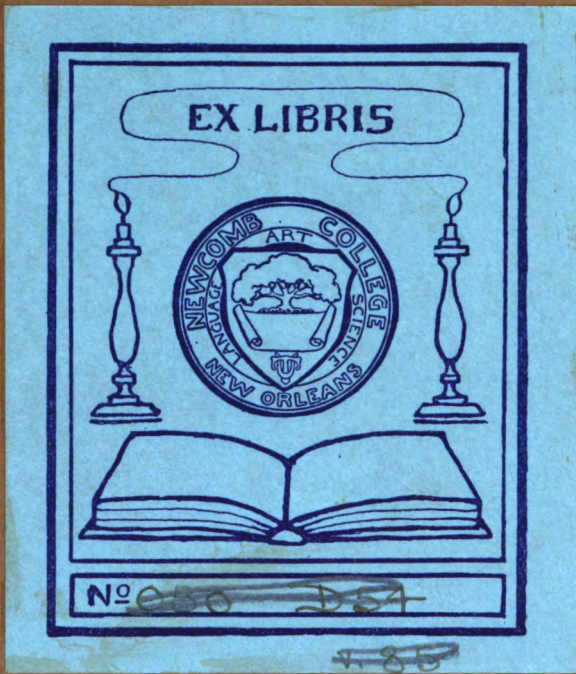


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DONNA MI PREGA

IN memory's locus taketh he his state
 Formed there in manner as a mist of light
 Upon a dusk that is come from Mars and stays.
 Love is created, hath a sensate name,
 His modus takes from soul, from heart his will;
 From form seen doth he start, that, understood,
 Taketh in latent intellect—
 As in a subject ready—

place and abode,

Yet in that place it ever is unstill,
 Spreading its rays, it tendeth never down
 By quality, but is its own effect unendingly
 Not to delight, but in an ardour of thought
 That the base likeness of it kindleth not.

IT is not *virtu*, but perfection's source
 Lying within perfection postulate
 Not by the reason, but 'tis felt, I say.
 Beyond salvation, holdeth its judging force,
 Maintains intention reason's peer and mate;
 Poor in discernment, being thus weakness' friend,
 Often his power meeteth with death in the end
 Be he withstayed

or from true course

bewrayed

E'en though he meet not with hate

or villeiny

Save that perfection fails, be it but a little;
 Nor can man say he hath his life by chance
 Or that he hath not stablished seigniory
 Or loseth power, e'en lost to memory.

HE comes to be and is when will's so great
 It twists itself from out all natural measure;
 Leisure's adornment puts he then never on,
 Never thereafter, but moves changing state,
 Moves changing colour, or to laugh or weep
 Or wries the face with fear and little stays,
 Yea, resteth little

yet is found the most

Where folk of worth be host.

PARTIAL EXPLANATION

A commentary is a piece of writing in which we expose and seek to excuse our ignorance of the subject. The less we know, the longer our explanations.

The preceding canzone was known as "the philosophic canzone"; the stir that it caused, over and above the stir aroused by any beautiful work, may be attributed in part to the state of philosophic opinion in and about A.D. 1290. Guido is called a "natural philosopher," I think an "atheist," and certainly an "Epicurean," not that any one had then any clear idea or has now any very definite notion of what Epicurus taught. But a natural philosopher was a much less safe person than a "moral philosopher."¹

It is not so much what Guido says in the poem, as the familiarity that he shows with dangerous thinking: *natural demonstration* and the proof by experience or (?) experiment. If after-dinner conversation in the Uberti and Cavalcanti families was any warrant for Guido's tone it is small wonder that Dante who was, as a young man, *bien pensant*, and probably quite content with the orthodoxy of Guinicello, thought it necessary to lodge the tough-minded seniors of these tribes in the Tenth Canto of his *Inferno*, where, indeed, the elder Cavalcanti might seem to be expecting his son.

My own sympathies extend even to the disrespect of Virgilio, but that point may seem irrelevant.

From this poem and from passages elsewhere it would seem that Guido had derived certain notions from the Aristotelian commentators, the "*filosofica famiglia*," Ibn Sina, for the *spiriti, spiriti* of the eyes, of the senses; Ibn Rachd, *che il gran comento feo*, for the demand for intelligence on the part of the recipient; Albertus Magnus, for the proof by experience; and possibly Grosseteste, *De Luce et de Incohatone Formarum*, although this will need proving.

At any rate for any serious thought in Guido's time we must suppose the Arabian background: the concentric spheres of the heavens, Ibn Badja's itinerary of the soul going to God, Averroes' specifications for the degrees of comprehension; and we may perhaps consider Guido as one of that "tenuous line who from Albertus

¹ See *Mediaevalism and Mediaevalism (Guido Cavalcanti)* by Ezra Pound, *THE DIAL*, March 1928.

Magnus to the renaissance" meant the freedom of thought, the contempt, or at least a moderated respect, for stupid authority.

He is possibly against Sigier and for Albertus, he wants no Truth that contradicts the "*rationes naturales*," he is not jamming down a dogma unsupported by nature. His truth is not against "*natural dimostramento*" or based merely on authority. It is a truth for elect recipients, not a truth universally spreadable or acceptable. The "*dove sta memoria*" is Platonism. The "*non razionale ma che si sente*" is for experiment, it is against the tyranny of the syllogism, blinding and obscurantist. The tone of his mind is infinitely more "modern" than Dante's. "*Fuor di salute, guidicar mantiene*," his position, here as on the rest of these cardinal points, shows him to be "very dangerous" to the peace of the mediaeval mind, if immobility may be considered as "peace."

And all this is done with the suavity of a song, with the neatness of scalpel-cut. Guido is eclectic, he swallows none of his authors whole. There is no open "atheism," indeed no direct attack on any church dogma, but there was probably a sense of briskness; I mean it would not have been comforting to lovers of quiet.

If part of this is conjecture, I think one can, at any rate, scarcely exaggerate the gulf between Guido's state of mind and that of Dante in the same epoch, or between it and Dante's willingness to take on any sort of holy and orthodox furniture. Dante's "heresies" are due to feeling, annoyance with Popes and so forth, rather than to intellectual hunger, or to his feeling cramped in the Aquinian universe.

I may be wrong, but I cannot believe that Guido "swallowed" Aquinas. It is perhaps by merest accident, but we find nowhere in his poems any implication of a belief in a geocentric or theocentric material universe.

"BUT THE POEM IS VERY OBSCURE"

The poem is extremely clear in a number of places, the philosophic terms are used with a complete precision of technique. I am aware that I have distorted "*accidente*" into affect, but I have done so in order not to lose the tone of my opening line, by introducing an English word of *double entente*.

For the rest there are certain enigmas, and the celebrated com-

mentators have done nothing to solve them. Those which face us to-day are precisely the same ones that faced Del Garbo, or Di Giunta in 1527.

Considering the clarity and precision of the text where it is clear, I am loath to think that these obscure points indicate merely a loose usage or *remplissage* on the part of the author.

Textual research brings us to a definite limit of knowledge about certain manuscript readings. The earliest known copyists found certain passages either illegible or incomprehensible: as for example, *la gir*, *largir*, or *laire simiglianza*.

Frate Egidio (Colonna, Romano, il beato, degli Agostini) goes round it. He begins his commentary with a graceful description of a notable lady, who must have begun life "of Paphos and the Isles" but who has attained a safe anonymity. She is seated on an anonymous mountain, by an anonymous fountain, whence she sends forth her ministers: Solomon and Ovidius Naso. However, *il beato* casts no satisfactory light on the phrase, "*largir simiglianza*." Dino del Garbo is, in the modern sense, a much more serious character. He quotes a good deal of Aristotle, explains the preceding line as if it read "*E si non ha diletto*," or "*quando non ha diletto*," but slurs over the *la gir* or *largir*. The manuscripts do not help us.

La gir means turn there, and *largir* is to give away freely. To give likeness freely? Or is *simiglianza* the subject?

For purpose of translation one has, as Rossetti remarks, to cut through various knots, and make arbitrary decisions. I have perforce, here as elsewhere, selected one of the possible meanings, or at least attempted to do so, but without any wish to insist upon it, or to conceal either the depths of my ignorance, or my width of uncertainty.

