.d.

Southern Illinois University (Carbondale): two J.C.P. letters to Hal W. Trovillion, 28 June 1949, 11 June 1950, and a postcard n.d.

Newberry Library (Chicago, Ill.): J.C.P. letter (attrib.) in the Eunice Tietjens collection, c. 1920.

University of Chicago: J.C.P. letter to Harriet Monroe, 28 February 1928. L.I.P. letter to Harriet Monroe, 25 September 1929.

Northwestern University (Evanston, Ill.): L.I.P. material still to be processed .

Indiana University (Bloomington): J.C.P. poem, "Wallalone." Three L.I.P. letters to Upton Sinclair, 2 April and 17 June 1927 and n.d.

University of Iowa (Iowa City): J.C.P. letter to Lee Keedick, 1928. A run of twenty J.C.P. letters to Ruth Suckow and Ferner Nuhn, 1931 to 1961.

University of Kansas (Lawrence): T.F.P. letter to Grant Richards, 17 April, 1928. Three L.P. letters to Grant Richards, 24 December 1924, 1 August 1926, Easter 1928.

Kansas State College of Pittsburg: the papers of E. Haldeman—Julius, publisher of Little Blue Books, are currently being processed. With ten J.C.P. and two L.P. titles in the Little Blue Books series, undoubtedly there are Powys letters...and perhaps manuscripts in the papers. Further information to come.

Tulane University (New Orleans): J.C.P. letter to William Beers, c. 1917.

University of Michigan(Ann Arbor): forty-eight J.C.P. letters and postcards to Maurice Browne, from the 1920s to 20 December 1956.

Kent State University (Kent, Ohio): J.C.P. letter to Wilbur Needham, n.d.

University of Oregon (Eugene): J.C.P. letter to Marian Powys Grey, 1957; sixteen J.C.P. letters to Valentine E. Kelly, 1956-1958. Manuscripts: six holograph poems from J.C.P.'s *Wolf Bane* ("Daffodils," "In a Hotel Writing Room," "The Immigrant," "Kings," "To an Idealistic Poet," "The Uplifter") plus galley proofs with author's corrections; typed carbon of J.C.P.'s preface to *Tristram Shandy* with a covering letter presenting it to his sister Marian, 30 April 1948. L.P. letter to Marian Powys Grey, 1935; L.P. letter to his nephew, Peter Grey, n.d.

The University of Texas (Austin) has by far the largest collection of Powys manuscripts and letters. Descriptions of the holdings will appear in future *Newsletters*.

Marquette University (Milwaukee, Wisc.): T.F.P. letter to Mr. Schwartz (presumably the N.Y. bookdealer), 30 January 1931.

LIBRARIES REPORTING NO POWYS MANUSCRIPTS

Arizona: Phoenix Public, Arizona State Univ. (Tempe), Univ. of Arizona (Tuscon), Tuscon Public. California: Burbank Public, Claremont College, Scripps College

(Claremont), Fresno County, Fresno State College, Calif. State College at Long Beach, Long Beach Public, Calif. State College at Los Angeles, Los Angeles Public, Univ. of Southern Calif. at Los Angeles, Mills College (Oakland), Pomona Public, Univ. of Calif. at Riverside, State of Calif. Library (Sacramento), Sacramento City, San Diego State College, San Diego Public, Univ. of Calif. at San Diego, San Francisco State College, San Francisco Public, Univ. of San Francisco, Univ. of Calif. at Santa Barbara, Univ. of the Pacific (Stockton), Whittier College. **Colorado:** Univ. of Colorado (Boulder), Denver Public, Univ. of Denver, Colorado State Univ. (Fort Collins), Colorado State College (Greeley). **Idaho:** Univ. of Idaho (Moscow). **Illinois:** Chicago Public, R.R. Donnelley & Sons Library (Chicago), Loyola Univ. of Chicago, Northern Illinois Univ. (DeKalb), Lake Forest College, Illinois State Univ. (Normal), Oak Park Public, Bradley Univ. (Peoria), State of Illinois Historical Library (Springfield), Univ. of Illinois (Urbana), Wheaton College. **Indiana:** Evansville Public, Fort Wayne Public, De Pauw Univ. (Greencastle), State of Indiana Library (Indianapolis), Indianapolis Public, Purdue Univ. (Lafayette), Ball State Univ. (Muncie), Univ. of Notre Dame, Indiana State Univ. (Terre Haute). **Iowa:** Iowa State Univ. (Ames), Grinnell College., **Kansas:** Kansas State Teachers College (Emporia), Topeka Public, Wichita State Univ.

