

THE ENGLISH REVIEW
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The Spectator: a Reply

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In an article in the *Spectator* of June 10th The English Review has been accused of "dumping garbage upon the nation's doorstep." The above list of writers, all of whom have written for the Review during the last year and a half, constitutes the only serious answer that can be given to an attack couched in language purely journalistic and uncritical. I do not myself feel confident to judge the morality of these writers, but, of course, if Mr. St. Loe Strachey claims the right to do so it is no affair of mine.

Frank Harris can take care of himself. I wish only to say that the writer of the article in the *Spectator*, by piecing together two sentences and omitting a very important qualifying paragraph absolutely essential to the right understanding of the argument, has entirely misrepresented the writer.

With regard to the pamphlet about the "Great Adult Review" with the *Spectator* condemns, I have to say that it was withdrawn by me before the appearance of the *Spectator* attack, as the wording laid itself open to the very objections the *Spectator* has so eagerly seized upon. These objections were that by advertising ourselves as an Adult Review, where men of letters could express themselves free from the irritating degradation of editorial excision, we thereby exposed ourselves to malicious misrepresentation. To accuse us of selling garbage because we advertised the fact that our standard was not that of the schoolroom is a distortion of truth. The point is really what we sell. Now, what we sell is the best work obtainable from the writers whose names head this statement. The proof of the pie is in the eating. Our pamphlet may have been unhappily word-

ed, but it is literary dishonesty to argue that therefore our tone is prurient. Finally, I may say that I cannot persuade our advertising manager to recognize the *Spectator's* tutelage.

So far as the attack concerns the general tone and tendency of the Review, it is perhaps wise to point out that as we do not appeal to the young and the illiterate, therefore an organ such as ours may claim for itself the right of reasonable freedom of expression and discussion.

The curious attempt on the part of the *Spectator* to stir up ill-feeling in the Liberal Press against us is so discreditable a breach of journalistic ethics and fair play that I need not characterise it here. It reduces the attack to a simple act of persecution, nothing more.

The writer in the *Spectator* quotes a phrase of Green (whom, by the way, he misspells) in support of his claim, but Green wrote other verses, one of which begins:

"Mothers and guardian aunts, forbear
Your impious pains—" etc.

No doubt, as he is such an important judge of literature he will remember the rest. It was Yvette Guilbert who spoke a brave and true word the other day when she talked of the English "shamefaced attitude" towards art and literature. Well, some of us may remember an illustration of du Marier in *Punch* some years ago, which depicted an old maid very much shocked at the sight of some bathers on the distant side of a lake. "But they are too far off to be indecent," remarked her companion. "Not if you use a glass," objected the old maid.

Exactly!

AUSTIN HARRISON.