Gilson¹ summarizes Grosseteste's ideas on light as follows:

"La lumière est une substance corporelle très subtile et qui se rapproche de l'incorporel. Ses propriétés caractéristiques sont de s'engendrer elle-même perpétuellement et de se diffuser sphériquement autour d'un point d'une manière instantanée. Donnons-nous un point lumineux, il s'engendre instantanément autour de ce point comme centre une sphère lumineuse immense. La diffusion de la lumière ne peut être contrariée que par deux raisons: ou bien elle

¹ Philosophie du Moyen Age, par Etienne Gilson, Payot, Paris, 1925.

rencontre une obscurité qui l'arrête, ou bien elle finit par atteindre la limite extrême de sa raréfaction, et la propagation de la lumière prend fin par là même. Cette substance extrêmement ténue est aussi l'étoffe dont toutes choses sont faites; elle est la première forme corporelle et ce que certains nomment la corporéité."

This French summary is most able, and most lucid. It is far more suggestive of the Canzone: Donna Mi Prega, than the original Latin of Grosseteste,¹ but my suggestion is not that Guido is a mere dilettante poetaster dragging in philosophic terms or caught by a verbal similarity (e.g., as Lorenzo Medici, dabbling in Platonism in his rhymed account of talk with Ficino). For "*risplende in se perpetual effecto*" we do find the Latin approximation:

(De Luce, the Baur edition) P. 51—*Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit. . . .*

. . . a puncto lucis sphaera lucis quamvis magna . . . generetur . . .

P. 52—*Lux prima forma in materia prima creata, seipsam seipsam . . . multiplicans. (? multiplicans = largir.)*

P. 56—*aer quoque ex se corpus spirituale vel spiritum corporalem generans.*

P. 58—*Forma autem, ut pote simplicissima, unitatis obtinet locum, as bearing on the "formato" or "non formato loco."*

P. 73—*aut transitus radii ad rem visam est rectus per medium diaphani unius generis . . . aut transitus . . . modi spiritualis, per quam ipsum est speculum . . . transitus . . . per . . . plura diaphana . . .*

P. 91—reference to Plato . . . *anima substantia seipsam movens.*

P. 345—*formam lucis in aere vel in corpore . . . transparente . . . nec lucis essentiam ibi esse . . . conceditur . . . nomine formae habitus censentur . . .*

P. 347—*aeternae rationes rerum causatarum, from the Timaeus.*

Grosseteste derives from Arabic treatises on perspectives. It is too much to say that Guido had, perforce, read the Bishop of Lincoln, but certainly that is the *sort* of thing he had read.

¹ L. Baur, Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Münster, 1912, Beitrage z. Gesch. Phil. d. Mittelalt. Latin text and German commentary, vols. IX and XVIII, 4-6.

His definition of "*l'accidente*," i.e., the whole poem, is a scholastic definition in form, it is as clear and definite as the prose treatises of the period, it shows an equal acuteness of thought. It seems to me quite possible that the whole of it is a sort of metaphor on the generation of light, or that at any rate greater familiarity with the philosophy of the period would elucidate the remaining tangles, particularly if one search for the part of philosophy that was in a state of activity in the years 1270-1290. One cannot absolutely rule out the possibility of Guido's having seen even some scrap of MS. by Roger Bacon, although this is, perhaps, unlikely.

Considering the quality of Guido's mind as manifest in indisputable passages it would, I think, be the greatest possible error to imagine that any part of the poem is mere decoration or stuffing. "*Talento di voler*" looks weak, but may not even that be due to an *idée fixe* on our part—"voler provare" meaning perhaps technically, "try to prove," and the whole phrase, "I have no inclination to attempt proof" rather than "wish to will to prove"? If not, the *talento* is dragged in for the rhyme, and we must count it a blemish.

It may not be amiss, as illustrating the contemporary situation of philosophic thought in the British desert, and the recognition of one serious mind by another, to recall an incident of fifteen years past. When the late T. E. Hulme was trying to be a philosopher in that *milieu*, and fussing about Sorel and Bergson and getting them translated into English, I spoke to him one day of the difference between Guido's precise interpretative metaphor, and the Petrarchan fustian and ornament, pointing out that Guido thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond to definite sensations undergone; in fact, very much what I had said in my early preface to the Sonnets and Ballate.

Hulme took some time over it in silence, and then finally said: "That is very interesting"; and after a pause: "That is more interesting than anything any one ever said to me. It is more interesting than anything I ever read in a book."

I was talking of certain passages in the Sonnets and Ballate, and not of this canzone, but the point should hold as well for the canzone.

What we need now is not so much a commentator as a lexicon.

It is the precise sense of certain terms as *understood at that particular epoch* that one would like to have set before one.

For example, does "*intenzion*" mean intention (a matter of will)? does it mean intuition, intuitive perception, or does the line hold the same meaning as that in Yeats's Countess Cathleen, *intenzion* being intention, and *ragione* meaning not reason, but "being right"?

At such points the commentators either branch off and give their own theories about the cosmos in general, or they restate with vague verbosity what Guido has said with greater pre- and concision.

As the philosophy of the time has been completely scrapped, there are very few specialists who can help us. I should be delighted to hear from any one who has more definite knowledge. Up to the present I have found out what little I have found out by concentration on the text, and not by reading commentators, and I strongly suspect that that is the road that the next man will have to follow.

There are certain definite impasses, for definite palaeographical reasons. The copyists simply did not know, and we are unlikely to find any more or anterior manuscripts.

The other dimension of the poem is its lyricism, in the strictest sense of the term. It is made for song, not for rhetorical declamation; on which count Dante twice mentions it in *De Vulgari Eloquio*, II, 12. First in connexion with his own: "*Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*"; and secondly in comparison with his: "*Poscia ch' Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato.*"

DONNA MI PREGA

NON e virtute
 ma da questa vene
 Perfezione
 ches si pone
 tale

Non razionale
 ma che si sente dicho

FUOR di salute
 giudichar mantene
 E l antenzione
 per ragione
 vale

Diserne male
 in chui e vicio amicho

DI sua virtu seghue ispresso morte
 Se forte
 la virtu fosse impedita
 La quale aita
 la contraria via
 Nonche opposito natural sia

MA quanto che da ben perfett e torte
 Per sorte¹
 non po dir om ch abbi vita
 Che stabilita
 non a signioria
 A simil puo valer quant uom l oblia:—

¹ MS. might read *forte*, but wrongly.

LESSER quando
 lo voler a tanto ¹
 Ch oltre misura
 di natura
 torna

Poi non si adorna
 di riposo mai

MOVE cambiando
 cholr riso in pianto

El la ighura
 con paura
 storna

Pocho soggiorna
 anchor in lui vedrai

CH en gente di valore il piu si trova
 La nova

qualita move a sospiri
 E vol ch om mirj
 in un formato ² locho
 Destandositj lo qual manda focho

IMMAGINAR nol puo hom che nol prova
 E non si mova

perche al lui si tirj
 Et non ssi a ggiri
 per trovarvi giocho

E certamente gran saver ne pocho:—

¹ Di Giunta: *L'essere é, quando lo volere é tanto.*

² Rivalta gives: *in non formato.*

I can only make simple sense of *non formato*, or complicated sequence of thought in reading *formato* without the *non*. But on eleventh thought perhaps my translation does violence to impartial palaeography. Reading *fermato* or *formato*, the sense wd. be perception, falling upon will in the possible whereabouts of the possible or potential intellect marks a locus or area, it does not create a stasis (the *possanza* of the second strophe). This area wd. be the *formato locho* to be contemplated, all of which is rather a strain on modern reader unaccustomed to poems having coherent thought from one end to the other, unaccustomed in fact to any mental sequence or coherence. Or still more briefly: "wills that he look at the form of beauty already engendered in his own mind." The words are not yet devitalized. *Immaginar* still meant "to form an image."