Louisiana: Louisiana State Univ. (Baton Rouge), New Orleans Public. **Michigan:** Detroit Public, Univ. of Detroit, Michigan State Univ. (East Lansing), Western Michigan Univ. (Kalamazoo), State of Michigan Library (Lansing). **Minnesota:** Minneapolis Public, Univ. of Minnesota (Minneapolis), Carleton College (Northfield), Macalester College (St. Paul), St. Paul Public. **Missouri:** State Historical Library (Columbia), Univ. of Missouri (Columbia), Kansas City Public, St. Louis Public, Washington Univ. (St. Louis). **Montana:** Montana State Univ. (Bozeman), Univ. of Montana (Missoula). **Nebraska:** Univ. of Nebraska (Lincoln), Omaha Public. **Nevada:** Univ. of Nevada (Reno). **New Mexico:** Albuquerque Public, Univ. of New Mexico (Albuquerque), New Mexico State Univ. (Las Cruces). **Ohio:** Akron Public, Ohio Univ. (Athens), Bowling Green State Univ., Canton Public, Cincinnati Public, Univ. of Cincinnati, Case Western Reserve Univ. (Cleveland), Cleveland Public, Columbus Public, Ohio State Univ. (Columbus), State of Ohio Library (Columbus), Dayton Public, Ohio Wesleyan Univ. (Delaware), Denison Univ., Kenyon College (Gambier), Oberlin College, Miami Univ. (Oxford), Toledo Public, Univ. of Toledo, College of Wooster, Antioch College (Yellow Springs), Youngstown Public.

Oklahoma: Univ. of Oklahoma (Norman), State Univ. (Stillwater), Univ. of Tulsa. **Oregon:** Oregon State Univ. (Corvallis). **Texas:** Dallas Public, Southern Methodist Univ. (Dallas), North Texas State Univ. (Denton), Texas Women's Univ. (Denton), El Paso Public, Univ. of Texas at El Paso, Fort Worth Public, Texas Christian Univ. (Fort Worth), Houston Public, Rice Univ. (Houston), Baylor Univ. (Waco), Midwestern Univ. (Wichita Falls). **Utah:** Brigham Young Univ. (Provo), Salt Lake Public, Univ. of Utah (Salt Lake). **Washington:** Washington State Univ. (Pullman), Univ. of Washington (Seattle). **Wisconsin:** State of Wisconsin Historical Library (Madison), Univ. of Wisconsin (Madison), Milwaukee Public. **Wyoming:** Univ. of Wyoming (Laramie).

[N.B. Large libraries missing from both lists did not respond to the mailing.]

EDITOR'S NOTES

Distribution: This first issue of the *Powys Newsletter* is going to all Powys scholars who have been in touch with Colgate University Press since it started reissuing the works of J.C.P. in 1965, and to the many libraries whose cooperation made possible the survey of Powys manuscript holdings. A few additional copies are available at two dollars each. We hope to distribute subsequent issues at no cost to active Powys scholars, and to sell a small overrun to institutions and collectors. Because the issue size (and cost) will vary from issue to issue, we cannot take prepaid subscriptions, but will accept standing orders.

Second Issue: The issue for 1971, planned for distribution in May, will feature J.C.P.'s story for *Victoria Magazine* in 1902, and include additional Powys letters and the listing of eastern American libraries with Powys manuscripts. At each library with major holdings, a Powys scholar has agreed to prepare a descriptive bibliography for future issues of the *Newsletter*.

Contributions: We will be happy to consider all contributions to the *Newsletter*—reminiscences, critical essays, letters of comment or query, unpublished writings by any of the Powyses—but cannot offer payment for those chosen for publication. For 1971 we welcome contributions on T.F. and Llewelyn; for 1972—the centenary of his birth—we plan an outsized issue on John Cowper Powys.

Scholarship in Progress: The *Newsletter* hopes to serve as a clearing-house for information about work-in-progress, and will allocate space in future numbers for those who tell us of planned essays, books and dissertations about the Powyses.

R.L. Blackmore
Hamilton, N.Y.
December, 1970

Colgate University Press has
published or distributed these
works by John Cowper Powys:

ALL OR NOTHING

ATLANTIS

AUTOBIOGRAPHY (introductions by J.B.Priestley and R.L. Blackmore, 1968)

THE BRAZEN HEAD

A GLASTONBURY ROMANCE (preface by the author, 1953)

HOMER AND THE AETHER

LETTERS TO LOUIS WILKINSON

LUCIFER (signed edition)*

MAIDEN CASTLE (introduction by Malcolm Elwin, 1966)

PORIUS (signed edition)*

SELECTED POEMS (edited by Kenneth Hopkins, 1965)

UP AND OUT

VISIONS AND REVISIONS

WEYMOUTH SANDS

WOLF SOLENT (preface by the author, 1960)

*out of print

and these pamphlets:

Louis Wilkinson, *BLASPHEMY AND RELIGION* (a dialogue about John
Cowper Powys' *Wood and Stone* and T.F. Powys' *The Soliloquy
of a Hermit*)

Louis Wilkinson, *BUMBORE: A Romance*. (A parody, written in 1916,
following John Cowper Powys' *Rodmoor*)

Kenneth Hopkins, *SLIVERS OF SYNTAX: More Emanations from Emily*.
(Purporting to be sixteen newly discovered poems by Miss Dickenson)