

INEXCUSABLE? DARKNESS

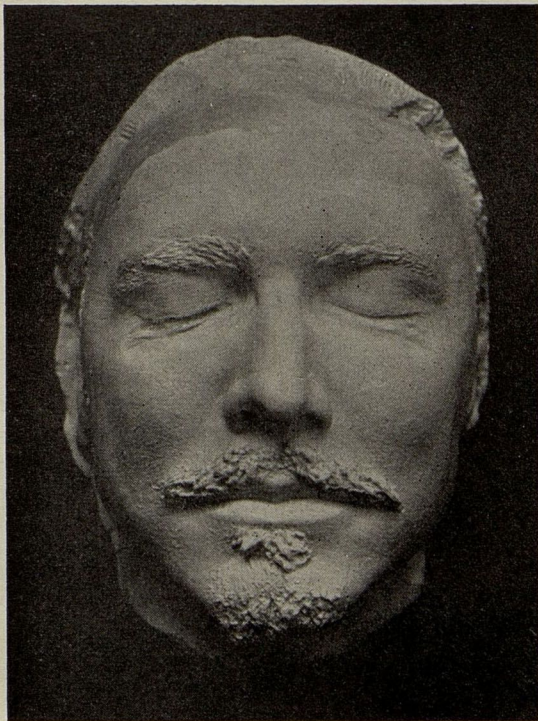
By Ezra Pound

Rapallo, Italy

IN FEBRUARY of this year (1938) a bill came up before the finance committee of the House which has received insufficient publicity. I am not writing for or against the bill and I am not writing a political article for or against any party.

Future historians may note that bills dealing with money, or shall I say bills tending to EDUCATE the public as to the nature of money and the infamies used to prevent the public from getting an adequate supply, seem to appear usually in Februaries in Washington or at times before elections when whatever is said about them will get swept out of the public mind quickly, if it ever gets to the newspapers at all.

Before Roosevelt's first entrance into the



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Presidency Senator Bankhead rose to considerable height of forensic lucidity in discussion of Stamp Scrip.

The European observer now thinks Bankhead was told to keep quiet, and the growing European unfaith in representative parliamentary government is fed by this opinion.

As to the Goldsborough Bill, not knowing the actual wording of the measure discussed in committee, all I can say is that the first draft was complicated, the second draft rather better, and that whatever can be said for or against any subsequent wording the bill must contain ONE ROOT TRUTH or must bear on one root truth about the U. S. monetary system.

As Representative Ford remarked in committee: "We are faced with a chronic shortage of purchasing power."

No nation NEED pay two dollars in taxes for every dollar spent by the government. England, France and the U. S. A., the three leading usuriocracies, all deserve what they get. Whatever minor differences in their administrative shop fronts, all three COULD have learned by now the nature of money.

Despite the vast educational machinery run wrong in the U. S. A. our university (and I should say our high school) graduates could by now have learned the difference between OWNERSHIP and Ownership PLUS INTEREST.

Money is a measured claim. Any individual piece of money is a measured, freely transferable, and general, claim. By "general" I mean that it is good in exchange for any commodity, or for services offered. That differentiates it from a title to a seat in a theater or a railway ticket.

● *Mask of Ezra Pound, by Nancy Cox McCormack. "When the literary battle was hotter and nothing but E. P.'s death seemed likely to content his critics, he, ever willing to oblige, provided 'em with a death mask."*

closer to Montaigne. The author of *The Narrow Door* seeks ever, as Montaigne did, an equilibrium that insures the contentment and peace of the soul. But, contrary to Montaigne, scarcely has he approached this state, when his critical humor and his natural instability turn him aside from it. He begins again to float according to the winds and currents; he yields to Nature and is happy in that until his restlessness leads him back to the pursuit of the lost Paradise.

Today the world has changed. Men born forty or fifty years ago have seen the development of strange possibilities in all spheres. In the last century, automobiles did not exist, aviation did not exist, the radio had not even been talked of, there were no films, the art of healing had only begun to take on scientific aspects, the use of electricity was rather limited to lighting, the abodes of men offered a comfort no more than mediocre. Then all at once, in less than forty years, perfected techniques transformed material life. They have rendered it infinitely more agreeable. On the other hand, social dangers have surged around it. The organization of the new society founded upon industry and industrial work is fraught with difficulties. Hopes are artificially excited; deceptions succeed them; the spirit of dissatisfaction and of revolt is breeding everywhere.

By this token, French literature of the present is forgetting the human individual. As in the XVIIIth Century, it is preoccupied with the "social." Some offer plans, others offer criticisms. The dream takes the place of the reality. Almost no one seeks within himself to find the "universal form of human conditions." Almost no one advises that interior discipline which is the mother of wisdom and contentment. The writer who represents officially at this hour all French poetry and in a measure, French thought, Monsieur Paul Valéry, has nothing of the moralist.

This does not signify that psychological analysis has no longer a representative. Maurois and Mauriac, in different directions are still moralists. Roger Martin de Gard, lauréat of the Nobel Prize, and Jacques Lacretelle, the young Academician, are moralists. Other

Academicians with older reputations, Henri Bordeaux, Marcel Prévost, merit the same title, as well as Georges Duhamel, at least in a certain measure. It seems even as if our youngest dramatic authors meant to take the same route as a François de Curel, a Bernstein, a Sacha Guitry and a Lenormand—that of Racine.

So the old current maintains itself in the midst of our life. But the French mind of today is so furiously carried away by the purely social and toward the collective; it is so captivated by the chimera of Utopia that it should be reminded that all this is beyond it and extraneous to it. The real field, which it excels in cultivating, and where it is past master, is that of psychological analysis and common sense. It may go outside of this, its real domain, and make magnificent conquests on condition that it return in the evening exactly as the militiamen that the lord had the right to enroll, but that he dared not lead more than one day's march away from their homes and their wives.

International Misconceptions

The average European pictures Americans as a rich, lawless, uncultured folk, who spend their lives going to movies, playing the stock-market, and dodging gangsters. Such impressions are derived from the newspapers, from the cinema, and novels. The average American, on the other hand, visualizes the French as a race who in society constantly pursue illicit love-affairs and avoid baths; while politically they continually overthrow governments, and often social systems besides. We too derive our ideas from the press and novels, both of which are, by nature, agencies to present what is *not* the usual.

Today when the need for understanding between democracies is so great, we shall do well to look at France through her real interpreters, such as Dr. Strowski. We should supplement his picture by one of the French *people*, determinedly democratic, in spite of politicians. As one American put it: "It should be obvious that it is not possible to make these descendants of the CroMagnon man and Vercingetorix's veterans work under the lash of any new "ism."

Thomas Jefferson long ago saw that "no man has a natural right to be money-lender save him who hath money to lend."

No theatre manager in our time BORROWS his tickets from someone else and PAYS that someone INTEREST on the tickets either before or after they pass in or out of his box-office window.

If 300,000 Delphians would meditate on that fact for half an hour they would all of 'em be in condition to understand the swindle of government LOANS even if such loans be not always ladled out through banking houses who collect an extra commission.

Economics is a dull subject both because it is complicated and because it is simple. It does not arouse the breathless interest of the common detective story SOLELY because the spectator does not understand the connection between public finance and his own private emotions, love affairs, kitchen, and bath room.

A crime has been committed? Well; that is putting it very mildly, for over two centuries an innumerable and unending series of crimes has been committed by a number of the slickest gangs ever dreamed of. And once a man is on the trail of THAT set of bleeders the mere theft of a diamond necklace is no more exciting than the idea that little Jimmie has pinched a couple of marbles.