DONNA MI PREGA

DA simil tragge
 complessione e sghuardj
 Che fa parere
 lo piacere
 piu certo
 Non puo chovertò
 star quand e si giunto

NON gia selvagge
 la bilta son dardj
 Ch a tal volere
 per temere
 sperto
 Uom seghue merto
 spirito che punto

E NON si puo chonosciere per lo viso
 Chompriso
 bianco in tale obbietto chade
 E chi ben aude ¹
 forma non si vede
 Perche lo mena chi dallui precede ²

FUOR di cholore essere diviso
 Aseiso
 mezzo schuro luce rade
 Fuor d ogni fraude
 dice dengno in fede
 Che solo da chostui nasce merzede:—

TU puoj sichuramente gir chanzone
 Dove ti piace ch i t o si ornato
 Ch assa lodata
 sara tua ragione
 Dalle persone
 ch anno intendimento
 Di star con altre tu non aj talento:—

¹ *vade.*² *da lei, and procede.*

THE OTHER DIMENSION

The danger of a canzone composed entirely in hendecasyllabics is that of going heavy. Dante avoids it in *Donne ch'Avete* without using inner rhymes. Here Guido employs them.

The canzone of Guido's which Dante takes as a model of "construction" is not the *Donna Mi Prega*, but *Poiche di Doglia*, of which only the first strophe is preserved, and this strophe for some obscure reason (or from simple habits of imitation) all editors insist on printing as a *Ballata*, beginning with *Di Giunta* and ending, curiously enough, with *Rivalta*. Apart from Dante's clear reference to it, one should be able to observe its formation.

The reader will not arrive at a just appreciation of the canzone unless he be aware that there are three kinds of melopoeia, that is to say: poems made to speak, to chant, and to sing. This canzone, Guido's poetry in general, and the poems of mediaeval Provence and Tuscany in general, were all made to be sung. Relative estimates of value inside these periods must take count of the cantabile values.

Modern professors with lifted eyebrows patronizing Dante's judgements in such matters appear to me rather like hypothetical persons who having taken an elementary course in phonetics or physics and having heard their wives' sisters play Chaminade bring out: "Bach's opinions on the fugue which our later criticism has superseded . . ."

The canzone was to poets of this period what the fugue was to musicians in Bach's time. It is a highly specialized form, having its own self-imposed limits. I trust I have managed to print the *Donna Mi Prega* in such a way that its articulations strike the eye without need of a rhyme table. The strophe is here seen to consist of four parts, the second lobe equal to the first as required by the rules of the canzone; and the fourth happening to equal the third, which is not required by the rules as Dante explains them.

Each strophe is articulated by 14 terminal and 12 inner rhyme sounds. That means that 52 out of every 154 syllables are bound into pattern. The strophe reverses the proportions of the sonnet, as the short lobes precede the longer. This reversal is obviously of advantage to the strophe *as part of* a longer composition.

At this point we divagate for fuller ultimate reference. The prestige of the sonnet in English is a relic of insular ignorance. The sonnet was not a great poetic *invention*. The sonnet occurred automatically when some chap got stuck in the effort to make a canzone. His "genius" consisted in the recognition of the fact that he had come to the end of his subject-matter.

It should not be necessary for me now to quote the whole of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. That notable opusculus is available in many and cheap editions. My own brief study of Arnaut Daniel may throw a further light on earlier phases of the canzone in the "*lingua materna*."

As to the use of canzoni in English, whether for composition or in translation: it is not that there aren't rhymes in English; or enough rhymes or even enough two-syllable rhymes, but that the english two-syllable rhymes are of the wrong timbre and weight. They have extra consonants at the end, as in *flowing* and *going*; or they go squishy; or they fluff up as in *snowy* and *goeth*. They are not "*rime agute*"; they do not offer readily the qualities and contrasts that Dante has discussed so ably in *De Eloquentia*.

Even so, it is not that one "cannot" use them but that they demand, at times, sacrifice of values that had not come into being and were therefore not missed in Limoges A. D. 1200. Against which we have our concealed rhymes and our semi-submerged alliteration. (*En passant*, the alliteration in Guido's canzone is almost as marked as the rhyming though it enters as free component.)

It is not always that one language cannot be made to do what another has done, but that it is not always expeditious to approach the same goal by the same alley. I do not think rhyme-aesthetic, any rhyme-aesthetic, can ever do so much damage to english verse as that done by latinization, in Milton's time and before. The rhyme pattern is, after all, a matter of chiselling, and a question of the "*lima amorosa*," whereas latinization is a matter of compost, and in the very substance of the speech. By latinization I mean here the attempt to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, i.e., as if each word had a little label or postscript telling the reader at once what part it takes in the sentence, and specifying its several relations. Not only does such usage—with remnants of latin order—ruin the word order in English, but it

shows a fundamental miscomprehension of the organism of the language, and fundamental stupidity of this kind is bound to spread its effects through the whole fibre of a man's writing.

HENDECASYLLABLES

Another prevalent error is that of dealing with Italian hendecasyllables as if they were English "iambic pentameter." One is told in college that Italian verse is not accentual but syllabic but I can't remember any one's having ever presented the Anglo-American reader with a lucid discrimination between the two systems of measurement.

Some day I shall erect a monument to the books one reads in country hotels. Their titles and their authors evade one. One is not there "on business," one does not take notes and make excerpts. Let me however record here, that once in Sicily I came upon a century-old Italian school-book containing intelligent remarks upon metric. It was probably G. Biagioli's *Tractato d'Armonia di Verso Italiano* (Palermo 1836), with references to the *Elementi di Poesia* of G. Gherardini. The author did not "lay down rules," he merely observed that Dante's hendecasyllables were composed of combinations of rhythm units of various shapes and sizes and that these pieces were put together in lines so as to make, roughly, eleven syllables in all. I say "roughly" because of the liberties allowed in elision. I had discovered this fact for myself in Indiana twenty years before and in my own work had made use of the knowledge continually, but I wish to salute Messrs Biagioli and Gherardini.

This system represented versification when it was in a healthy state, when *metz* had not been divorced from *son* and before the sonnet had got in its dirty work.

Historically the sonnet, the "little tune," had already in Guido's day, become a danger to composition. It marks an ending or at least a decline of metric invention. It marks the beginning of the divorce of words and music. Sonnets with good musical setting are rare. The spur to the musician is slight. The monotony of the 14 even lines as compared to the constantly varying strophes of Ventadour or of Arnaut: the vocal heaviness of the hendecasyllable unrelieved by a shorter turn are all blanketing impediments for the music. This is not to say that the unrelieved hendecasyllable is impossible, and Dante, seeking the difficult, is

quite right to set the canzone in unrelieved hendecasyllables as the grand bogy of technical mastery.

Guido as we here observe, and as Dante had observed before us:

rithimorum repercussionem frequenter videtur assumptum.

He keeps the sound sharp and light in the throat by the rhymes inside the long line. Even some of the best Provençals, using a strophe of half his length, are unable to keep this cantabile virtue. All of which is probably a matter for specialists who will not be content with any general statement but will want to compare sound by sound the actual examples of mastersong that *totam artem comprehendunt*.

But one owes it to the general reader to jab his curiosity as to the degree of sonorous art, one might almost say of concrete or material sonority, required in this exposition of a general theme, in the case of the Donna Mi Prega; and of its relativity to the sonnet.

Of the great songs one remembers, that is songs sung with music, from Ierusalem Mirabilis to Le Pauvre Laboureur, and from that to Debussy's settings of Charles d'Orléans, does one remember a sonnet? And if so, how many?

The Canzone, any canzone, is obviously in intention a *capo lavoro*, a consummation of *métier*. Perhaps no poet has left half a dozen, or shall we say that Dante and Arnaut Daniel alone have left half a dozen each, that any one can remember? If I exaggerate, I do not exaggerate very greatly.

Of Guido this one survives undisputed. There is one inferior canzone ascribed to him; there is a strophe of another (Poiche di Doglia); and there is, I should be inclined to sustain, a *chance* of his having written the first strophe, though certainly not the entire, canzone to Fortune.

Apart from the Donna Mi Prega, Guido's reputation rests largely on the ballate, more or less his own field. That is to say, for purposes of song he chose a lighter and freer form, *not* the sonnet. In the ballata the first lobe is not immediately re-echoed. Tradition is that the ballata is made from popular dance-song, a scrap of folk-song caught up for the beauty of its tune, or for

some felicity, and then made into an art-form, more emotional and more emotive than the form of the Italian canzone.

Note that by A. D. 1290 the sonnet is already ceasing to be lyric, it is already the epistle without a tune, it is in a state of becoming, and tends already to oratorical pronunciamiento.

