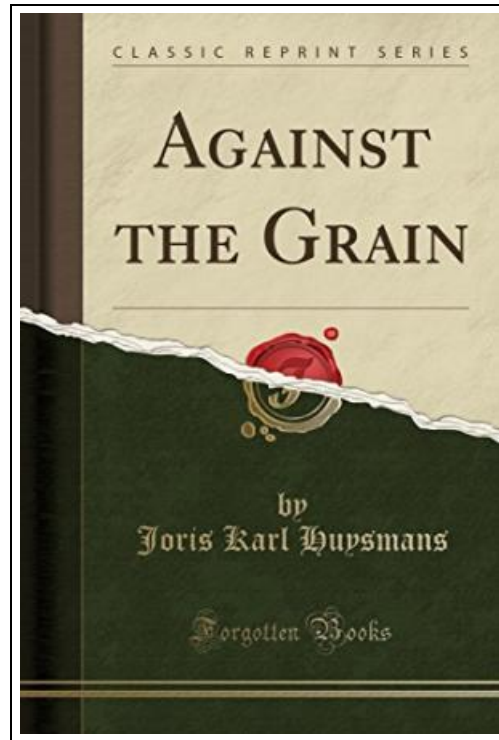


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Forgotten Books, 2018. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Excerpt from *Against the Grain* N trying to represent the man who wrote the extraordinary books grouped around *A Rebours* and *En Route*, I find myself carried back to the decline of the Latin world. I re call those restless Africans who were drawn into the vortex of decadent Rome, who ab sorbed its corruptions with all the barbaric fervour of their race, and then with a more natural impetus of that youthful fervour threw themselves into the young current of Christianity, yet retaining in their ?esh the brand of an exotic culture. Tertullian, Augus tine, and the rest gained much of their power, as well as their charm, because they incarnated a fantastic min gling of youth and age, of decayed Latinity, of tumult uously youthful Christianity. Huysmans, too, incarnates the old and the new, but with a curious, a very vital difference. Today the roles are reversed; it is another culture that is now young, with its aspirations after human perfection and social solidarity, while Christian ity has exchanged the robust beauty of youth for the subtler beauty of age. The most perfect analogy to our time which I can find, wrote Renan to his sister amid the tumults of Paris in 1848, a few weeks after Huysmans had been born in the same city, is the moment when Christianity and paganism stood face to face. Huysmans had wandered from ancestral haunts of mediaeval peace into the forefront of the struggles of our day, bringing the clear, refined perceptions of old culture to the in tensest vision of the modern world yet attained, but never at rest, never once grasping except on the purely aesthetic side the significance of the new...



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