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To preserve a "democratic system of government" (or perhaps we are too late to do much preserving) say to preserve even the forms of our American government and BE DECENTLY GOVERNED, at least a nucleus of the electors have got to understand the MEANING of congressional bills concerning money. And, above that, they have got to elect at least a nucleus of congressmen who can understand a half dozen simple DISSOCIATIONS of ideas.

FOR EXAMPLE. If you don't believe money is a measured claim, in itself non-interest bearing, though it can enter into contractual complications wherein one party agrees to pay interest;

Or if you don't like to call these measured claims money, at least you will, when you ex-

amine the facts, be forced to admit that such claims have existed and been circulated for centuries and WORKED.

For example, the pretty picture on page 17 shows a Tang Dynasty government ticket, issued between 841 and 846 A. D. and not by any means the first Tang ticket. There were such paper tickets in A. D. 650.

Before men learned how to stamp paper there were brass checks with holes in the middle.

B. C. 1766, for example, when the Chinese Emperor Tching-Tang opened a copper mine, coined round discs with square holes these were given to the poor to buy grain from the rich. Are we to call it a dole or a dividend?

It didn't effect the grain shortage, but it did serve to distribute a lot of grain. It "increased the purchasing power of the people quite a good deal." And it probably wasn't inflation.

How many of you ask your congressman what inflation is?

Inflation in theatre tickets would be passing out two tickets for the same seat on the same evening. The value of such tickets would decline. But if you never issued more tickets than there were seats, the tickets would be worth whatever the show was worth.

Or to put it in formal terms. You can issue valid money against DELIVERABLE goods, and, or, services, UP TO THE AMOUNT that is WANTED. None of the words of this sentence can be omitted without destroying the sense. Note especially: deliverable and wanted.

If you issue money against more goods than there is or can be delivered or against stuff that nobody wants, that is inflation. The goods must be deliverable AND wanted.

Anything short of that is just fake inflation, or inadequate issue.

I think nobody, save a few criminals as dead heads, now denies the abundance of needed food and material for making clothing and keeping houses warm in America. You've got the Loeb Chart of Plenty and even from the Washington Wigwags you have Mordecai Ezekiel's "2500 dollars a year."

Nothing but mental laziness keeps the public



● This portrait of Ezra Pound by Wyndham Lewis is interesting both for itself, and for recent controversy over Lewis' portrait of T. S. Eliot. The British Academy rejected it, whereat one of Britain's most famous painters resigned from the Academy.

from realizing the bearing of the facts in Loeb's Chart.

What keeps the public from understanding the difference between property and capital and digesting a few other clear definitions of terms, heaven alone knows.

Jefferson understood these things, so did John Adams; so most enlightedly did Martin VanBuren; but the history of the U. S. A. between 1830 and 1840 has been wiped out of the school books.

Nobody has written the history of money-lending in America. Nobody has compiled the ascertainable facts about money-lending to the Southern planters before the Civil War and the relation of their debts to New York; and

to the main European usury houses dealing through N. Y. offices. Until such history is written, the stuff taught your children in schools is just bed-time stories of the most insidious and contemptible kind. It is taught them to make them slaves; it is taught them to obfuscate their intelligence and destroy the whole civil fabric of the nation. It has already abominably well done so. The more you study the decades from 1865 to 1925, the more you will loathe the bunk my generation was brought up on, and the sooner you will get sufficiently angry to go to work and clean up the mess.

The mere jailing of a Stock Exchange President is, or rather the facts and acts conducing to such imprisonment are a mere flea bite to what has been put over on the easy-going and naturally tolerant American people.

We had a social order, we had the start of a quite decent and very widely respected civilization.

And today the professors of history hardly dare take a look at the records. Most of 'em haven't the groggiest notion of what the real records consist in. Most of 'em have no method and do not even begin their work by defining their terms.

Defining your terms doesn't mean just getting into a squabble over nomenclature. It means SEEING the difference between things that are basically different.

Get it that money, a dollar bill, doesn't bear interest BY ITSELF. However much it may serve in some wangle wherein interest is agreed on.

It is handed from one person to another without other formality than the transfer. And it is a MEASURE. That is the essence of it. It is a measure and also a claim. Not a claim to a cake of soap or a peck of wheat but a general claim.

And for a country to say it can't do something because it HAS NO MONEY is as idiotic as for a government to say it can't build roads because it has no MILES.

A government can issue money, without BORROWING it, up to the amount of available goods and services WANTED.

But on the other hand, to play fair, you have got to admit that a measure is often useful, and that the man who makes you a yard stick deserves a JUST recompense. That is why a government has a right to redeem, as it is called, its own money by taxes.

Naturally the best of such taxes is a tax on the money itself. Say a cent a month on the dollar you actually HAVE AT THE MOMENT. That would never bother anyone much.

Such a tax could never fall on any one save WHEN he or she actually had one hundred times the amount of it IN HIS POCKET at the moment the tax fell due.

The idea of dated money paying a monthly tax has had so little publicity that people haven't yet got to taking it as a matter of course. We are, as they say, creatures of habit. The least mental effort is just too bad.

Bankhead told the Senate about this kind of tax, but Mr. Whitney's friends showed no enthusiasm either at that time or since then. AND you have had a couple of slumps and will have another half dozen UNLESS you listen to Bankhead (or rather look up what he said at that time) or to Bro. Goldsborough suggesting another means of getting the money into circulation and keeping it working, or unless you go in for complicated European guild systems that have, at the present moment a very bad name in the U. S., because nobody in America knows in the least what they are, and because you have been TOLD by your chicken-headed press that guild organization is INEXTRICABLY and unbreakably joined with a lot of very old habits, militarism, etc., which the great new glorious Western Hemisphere doesn't like.

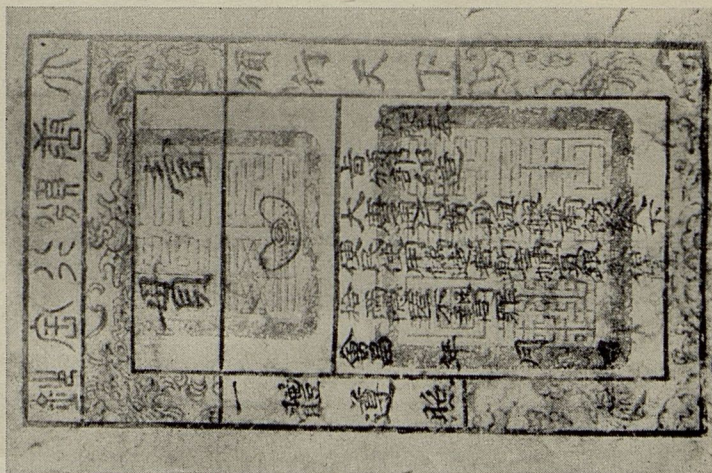
All I now suggest is a decent curiosity as to what Congressman Goldsborough MEANS, and a healthy distrust of all

newspapers which don't report on the matter quite fully and clearly.

Congress HAS (by the Constitution) the right to coin money and to determine the value thereof. Every High School in America should devote one week of its history course to making the students understand QUITE FULLY AND CLEARLY what that sentence in the Constitution MEANS and why it was put there by the founders of the American commonwealth. I wish to heaven my generation had been enlightened on this subject when they were school boys. There is nothing in it a boy of 14 can't understand and we should all today be much happier if we hadn't been kept lolling in darkness.

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Postscript, and by no means negligible as such. The campaign for dated money in California is of interest to every alert economist. First because dated money works, and has worked when tried, secondly because of its enormous educative value. Once people have used dated money (stamp script) they can never again be fooled as to real nature of money. There is, I believe, no economic education comparable to such actual practice. If two or three million people once get a taste of this mechanism of exchange, it should be forever impossible for the rest of the U. S. A. to be kept in monetary serfdom and illiteracy. The privilege of money and especially of hoarded money over all products of human toil would disappear and the superstitions of scarcity economics be unsustainable after it.