The strophes of canzoni are perforce symmetrical as the musical composition is only one fifth or one sixth the length of the verbal composition and has to be repeated. I don't believe we can prove complete absence of modulation; or that in case of canzon in tenzone one should assume impossibility of answer to tonic from dominant. Neither do we know what happened to the tune of the sestina while the recurrence-scheme was performing its evolution; the six units of the tune may, and in the case of Arnaut's *Oncle ed Ongla* could very well, have followed the permutation. The aesthetic of the carry-through of one rhyme-scheme from strophe to strophe is of Provençal not of Tuscan composition.

We know something of twelfth-century music, or have at least some grounds for particular conjecture, graphs, that is, of pitch sequence for some two hundred melodies; we are without any such comparable guide for "Dante and his Circle." I know of no manuscript containing music of that particular period; the one "item" in the Siena *archivio* is not a fragment of melody, but two lines of police record: Casella, juggled for being out after Curfew.

But considering the finesse of some of the Limousin melodies there is nothing to prevent our conjecture that the decadence of verbal mastery in Italian poetry may have paced a parallel decline in the melodic component. This would apply to the perfection of the single line or the "snatch" of song; to the close fit of word and melody, but not presumably to the whole form of the music. One may summarize the phases of development of the canzon as follows:

1. Strophe with few terminal sounds, sometimes only two, often no more than four sounds, repeated throughout the poem, meaning that the same rhyme wd. occur 18, or 24 times in the poem, or even more. After a century or so this grew monotonous, and we have
2. Use of *rimas escarsas* which may mean either the hunting up

of less usual terminal sounds, or the spacing out of the rhymes. In Arnaut's *L'Aura Amara*, we have 14 different rhyme sounds only 3 of which repeat inside the strophe, eleven of them repeat only from one strophe to the rest, that is occur only six or seven times in the poem.

3. Abandonment of the carry-through from one strophe to another. Arnaut had omitted carry-through in *Can Chai la Fuoilla*. Here in Guido's canzone 8 different sounds form the pattern inside the strophe; 5 occur 4 times, and 3 twice.

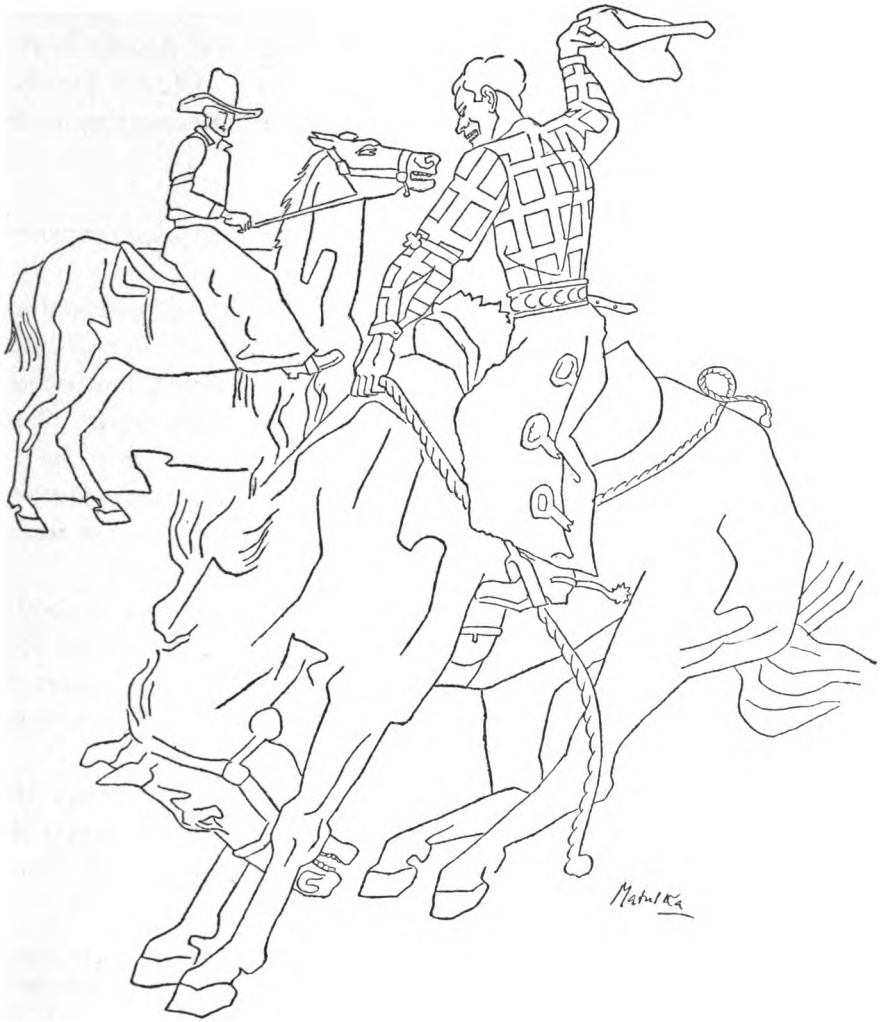
To be well done this patterning must lighten, not clog the movement, either of sense or sound.

As to the atrocities of my translation, all that can be said in excuse is that they are, I hope, for the most part intentional, and committed with the aim of driving the reader's perception further into the original than it would without them have penetrated. The melodic structure is properly indicated—and for the first time—by my disposition of the Italian text, but even that firm indication of the rhyme and the articulation of the strophe does not stress *all* the properties of Guido's triumph in sheer musicality.

One must strive, almost at any cost, to avoid a sort of mealy mumbling almost universally tolerated in English. If english verse undulates the average ear tolerates it, or even welcomes it though the undulation be but as a wobble of bread-dough, utterly incantabile, even when not wholly unspeakable.

I have not given an english "equivalent" for the *Donna Mi Prega*; at the utmost I have provided the reader unfamiliar with old Italian, an instrument that may assist him in gauging *some* of the qualities of the original.

NOTE: All this is not so unconnected with our own time as might seem. Those writers to whom *vers libre* was a mere "runnin' dahn th' road" videlicet escape, and who were impelled thereto by no inner need of, or curiosity concerning, the quantitative element in metric; having come to the end of that lurch, lurch back not into experiment with the Canzone or any other unexplored form, but into the stock and trade sonnet.



A DRAWING. BY JAN MATULKA



A DRAWING. BY JAN MATULKA

THE VENUS

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

WHAT then is it like, America?

It was Fräulein von J. talking.

They were on their way to take the train to Frascati, the three of them—she, her companion, and Evans.

In reply, he shook his head, laughing—and they hurried on to catch the car.

She could speak English well enough, her companion could not, Dev's German was spasmodic coming in spurts for a moment or two but disappearing as suddenly leaving him tongue-tied. So they spoke English and carried their lunch. A picnic. He was delighted.

This day it was hot. Fräulein von J. seemed very simple, very direct, and to his Roman mood miraculously beautiful. In her unstylish long-sleeved German clothes, her rough stockings and heavy walking-shoes, Evans found her, nevertheless, ethereally graceful. But the clear features, the high forehead, the brilliant perfect lips, the well-shaped nose, and best of all the shining mist-like palegold hair unaffectedly drawn back—frightened him. For himself he did not know where to begin. But she looked at him so steadily for some strange reason, as if she recognized him, that he was forced at last to answer her.

The tram was packed to the doors with passengers. Just before starting three treelike Englishwomen had come rushing up calling out distractedly in English that the tram must not go, that somebody was coming—Do you see her? Oh, what can have happened? She had the correct information, et cetera—until finally Clara arrived just in the moment of the tram's departure and clambered aboard desperately, not a minute too soon. So that now they stood in the aisles, the four of them, sweating and glowering at the Italian men, who oblivious to such violence had long since comfortably settled themselves in their seats.

Fräulein von J. was placed immediately before Evans looking at him absorbedly like a child. Not knowing what else to do or to say, he too looked (as the tram went through some bare vineyards)

straight back into her clear blue eyes with his evasive dark ones. She lifted her head a little as if startled, flushed (he thought) just a trifle but did not change her gaze. So they continued, to look fixedly among the backs and across the coats of the Englishwomen in the aisle, who were jabbering away disturbedly about the threatening weather. She did not stir to look away but seemed to rest upon his look with mild curiosity and no nervousness at all. It was, as usual, his look which faltered.

Hearing the talk of the Villa this and the Villa that, about to be visited, Evans felt that he wished he could lose this crowd and was more than pleased when Fräulein von J. suggested that as soon as they should get to Frascati they head for the open country, delighted to find that her mood suited his own so well.

At the market place of Frascati, where a swarm of guides and carriages swooped down upon them, the three picnickers moved off at right angles to the direction taken by the rest, up a road that led between two walls around behind the town. They did not know where they were or indeed anything about the place or its beauties—they didn't care. Fräulein wanted to see the Italian springtime, that was the most definite of their spoken desires and Dev, sick of antiquities and architectural beauties, was more than willing to follow. The companion disliked Italian gardens anyway, lacking as they do the green profusion of the northern trees. With this they started, beginning at once to see violets along inside the fences, violets they could not reach. Following a brook which ran beside them, contrariwise down the hill, they tramped on, heading for open country.

What is it like, America? And so Dev began to tell her—Not like this—and all the time somehow he was thinking of his sister. Where is Bess? I wish she were here! till walking and talking, leaving the town behind them, they came quite out into the fields with a hill on the left and a little village off in the distance across the valley before them. They were in a worn dirt gully high hedged on both sides with banks cut into narrow paths by goats' hoofs. Before them four absorbed children gathering violets rushed forward in the path by ones and twos rivalling each other in their efforts to pounce upon the finer groups of flowers.

The children paid no attention whatever to the three hikers,

not even by so much as one glance. Running ahead with cries of delight, each racing to exceed the others, they soon disappeared through gaps in the hedge. Evans was over and over startled by the German girl's delicate colouration and hair and eyes. Also, her hands were lovely, her ankles, firm—like the Venus, thicker than the stage or dance-hall type, but active too—just suggestive enough of the peasant to be like a god's.

You have not told me yet, what it is like, America.

It is like, Dev began, something muffled—like a badly trained voice. It is a world where no man dare learn anything that concerns him intimately—but sorrow—for should we learn pleasure, it is instantly and violently torn from us as by a pack of hungry wolves so starved for it are we and so jealous of each of us is our world.

I think I know what you mean, she replied, it is that we are all good citizens on top and very much better than that inside. It makes me think of the *Johannesfeuer*. You know Sudermann's play?

America is a pathetic place where something stupefying must always happen for fear we wake up. Yes, I have read the play.

By this time they had come quite around behind Frascati hill. Here they had lunch in a diminutive, triangular grove of oaks where there was a grassy bank with a few daisies on it, and the tall trees bending overhead. Then climbing through a fence they took the road again up to the right around the hill climbing steeply now on a stony path. It was a hard walk this part of the way and before long they were tired, especially Frau M. who was glad to stop near the top and rest.

But after a few words in German which Dev missed, Fräulein von J. cried, Come on! and they two went on alone about two hundred yards ahead up to the woody summit, to a place from which they could see Frau M. below them lying under an ash-tree. Here there were a few stones of some ancient construction almost gone under the wood soil and rotted chestnut leaves. It was a chestnut grove cut and counter cut by innumerable paths which led north over the brow of the hill—to Frascati, no doubt. But now at this early season, the place was deserted. The random, long, dart-shaped dry leaves covered the ground all about them,

two foreigners resting on the old stones. Elsa waved to Frau M. from where she sat, then she turned again to Evans, Tell me what you are. You do not mind? I want to know everything. What is America? It is perhaps you?

No, Dev shook his head.

Is it something to study? What will it do? Shall we go there to learn? she asked in rapid succession.

Dev shook his head.

But you will return to it?

Yes.

Why?

Habit.

No, it is something.

It is that I may the better hide everything that is secretly valuable in myself, or have it defiled. So safety in crowds—

But that is nothing. That is the same as in Europe.

America seems less encumbered with its dead. I can see nothing else there. It gives less than Europe, far less of everything of value save more paper to write upon—nothing else. Why do you look at me so? Dev asked her.

Because I have seen no one like you in my life, few Americans, I have talked to none. I ask myself, are you an American?

And if I am—

Then it is interesting.

He said, To me it is a hard, barren life, where I am “alone” and unmolested (work as I do in the thick of it) though in constant danger lest some slip send me to perdition but which, being covetous not at all, I enjoy for the seclusion and primitive air of it. But that is all—unless I must add an attraction in all the inanimate associations of my youth, shapes, foliage, trees to which I am used—and a love of place and the characteristics of place—good or bad, rich or poor.

No, she continued, it is not that.

Evans felt at that moment, that there was very little in America. He wanted to be facetious but the girl’s seriousness was not a thing to be fooled. It made him pensive and serious himself.

He could say—that it was just a place.

But you must not tell me that America is nothing, she anticipated him, for I see it is something, and she looked at him again

with her little smile. You seem to me a man like I have not seen before. This is America?

I am a refugee, Dev continued, America is or was a beginning, to clean out the—

Then, she replied, it is as in Germany. I did not think so when I saw you.

And I, Dev answered, did not think so when I saw you.

Why am I in Rome, do you think? she queried next.

He did not know.

To become a nun.

And with a shock he remembered the German youths in their crimson gowns whom he had seen filing down the Quirinal, down the long steps; the Scotch youths playing soccer in the Borghese Gardens Sunday afternoon with their gowns tucked up, or doffed, garters showing and running like college athletes for the ball. He remembered too, the Americans with the blue edge to their gowns, the Spanish, the French.

Yes, she continued, that is it. I am in Rome to feel if the church will not offer me an answer. I was fourteen years old when the war ended. I have seen the two things—to throw myself away or to take hold again. I have seen the women running in the stadiums, I have seen them together. If we were peasants, we could be nearer—but we must lose it all, all that is good. I am a German, an East Prussian. My mother is dead. My father is a general—of course. What shall I do? I do not want anything—Tell me what is America. You must say. Is it just a place to work?

Dev nodded.

You see that I am young—I am young, of course. You come to me carrying a message. I do not know what to do. I believe you will tell me. I am not a fool—and I am not gifted either. There is nothing for me. Is there? I cannot walk about letting my hair loose to surprise men because it is so yellow. You perhaps, yes, if you please—and she smiled—but not those whom I do not want. I cannot marry. It makes me sick to marry. But I want, I want. I do not care that I am a virgin or not. No. No. That is childish. I cannot remain as I am—but I must—until this (and she tapped her forehead) is satisfied. You have said something to me. What do I say to you?

Dev thought "running wild" that if they should do as he wished they would both end that night in the jail at Frascati hungry and very much disturbed—possibly—but no more than that. Fool.

They speak to me of my body. It is beautiful. For what? Of what use to me?

She talked quite coolly.

Within a few years I must lose this. Why not? and I have nothing else unless it is a mind to have, to have and nothing that I want. Not painting, not music, philosophy, tennis—for old men, for young men, for women? No. America, that seems something new.

You would find nothing in America, Evans quickly interposed. The girls there cannot go half a mile out of town for fear a negro might rape them, or their complexions be spoiled by the weather or the Japanese come too close or they be buried in snow or baked in summer; or they marry their business managers or secretaries and live together two or three in apartments. Their thoughts are like white grass so heavily have they been covered by their skins—and so heavily covered are they to protect them from the weather that when they are uncovered they do not exist. One must snatch another up quickly from the general supply, from a patent container.—Evans was ashamed of this speech of which as a fact Fräulein von J. understood not one word. But the few women he had admired were not pretty and the pretty ones he did not admire.—Never think of America, he concluded. The men are worse than the women.

Are you then one?

Evans had no reply.

When I saw you, I saw something unusual, I am never mistaken. I saw something different from what I see every day, neither throwing away nor taking hold to the old horrible handle, all filthy—Is it America I asked, but you tell me nothing. It is because you will not do so.

America, he began again haltingly, is hard to know.

Yes, she answered, because she had made him serious so that he must speak his mind or say nothing.

I think it is useful to us, he continued, because it is near savagery. In Europe, you are so far from it that maybe you will have to die first before you will live again.—But Dev was not such a fool.—

Europe, I do not know, he corrected himself. I am seeing a few superficial moments only.

But he had a quick pupil.—That is enough, replied Fräulein von J. I see now what I saw at the beginning. You are a savage, not quite civilized—you have America and we have not. You have that, yes it is something.

It is very difficult, said Dev. I am not a typical American. We have a few natives left but they would not know me—

You are holding on to something, she said.

It is very difficult, Dev went on—something very likely to be lost, this is what—So he took out the flint arrowhead he had in his pocket and showed it to her.

She was impressed. She held it hard in her hand as if to keep its impression there, felt the point, the edge, tried it, turned it over.

Yes, she said, I have seen the same thing from our own fields, more finished work—but it is very far, very far. No one believes it is real. But this you carry in your coat? It is very strange. Where did you find it?

In a corn-field in Virginia, there are many of them there.

Are there many Americans who know this that you are saying?

Dev shook his head. I have seen but a few. There are pictures pressed into my mind, which have a great power of argument. Summer pictures mostly, of my part of the country, one of the old pioneer houses fast to the ground. There is nothing like them in Europe. They were not peasants, the people who built them, they were tragic men who wasted their wits on the ground—but made a hard history for me—not for me only, I think; they were like all the earlier peoples but it has been so quick and misplaced in America, this early phase, that it is lost or misinterpreted—its special significance.

You think then it might be useful to—me? Yes, that was what I saw in your eyes.—She looked again. Yes, it is so.

She shook her head gently from side to side in marvelling realization. Come, she said, I was right. What an America is that! Why then did you not look at me all this week? I was troubled. I wondered what was the matter with me.

Dev said he had been excited studying something he wanted among the antiquities.

But a feeling almost of terror, Dev thought, mixed with com-

passion perhaps, came now into her eyes as she continued to look at him.

It must be even more lonesome and frightening in America than in Germany, she said. She shook her head. She seemed as if looking off into a new country and to be feeling the lonesomeness of it.

America is marvellous, replied Dev, grossly prosperous—

She shuddered, No. So were we. So will we be soon again.—She was frightened.—How can you stay where you are? Why do you stay there? You make the church impossible—but you are alone. I will pray for you.

They started to get up quietly from their serious mood and were rather startled to find themselves still in the surroundings of this pagan grove. Not too sure were they that they knew each other as well as they had been feeling they did for the few moments of hard sympathetic understanding just past, projecting themselves out; each feeling, each trying hard, to get at the other's mood. They laughed, and Dev gave her his hand but she did not move away.

It is very difficult, she said, for us to support ourselves after we have passed the semi-consciousness of the peasant, and his instinct. We fall back, do we not? You are brave, she said, to want to find some other way—and one that is American. It seems curious to me.

Moving to rejoin Frau M. they saw that it was getting on into the afternoon and that they must be stepping along if they would be back in Rome by nightfall.

You believe in America like a church, mused Fräulein von J. almost to herself.

Dev did not think so.

Do you believe then that the church is an enemy to your belief?

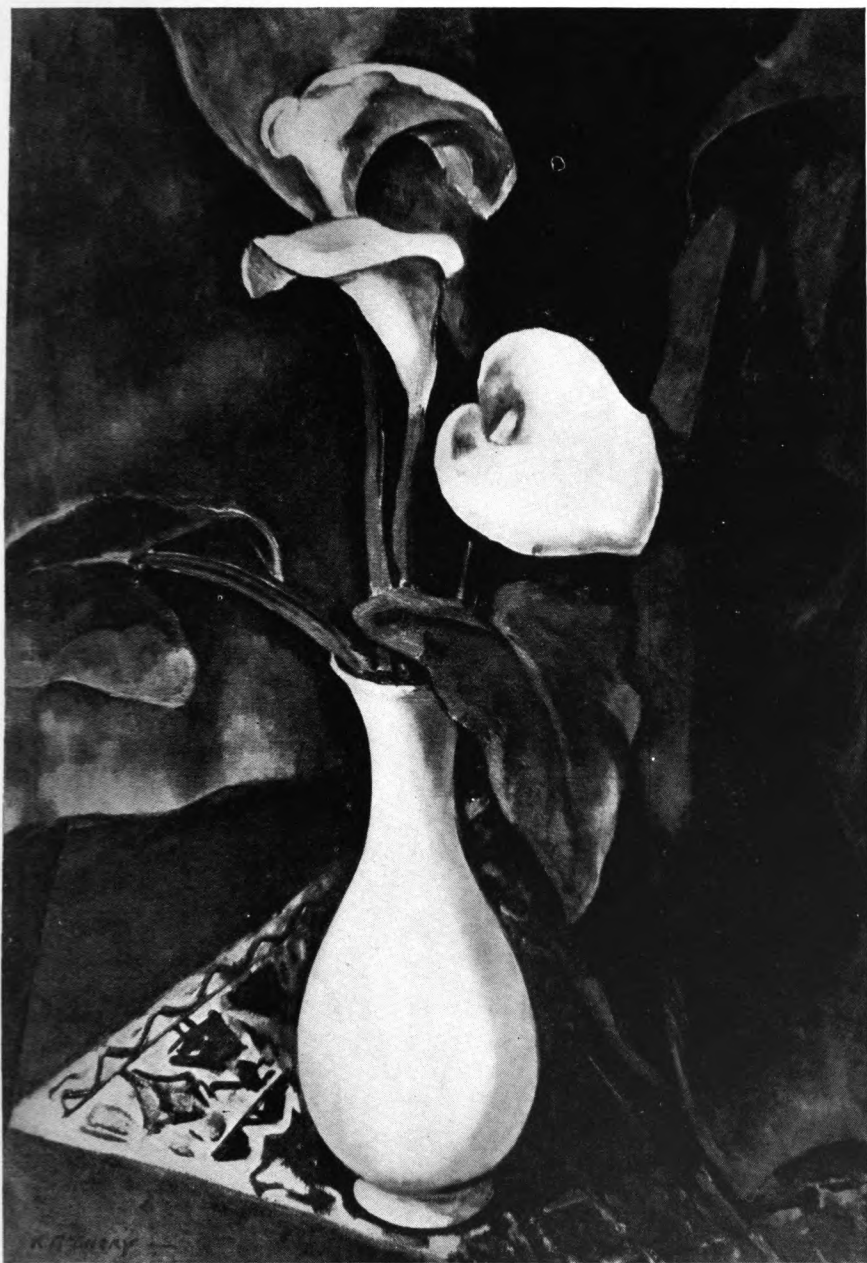
Yes.

She looked away.

Oh come on, said Dev, let's get out of this.



PORTRAIT. BY KATHLEEN McENERY



Courtesy of William H. Holston Galleries

STILL-LIFE. BY KATHLEEN McENERY

THREE POEMS

BY CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN

FOUR O'CLOCK RESOLUTION

I have just discovered
There is a symphony
Of molecules
Even as there is
A music of spheres!
I have just been told
By someone—
I forget whom—
There are ears,
Other than those of men,
Which can hear
Automatically
And without effort
Those harmonies of sound
Inaudible
To men!

Something should be done
About this!

Will not someone—
I don't care who—
Any person of vision—
Please put this
In the form
Of a motion?

TWO BLIND BOYS WALKED TOGETHER

Two blind boys walked together down Eighth Avenue
In their darkness.

One carried a cane in his right hand,

The crooked elbow of his free arm locked tightly
 Like the link of a chain through the crooked elbow-link
 Of the other.

One had once had eyes for seeing.
 He carried his cane jauntily
 Like a gentleman on Easter morning.
 The other had been born with dead eyes,
 Like a mole into a world of unseen shapes.
 His was a crooked right arm curved
 Like a chain link.

As they walked together in step,
 One's mind told him he walked too slowly.
 The other's mind warned he walked
 Too rapidly.

One smiled—a deep, internal, silent smile
 It was—as they paraded down Eighth Avenue
 Past the flaming, sight-arresting window signs
 Along the sidewalk. He had once known colour.
 He had known the spectrum one time.
 His heavy-lidded companion clutched the free arm's elbow
 Desperately. He had never known.
 He trusted.

Two blind boys walked down Eighth Avenue
 Together in their darkness.

I HAVE WET MY FEET IN MANY WATERS

I, who love many things
 But who love wading as I do few other things,
 Have wet my feet in many waters.

Ankle-deep in the lacy fringe,
 The blue of the Atlantic
 I have wandered,

Within my bathing woolens
Like a sandwichman
Between his signs.

From the Cliff House, where surges
Leap high to spray the seals basking on the rocks,
I have followed an old trail
Around the shore, almost to the Presidio,
Because I knew combers burst white,
Boiling with vigour, exploding with riot, at Land's End
Where my feet could dangle in the turmoil.

At the brink of Niagara,
At the trough to oblivion,
I have extended my feet to the water.

At the base of the precipice, at the bottom
Where green masses plunge to crash—
Down, down, deep down—
I have stood on the drenched rocks,
Saturated with rain from the collision of waters.
Five feet from the thunder, I have stood on the rocks
Barefoot.

On rivers and lakes I have ridden in boats,
And straddled the bow, like a figurehead,
My feet dragging against old, old waters,
Little currents eddying between my toes
As between twigs of a fallen tree in a spring flood.

I have wet my feet in many waters.

AN APPROACH TO AMERICA

BY STEWART MITCHELL

DURING the past year M Siegfried, possibly at the will of God, has granted to all intelligent Americans, the pious wish of Burns, with the amusing consequence of general satisfaction at the result. But the immediate aim of this shrewd Alsatian was to explain the United States to France—socially, politically, and commercially—and describe the shift of the centre of “Anglo-Saxon” power from Great Britain into North America. Whatever has been the effect of his old and accurate knowledge of us on the French, the immense sale of the translation of his book has been only a secondary success. The purpose of Mr Morison’s *The Oxford History of the United States*,¹ if not quite parallel, is similar, comparatively: occupant for two years of the visitors’ chair of American history at Oxford, the author found the leisure and perspective he needed for his work, a history of the United States primarily for English readers. The substance of these two volumes is two years of lectures to audiences of English students; the mere American can only feel that Oxford has used the Harmsworth foundation to advantage.

In the first place, the international effect of this history is apt to be important, for however world-wide the British are at building up empires and trade, they can be amazingly insular at reading books—some absurdity like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is more than likely to settle their notions for a generation, and all to the greater confusion of wise men and good women. Even Mr Asquith was for ever being startled by the back-fire of American hostility toward England. It is to be wondered whether a specimen explanation, such as the following, will open any eyes:

“Mr. Roosevelt once remarked that no American, save himself, was free from hereditary bias towards England. That this should be so is puzzling to Englishmen—perhaps their own attitude toward Rome may illustrate it. The Church of England has come out from Rome much as the United States separated from the

¹ *The Oxford History of the United States—1783-1917*. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Two volumes. 10mo. Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$10.

British Empire. In both cases the old association continues to exercise attraction or repulsion. Few members of the Church of England can regard Rome with the same detachment as they do the Orthodox Church, or Islam. Similarly, some Americans worship their English ancestors; others are deeply and unreasonably suspicious of British policy."

If ever the English are to lead captive their captors (and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand must go one way or another some day) they will meditate as Mr Morison, and imitate Sir Auckland Geddes and the Earl of Balfour.

With much of the statement of fact in these volumes the present reviewer is not equipped to quarrel, even if he were to feel so disposed. Many of the errors are obvious to Americans and most of them are unimportant to any one but specialists. Beginning with a survey of the country at the time of the legal separation of 1783, the author carries his story on to the catastrophe of 1917, the land's end of liberalism. From a professional point of view, of course, these books are not well balanced, for they deal largely with persons, with politics, and with wars; no one has said they want interest. Only remoteness over miles of salt water could have steeled a modern historian to the courage of saving so great space for campaigns and characters. Mr Morison's pen-portraits are invariably lucky and long-lived, and his *Battle of the Seven Days*, for example, is the first clear account of that action one of his readers has found, so far.

As to what reviewers are accustomed to call style, Mr Morison is always easy and not infrequently fine—now and then he is even flippant, but seldom except when the treatment of a subject calls for fresh air. And amid all this distinction of language one finds the old-fashioned New England conscience hard at work, repairing reputations ruined unjustly and pulling wooden idols off their pedestals. John Adams, Jefferson Davis, and McClellan deserve to flourish, if only in fame; Webster ought to sit down to his grain of salt with Hamilton and Grover Cleveland, but Aaron Burr still has ground for complaint. This man's "bad press," indeed, is one of the pranks of American history: at the long last he was of more favourable effect than Sumner, for instance. And Lincoln certainly deserves less praise and more discrimination than Mr Morison awards him—he himself would be the first to rub his eyes at a deification not only desperate but dangerous. Even a great man makes a little god.

When the author descends to the market place of social and economic history, he walks through quickly as if he were in a hurry to be home again with his heroes. Just there the comparison with the work of the Beards is interesting: although the points of emphasis are different, neither history is strewn with statistics. Readers are obstinate and sensitive beasts, in spite of what scholars may hope for, and the clatter and clutter of figures bewilders them. A comparison of Arkansas and Michigan between 1836 and 1850, in the second volume, is an excellent example of the art of numbers. Certainly Mr Morison has done his best to avoid that pet vice of the professions, neglecting the amateur for the pleasure of the specialist.

In appearance these two volumes are distinguished, although why the binders of the American edition saw fit to cut down the margins of their issue, remains a mystery. The maps are plentiful, clear, convenient, and instructive; the select bibliography is ample, and the critical comments are economical and accurate. In this business of valuing the scholarship of books by other men, as well as in the text of his own, Mr Morison is pleasantly free of that curious and almost chronic provincialism that has made too much of American history a kind of gospel according to the Yankees. Self-esteem may be a complex in the individual; in whole communities it is invariably a mechanism of defence against suspicion of decay. But only hostile localists obsessed with the importance of other sections of the country, will find any trace of this taint in the Oxford History.

The real charm, the power, perhaps, of this history is the author's sense of the dramatic and his feeling for persons. Not only are three wars followed in detail and with gusto, but the great Congressional debates preceding the Secession are recovered with action and colour; the pages on the Age of Andrew Jackson are filled with all the flourishes and fictions of that time. The phraseology of this book, the epithets, the anecdotes, the incidental remarks, are usually good and not infrequently unforgettable, although here and there some readers may find certain translations into insular English excessively painstaking. Understatement and sarcasm add sophistication to these pages, even if Mr Morison cannot yet equal Mr Channing at the art of putting unpleasant facts politely. Readers can enjoy their week or two with these books; having spent their time well, few will find reason to feel homesick for history.



L'ÉCRASÉ. BY FRANS MASEREEL

ROOTS

BY JOSEPH GAER

THE grass was yellow from lack of rain and beyond the lawn, on the other side of the dilapidated fence, the garden was baking in the heat. If it did not rain soon there would be no tomatoes nor cabbage for the winter, and no corn for the chickens and cows. Anna sighed.

Buster lay at the entrance from the kitchen to the cellar with his eyes closed and his head on the door-step. Anna wished that she too could find a cool spot to rest in, but the white cherries had to be canned or they would spoil. She sat on a low stool before a pail of them, a pail of water, and a large basin. She picked up a handful of cherries, dipped it in the murky water, inspected it hurriedly for wormy fruit, then threw her palm open into the basin.

Buster raised his head suddenly and growled, then rose lazily, and began to bark as he trotted out of the kitchen. From behind the wagon-house beyond the yard, came the crunching sound of light wheels on cinders. Anna rose with difficulty and walked into the yard, wiping her hands on her apron as she waited for her husband to drive up to the house. She could see that David Fishbein was with him, and she came a little nearer to the gate.

"Well, well! I'm back again, Mrs Burnstein," David called from the high seat of the little wagon.

That was his unfailing greeting every year.

"I'm glad you are, Mr Fishbein!" Anna answered and wiped her forehead.

Her husband, Harry, and their yearly visitor, David, got off the wagon and unloaded the packages. Anna held the gate open for them. When they had entered the house, she still remained near the gate looking vacantly at the blue sky shimmering against the horizon. Harry came out of the kitchen with a handful of cherries.

"Any mail?" Anna asked, as she always asked when Harry returned from town.

"No," he replied sulkily, as if she had blamed him for the world's neglect.

Still swinging the cherries into his ready mouth one by one, Harry led away the horse and wagon. Anna returned to her task; now that the work had been broken she hated to resume it; but it had to be done or the cherries would spoil.

David came down into the kitchen from his room upstairs in overalls, a blue shirt, and heavy boots. The first thing he did on arriving for his two weeks' stay on the farm was to change his city clothes for overalls, and he kept on wearing them till he had to leave.

"Whew! It's hot!" he exclaimed as he slumped into a chair near the table.

"Must be awful in New York!" Anna half-asked, half-affirmed, minimizing their discomfort by comparing it with the city's greater discomfort. Then she sighed and added: "Would you like to have something to eat?"

"No, thank you! I had my dinner just before Harry met me at the station."

"Then have some cherries."

David took a few cherries, inspected them as if they were for sale, and began to eat them critically.

"These cherries somehow are never as good as the cherries at home," David remarked.

"At home" meant the little Bessarabian village from which he had come to New York twenty years before.

"No, somehow they aren't," Anna agreed.

"And where are the children?" David asked.

"Ben and Willie are working again in the porcelain factory in town, and Babe is over at the Nieces."

Buster came into the kitchen and settled again in the cellarway, the coolest spot in the house. David looked at him—a shaggy collie—and remarked that he was getting old.

"Just a nuisance," Anna said and yawned.

"And how is Dick?"

"Dick?" Anna raised her eyes, puzzled.

"He was sick when I left last year."

"Oh, that horse is always getting into trouble!" After a pause she added: "He's all right now."

There was nothing else to talk about and they were silent.

David rose and said, "Well, I guess I'll go out and see what the place looks like."

Anna stopped work for a few minutes; her eyes followed him. She knew where he was going. Going to see his trees.

He paused in front of the house and looked down the slope. He noticed that the hay was not yet cut and was pleased, for he liked to cut hay. That was really why he took his vacation early in July. He walked across the familiar farm-yard, observing the untidy woodpile near the brooder-house, then made his way to the little orchard where the trees were.

He had been coming to the farm for his vacation every summer for more than ten years, and once during the third or fourth vacation had planted in the neglected orchard four apple-trees and one pear-tree. He had planted them with his own hands and had carried manure for them from the barn in an old discarded pan. And every day of those two weeks he had watered them with care. They had been planted out of season, but they took root, and three of them, two apples and the pear, had survived the winter. The next year his heart was filled with joy at the sight of the thriving young trees, and after that the place of his summer's rest was determined by immutable law. After helping Anna in the garden, or fixing the pasture fence for Harry, David would come by the little orchard and stop to look at his trees, marvelling at their size. Marvelling as a father might at the realization that his daughters have grown tall and lovely beyond words. When in bloom, Babe told him, they were the prettiest things on earth. David knew he would never see them in May because they didn't cut hay till July and because his employer would not let him go so early. But when the sun went down and Harry went to milk the cows, David would watch the sunset through the branches of his trees. And there he sometimes wondered how it was that in a life where one moment of joy can cause so much regret and one moment of pain can cause one to forget both death and life, there should be so much pleasure in the presence of a tree one calls one's own.

As he walked through the parched weeds and grass he looked at his heavy boots and overalls and thought how good it was to be

away from the store and from dry-goods and from women-customers and the life that was life to him in New York. Suddenly something fell softly on him. He brushed his palm nervously against the back of his neck and noticed a yellow and green caterpillar fall to the ground. Looking up at the nearest tree, he saw huge nests of chrysalises supported at the crutches of the branches, and the twigs heavy with caterpillars. The leaves on the tree were eaten clear through and spotted on the back. He hurried to his own trees and walked around them anxiously. They too had been stricken!

"Hello, Mr Fishbein!" a young voice shouted from the road beyond the orchard.

"Hello, Ethel!" David shouted back and waved his hand.

Ethel, whom the family still called Babe though she was nearly fourteen, came across the field to him. She was a lanky girl with a long neck and small head that made one think of a young camel. And as she walked her bare knees touched each other.

Ethel grinned happily as she came near. To her the arrival of David on the farm was always a great event. During his stay he gave her more attention than she received during the rest of the year. And he always brought her little gifts because she promised to take care of his trees.

"What's happened to the trees?" David asked her.

"No rain," Ethel answered simply. "If we don't have rain soon there's goin' t'be no corn neither. There's goin' t'be hell t'pay, Mr Niece just said."

David looked at his trees, then asked pleadingly, "Is there nothing one can do to save them?"

"I donno."

In the evening visitors came to the house as they always did when they knew of David's arrival. Sam Leibowitz, the tailor, came from town with his entire family, to visit the Burnsteins and welcome their guest. Sam, who was a permanent subscriber to the *Morgen Journal* and often went to New York to make purchases for the little store that he kept in conjunction with his tailor shop, felt greatly superior to the three Jewish farmers of the vicinity. He conversed freely and readily on all world events, and at home in his front room he had a bookcase full of books in

sets. His business in town had succeeded to the extent of a bank account and an automobile, a Buick. Sam felt superior to the Jewish farmers of the vicinity, but his was the only Jewish family in a town hostile to Jews, and he was driven to associate with the farmers. And the farmers associated with him and with each other more out of necessity than from choice. Each in turn found a sufficient cause for feeling superior to the other, that of Aaron Stein, Harry's neighbour, dating back a hundred years to a time when his great-grandfather was a *Rov* (religious leader) in a little village in Poland. When David came, however, they all congregated after the day's work to welcome him.

They were sitting on the wide veranda stairs watching the fire-flies down the slope of the hill where the darkness began to swell like a transparent mist.

"What then, it doesn't rain much in the city neither?" Aaron asked David.

"What a question!" Sam mocked. "If it doesn't rain here it doesn't rain there!"

"I don't know what we'll do if it keeps up much longer," Aaron whistled between his missing teeth. "It's fifteen years now that I've been farming in New Jersey and I haven't seen a summer like this."

"You say that every summer," Sam objected.

"How is your well, Aaron?" Harry asked suddenly.

"Why?"

"Our spring is almost dry," Anna explained.

"If you need water for cooking come and get it," Aaron said sulkily.

"They say there's going to be another war soon between Russia and Japan," said Sam, trying to change the subject. "Now, if there's going to be a fight between the Russians and the Japanese again, it'll be ten times worse than the last war."

"Let them fight. Who cares?" Harry's youngest son, Ben, bit his hard fingernails and added: "If you had taken my advice last year, Dad, and dug an artesian well you wouldn't have to worry about water every summer."

Harry did not reply.

Anna rose from the steps with difficulty and entered the house to prepare tea and jam. The heat and the day's work had sapped

the energy from her worn body. All she wished was to lie down. But she had to offer tea and jam to her guests. She always did when they came to visit.

"Who wants tea on a hot night like this?" Sarah Leibowitz protested in her shrill voice. But the men filed into the large front room and seated themselves awkwardly around the large table. The smell of manure and varnish mingled with the broken talk of farm-problems as they drank hot tea. Aaron wiped his heavy brown moustache and handed his empty cup to Anna without a word. How she hated to get up and go to the kitchen again. But these were her guests.

David listened eagerly to the talk. Only the night before, he reflected, he had been sitting in his uncle's house in the Bronx listening to a lecture on marriage by his Aunt Rivkah. He had heard it so often it made no impression. He was glad to be away from home and from those lectures.

The talk around the table had turned on Jerusalem.

"I'd like to go there myself," said Sam with enthusiasm.

"What would you do in Palestine? Farm?" Aaron asked.

"Why should I farm? Do I farm here?" Sam's feelings were hurt. "Do you think all the Jews that go to Palestine go there to farm? If they all farmed they would have to go naked and barefoot. If we are going to rebuild Palestine, don't think it will be like it used to be! We'll make it the most modern place in the world. Only the other day I read in the paper how they are trying to put electricity all through Palestine."

"Palestine or no Palestine," said Ben and yawned, "I'm going to bed." And he went upstairs.

That was a signal for the others. Sam and his family were the last to leave. Finally the glaring eyes of his Buick swept the blackness of the entire horizon as it turned around the yard towards the road to town. Harry, Anna, and David stood near the gate watching the car leave the yard. A faint breeze rose. Harry wetted one finger and raised it above his head.

"It's from the east," he said. "I hope it'll bring rain."

David was the first to wake the next morning—disturbed by the cackling of chickens and crowing of roosters. He dressed lazily and went downstairs. Although the sun had barely risen,

the dense hot air was already hard to breathe. With Buster trailing behind, he sauntered to the orchard and walked around his trees like one visiting a sorrowing friend. The leaves teemed with insects and he noticed the trunk of the pear-tree was injured at the base where brownish sap had thickened on the wound. He walked away with lowered head, his hands clasped on his back. When the chickens saw him coming they raced expectantly to meet him.

"Why did you get up so early?" Harry asked as he came out of the house, blinking in the glare of sun.

"I just couldn't sleep!"

"Well, I think I'll be cutting hay to-day," