

## APPENDIX

### Some Press Opinions

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#### BEFORE THE BOMBARDMENT

After an opening of the old, devastating cleverness, he (Mr. Sitwell) settles into a rhythm, rounded, complete and harmonious, welding all his old gifts—poetic power, the new edge of irony, acute insight, and an almost classic sense of pity—into one admirable whole. One no longer holds up such-and-such a quality for admiration; one accepts the book in its entirety as a masterpiece.”—*The Morning Post*.

“ . . . All the time one’s sympathies are rather with his victims than with the author who created them.\* Unfortunately Captain Sitwell has no pity.”—*The Tatler*.

“ It is, indeed, not the withered old ladies or their over-worked housemaids one is sorry for in the end, but the unfortunate Mr. Sitwell.”—*Evening Standard*.

“ It would be difficult to praise Mr. Sitwell’s book too highly. He has brought to bear on a novel all the richness of imagination and artistic workmanship that a poet might expend, but which is only too rare in fiction. There is zeal and unforgettable beauty in his descriptions and in his language, and a unity of tone which seems to re-create an almost forgotten period. He is never once guilty of an anachronism or a false note, and we hope that this author . . . will continue to enrich the novel with such artistry.”—*Irish Times*.

“ Mr. Sitwell bids fair to become the Amanda Ross of his generation, and his blunders will be widely quoted and treasured. . . .”—*Country Life*.

“ Whatever Mr. Sitwell may or may not have done before, in this book he has permanently found his style, and made his mark as a literary artist. ‘Before the Bombardment’ is an achievement. . . . There is irony and pity, understanding, and tenderness.”—*Daily Express*.

\* Surely this should be one of the objects of the author!

"In his (Mr. Sitwell's) pages is to be found some of the most vivid satire written for many years . . . at its best, brilliant, amusing."—*Saturday Review*.

"The first merit of this book, after its sanity, is the excellence of its style. The author has a real command of language and uses it crisply. . . .

"It is irony that will vex many. So hugely has the liberty of the Press been curtailed of late that the public is unaccustomed to adverse comment on institutions, customs, popular prejudices or current events."—*Spectator*.

"The Victorians are drenched with every variety of ridicule, insult, derision and contumely. Their catch-words are burlesqued. Their frame of mind is caricatured. Nothing is sacred or sacrosanct to Mr. Sitwell. He spits on the Victorian age so contemptuously that I feel he should have called his novel, 'Great Expectations.'

"It is not so much a matter of taste or good breeding, as a matter of sportsmanship. . . . I shudder at these vulgarities. . . ."—Greenjade in the *Daily Express*.

"A negative merit of Mr. Sitwell's novel is that, except for an unpleasantly suggestive episode concerning a rescue-home, the book is free from the trail of sex that overlies so much of the work of the younger writers of to-day."—*Church Times*.

". . . Undeniably entertaining."—*The Christian World*.

"Mr. Sitwell laughs at Church services, laughs at the war, laughs at old age."—*The Church of England Newspaper*.

". . . A remarkable piece of work."—*The Nation and Athenæum*.

"His (Mr. Sitwell's) considered judgment is icy, terrible. We must remember, when we shiver under this savage irony, that the author and others like him are recently come from Calvary, and that the vinegar they proffer there is surely this vision of life as a bleak irony, a cruel and obscene jest. . . .

". . . The book is packed with wit, humour and subtlety, and, though liking some of the author's poetry extremely, I had not realized his reserves of intensity until I read his prose."—Mary Webb in the *Bookman*.

". . . Merely caddish."—*The Yorkshire Post*.

"Snobbish too."—*The Star*.

"It is all quite good fun. . . . There are of course lapses. 'He is very fussy about the late, or great, war.'—*The Outlook*.

"Mr. Osbert Sitwell's book, *Before the Bombardment*,' is not taken seriously by the reading public of Scarborough.

"It is but the outburst of a man who is pitied more than blamed,' writes a Scarborough correspondent. Local people are amazed at his writing, but their amazement is tinged with pity. The Mayor of Scarborough (Councillor S. Whitfield) said, 'I have not read the book . . . it is in thoroughly bad taste.'"

"The Vicar of Scarborough (the Revd. J. Capron) said: It is a vulgar caricature. The best thing is to treat it with silent contempt.'"—*The Yorkshire Post*.

#### CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THE HORSE IN LITERATURE

"This is what Mr. Sitwell thinks of the Horse:

'Of all animals the horse, though occasionally beautiful, is the stupidest, is merely an obsolete method of locomotion, an animated, strong-willed and headstrong "Stephenson's Rocket." By its slowness in the town, by its silliness in the country, it is surely responsible for more deaths in city and countryside than all the elephants and motor-buses of the world heaped together. It is time that the creature was relegated to private collections or to museums and zoological gardens. . . .'"—"Mr. Gossip," in the *Daily Sketch*.

"Osbert Sitwell's novel, '*Before the Bombardment*,' deserves to be boycotted, if only because of his un-English remarks regarding the horse.

"I wonder if he saw the splendid service which the horse rendered in France during the war?"

"Nothing is more delightful to see in town than an angry road-hog being held up by one of these 'headstrong Stephenson's Rockets' as Mr. Sitwell names them."—Laurence A. Booth Congleton in the *Daily Sketch*.

"I should like to point out to your correspondent with reference to his letter suggesting a boycott of Mr. Osbert Sitwell's novel on account of his un-English remarks about the horse, that this animal played a somewhat double game during the Great War, when, like some of our gold and financial houses it fought gallantly on both sides,

and it may be Captain Sitwell's patriotism that makes him take up this line.

"I know that all my life I have been a lover of horses, and it was not until I saw the Uhlans that I realized how different was the equine standard of patriotism from the human."—C. R. W. Nevinson in the *Daily Sketch*.

### "ENGLAND RECLAIMED"

By

OSBERT SITWELL

". . . Mr. Osbert Sitwell and his brother and sister must have the credit of the discovery of a new poetic territory. Like the new poetic territory discovered at the beginning of the last century, Mr. Sitwell's discoverer have the same exhilarating effect on his poetry."—*The Times*.

"It is difficult to review Mr. Osbert Sitwell's new book of poems with decent restraint. It is so intensely alive, so full of vivid imagery, droll and grotesque; so mocking in bombast and fanfaronade; so free from anything like conventional poetizing, and yet so flushingly poetical at times, that one is tempted to fly off in a species of Mr. Sitwell's own free-verse in praise of it. . . .

". . . It may be safely affirmed that no recent poem has re-created a world more thoroughly or more fascinatingly English, alike in scene, in sentiment and in inspiration."—*The Daily Telegraph*.

"Indeed in this slender volume we not only have a real contribution to English poetry, but a sidelight on the past social history of our time."—*The Westminster Gazette*.

"A clever and amusing book."—*Birmingham Post*.

"Mr. Sitwell, among few young men of his generation, has the possibility of being a really big writer."—*The Daily Express*.

"They (the characters in the poem) are portrayed with an affection that is never sentimental and with an irony that is never cruel. They are figures of fun; but they are human and lovable and, as English types, so indubitably authentic that we recognize them at once as old friends. We feel, in the great warmth of that recognition, the first pleasurable shock of that surprise, that the poet is recording not only his own childhood's memories but ours as well."—*General Bullitt in the Saturday Review*.

"Those people who have been amused by the juvenile audacities and sympathetic to the adolescent intolerance of Mr. Sitwell's earlier verse will find traces of their quality in this mellowed product of his maturity. But they will also find that Mr. Sitwell has not lost in power now that he is able to allow sympathy to replace indignation in his recollected experience. His art has gained perspective. Where his work once glittered with tinsel and spangles it has now become rich and deeply coloured and not less exciting, but far more moving than it was in its earlier brilliance and fantasy.

"In versification too the poet has grown mature: he handles his line as a master; uses rhyme as his occasional but not too constant servant. He has learnt the last lesson of poetic technique, and writes now, not in verses but in phrases and paragraphs of verse according to the necessity of his theme or the rhythm of his emotion. The change of his mood, his interlacing of wit, visions and tenderness, is so close and so rapid that from a book packed with memorable phrases and vivid pictures it is almost impossible to quote an isolated passage."—Naomi Royde-Smith in *Time and Tide*.

"ALL AT SEA"

A Social Tragedy

in Three Acts

For First Class Passengers only

by

Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell

with a preface entitled

"A Few Days in an Author's Life,"

by

Osbert Sitwell.

"... taken as a whole, 'All at Sea' is far wittier than most revues."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

"Mr. Osbert Sitwell has in his inimitable style written a preface entitled 'A Few Days in an Author's Life.'"—*Daily Mirror*.

"While reading it, I smiled gently most of the time and on four occasions was visited by the 'golden glory' of laughter, and in spite of all the dramatic critics who look and sound so very dramatic themselves (especially when

clinging to their telephones), I believe it would please me even more as a play—especially if the dark, inexorable ocean, which is the unseen protagonist, was visible in its tumultuous power all the while as in that terrific Grand Guignol satire of the sinking submarine. . . .

"By thus adding to the nation's gaiety, especially in the dreary season called the 'tunnel months' by a French wit, the authors of 'All at Sea' have surely earned our gratitude—mine, at any rate, is theirs."—E. B. Osborn in the *Morning Post*.

". . . The vivacious Sitwells have now attacked the drama with 'a social tragedy, for first-class passengers only.' It is a delightful extravaganza, a witty and amusing comment on present-day 'society' American divorce; the cinema star and the stolid Englishman are aptly pilloried. The scene is mainly laid in the cocktail bar of a Transatlantic liner, and a series of disguises produces gay catastrophes and the discomfiture of the indefatigable Lady Flinteye. The play is chiefly remarkable for its clever dialogue."—*Aberdeen Free Press*.

". . . Alas, it is a formless mass, with neither any characterization nor dialogue ascending above the intelligence of a fourth-form boy! . . ."—*Bookman*.

"We cannot think it will be long before Mr. Sitwell will wish to withdraw this absurdly superfluous and fundamentally ineffective—though wonderfully well written—defence of the Trinity 'from circulation.'"—*The New Statesman*.

". . . A shrewd criticism of the forces at work in the theatre to-day."—*Yorkshire Weekly Post*.

". . . Mr. Osbert Sitwell is also part author of that farrago of silly tripe and unconscionable bunk called 'First Class Passengers Only,' which was produced some months ago at the Arts Theatre, applauded by an audience which should have been certified wholesale had two doctors been present on any single night; and actually made a profit! . . ."—*New Age*.

"Dreary drivel . . . interminable outbreak of falsetto caterwauling. . . . I become incapable of laughter. . . ."—Greenjade in the *Sunday Express*.

"Characteristic Sitwellian impudence!"—*The Stage*.

"Mr. Sitwell is acutely aware of the value of the cultured Jews. . . ."—*The Westminster Gazette*.

"He (Mr. Osbert Sitwell) was for some time an actor himself, and therefore is entitled to ask 'What is wrong with our Stage?'"—*John o'London's Weekly*.

### THE PEOPLE'S ALBUM OF LONDON STATUES

"For those who delight in urbane satire, gentle humour and delicate irony, I prescribe 'The People's Album of London Statues,' described by Osbert Sitwell, with exquisite drawings by Nina Hamnett. Before I read Mr. Sitwell's essay on our London statues I was in a state of November despondency, but its mockery of our 'petrified brothers' filled my damp mind with laughter and joy. . . ."—James Douglas, *Daily Express*.

". . . It is, in the best sense, a 'popular' book, because it helps to a better understanding of a subject of general interest. . . ."—*The Times*.

". . . What Miss Hamnett and Mr. Sitwell have done is to take the London statues out of their limbo and bring them home consistently in line and words respectively; and we are enchanted at the result. . . ."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

"Mr. Sitwell supplies the unexpected yet always apposite comment. He is at his best, circling round these graven images, mostly of the Victorian yesteryear. His power of satire has now developed a lightness of foot and a suppleness of gesture, and plants a deadlier dagger with an elegantly casual air. This is a volume to take up when the frosty weather has stiffened and stupefied and bored the brain. One glance, and you smile: read a little way, and some artfully artless statement, made with a melancholy gravity, betrays you into 'audible mirth. . . ."—*The Spectator*.

"Mr. Sitwell is notoriously energetic as an author, but he is, we realize, a promoter of sloth in others. His mind enjoys a perpetual holiday through time of the kind that has its counterpart in the workaday world in meandering about from one place to another. This has a sort of hypnotic effect on the reader, so that as he reads he is slowly induced (so persuasively do the author's white finger-tips caress the forehead) to see the present through the same dreary eyes he normally turns upon the past. Mr. Sitwell swims through life with us in his wake, as if he were a being who had come into the world about the

close of the sixteenth century and would still be on earth long after we had gone. . . ."—*Burlington Magazine*.

" . . . His chapters dealing with the history of sculpture and with the production of London statuary and the means that ought at once to be taken to put a stop to it are in his most flashing manner, with sustained flights of ingenious fancy. . . ."—*Manchester Guardian*.

" Mr. Sitwell is the compleat verger."—*Oxford Magazine*.

" A very entertaining book."—*Evening Standard*.

" . . . In an age when most art criticism has a background of robust morality and stiff principle, and when most critics must, as it were, drink their art neat or net at all, it is refreshing to find so young and talented a critic offering us such delicate vintages."—*Daily Telegraph*.

" . . . Exceptionally charming."—*The Bookman*.

## THE MAN WHO LOST HIMSELF

By

OSBERT SITWELL

" . . . Mr. Osbert Sitwell has written a very brilliant book, of which the bare story is the least absorbing part. So far as the story goes, the life and death of the writer Tristram Orlander, who changed, at the height of his career, from being the poet and leader of an intellectual generation into a writer of best sellers, wealthy, commonplace, and removed from all his old friends, is a clever fancy skilfully contrived: it is a variation on a theme which has appealed to others before. The active thing in this book is Mr. Sitwell's own intellectual passion for beauty and the powerful use he makes of it. The long central section of the novel describes the narrator's sojourn with Orlander at Granada just after his breakdown. It is a magnificent piece of writing, pure if consciously elaborate, which perfectly expresses Mr. Sitwell's sense of summer on the enchanted hill where stands the Alhambra. The spirit of beauty is seized in the succeeding hours of the day, as it can only be seized at leisure—the woods, the sound of water, the courts of the Alhambra, the gypsies, the incongruous tourists, the infinite delight, the undertone of sombre foreboding, the light of dawn upon the mountains and the blue depth of dusk upon the city. And humour of Mr. Sitwell's satirical kind, is thereto."—*The Times*.



" . . . Mr. Sitwell carries the thing through superbly; his analysis of Tristram's sleeping and waking terrors makes the reader tremble in his chair; the second appearance of the 'doppel ganger' is entirely effective in its terrible irony; Tristram is magnified into a Faust. The force of Mr. Sitwell's intention almost persuades us that the punishment fits the crime, but not quite. . . ."—*Saturday Review*.

"This is the best book Mr. Sitwell has written."—*London Mercury*.

" . . . It is 'bravura,' but of that kind of which Mr. Sitwell and his brother are always maintaining and revealing the beauty and the meaning. It is intellectual passion, the other end of the scale to the passion of the entrails. It is not so warm, but it is less exhausting, no less intense and no less lasting. Mr. Osbert Sitwell by the poetic passages of this book, easily his best, has achieved an assured place."—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

" . . . His cleverness, firmly applied, ensures that we see with his eyes and hear with his ears, until the illusion is complete that there is something clever about us too. And that, because all that he sees and hears is perfectly presented, is one of the reasons why 'The Man Who Lost Himself,' is irresistible."—*Illustrated London News*.

" . . . Honest snobbery."—*The Evening Standard*.

" . . . The whole book is brilliant, intricate in its implications and distinguished. Sometimes it has the tedium of a summer too greatly laden with beauty; but in his descriptions of Granada in its sublime, monotonous and sombre moods, Mr. Sitwell rises from the delight and suave to the magnificent. These pages are no mere purple patches; they are true emanations from the city itself, as troubling as the haze of heat which quivers over those ancient roofs."—*The Spectator*.

" . . . The Spanish background is marvellously evoked. It is becoming the fashion now to write about Spain, as once it was the fashion to write about Italy, but this Spain of Mr. Sitwell's is not only beautiful for its Spanish quality, but also because it is a symbol rich in individuality. Of other beauty there is nothing in contemporary English literature like Osbert Sitwell's prose, unless, it be his

See the *Star's* review of "Before the Bombardment." Same reviewer, consistent of course.

brother's, and the only volumes that can possibly be compared with this one are those on Gothic art by Sack-  
 everell Sitwell. They are evolving together a poetic prose  
 that must, I think, be of real importance in the develop-  
 ment of English letters. It is personal, acrid, has often  
 the cloudiness of smoke and the brightness of flame, it is  
 thick with erudition, but is never pedantic, it owes some-  
 thing to Proust in its evocation and re-creation of childhood,  
 but is always strongly English, even in its abuse of England  
 and its odd rhythm of home-sickness.

"This is beyond any question Mr. Osbert Sitwell's best  
 book up to now, one of the really important books of  
 the year, but it is not the best book that Mr. Sitwell will  
 ever write."—Hugh Walpole in *Book Society News*.

". . . Reveals the genius of the author at its best."—  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

"Vivid story told in brilliant prose."—*Daily Mail*.

"Not since Pater wrote as Whistler painted have I  
 read prose that so ministers to emotion and thought alike."  
 —*The Morning Post*.

"It makes a very heavy demand on the reader. . . . I  
 do not think the reward justifies the demand."—V. Sack-  
 ville West, author of "The Land" and "The Edwardians,"  
 in *The Listener*.