● Currency of the Tang Dynasty, 841-847 A. D. Not a bank note but a state-note.

MARTENOT MAKES MUSIC AND HISTORY

By Louise Llewellyn Jarecka

Paris, France

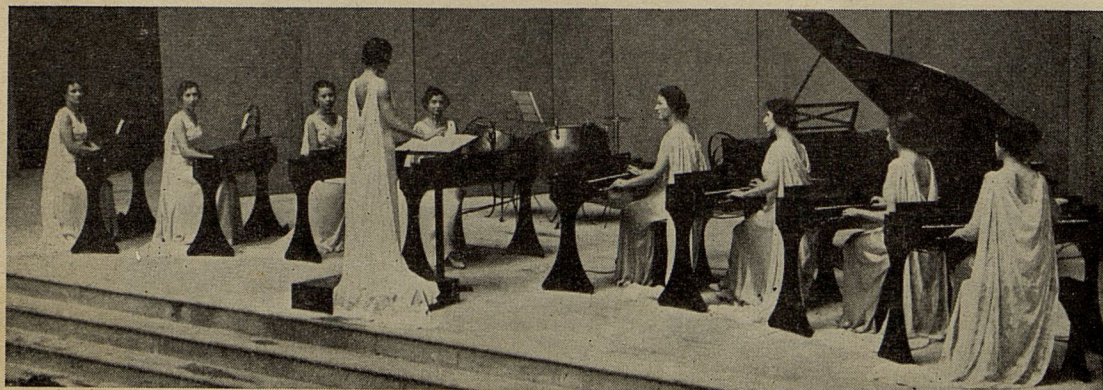


THE debutant in the family of musical instruments continues almost to monopolize the attention and interests of composers and amateurs of music in Paris. This is the *ondes Martenot* called by J. C. Gabriel, writing in a recent number of the scientific journal *Synthèse*, the Adam of a new sound race. That writer even claims for the inventor of the martenot the third place in the annals of musical discoveries, granting first and second to Pan, as originator of the first wind instrument, and Mercury, creator of the lyre, ancestor of lute, harp, violin, guitar, harpsichord, piano and banjo. For, as he explains, that which Herr Sax contrived a hundred years ago was no more than a last descendant of a numerous tribe of wind instruments, including brasses, woods, the human voice, the organ and accordion. Whereas Martenot has closed a hiatus of forty uneventful centuries, during which interval no new species had shown itself.

An early edition of the ethereal little lamp-clavier, which needs no discs nor antennae, which has nothing to do, in its perfected state, with the mechanical reception of atmospheric parasites for radiophonic transmissions, made

its first and only world tour in 1931. At that time it was still without a key-board. It was played by means of the metallic band or "ribbon" alone, and was capable of producing but one *timbre* or tone-quality. Now plans are under way to make the improved instrument a feature of the New York Exposition of 1939. It was not until the final weeks of the Paris Exposition of 1937 that the public had the opportunity to take account of the progress made in its development in the course of the last six years, and of the amazing possibilities it offers as an instrument of the orchestra and of chamber music ensembles.

As it is today, the martenot, resembling the clavichord in appearance, but having neither strings nor bow, neither reed nor pipe, has begun to tempt the imagination of the best known composers. Several martenots are employed in the new ballet, *Jeanne d'Arc* of Honegger, and in his *Songs of Songs*, to be produced at the Paris Opera, both works now in preparation. Florent Schmitt has employed the martenot with orchestra. Milhaud, Rieti, Cadou, all have been enchanting theatre audiences of late by means of the martenot used in ensembles of incidental music. Messaien, a



● First Orchestra of Ondes Martenot. Exposition Internationale, Paris, 1937. An ensemble of "ondes" directed by Mlle. Ginette Martenot, sister of the Inventor.

Agence Trampus Photograph, Paris.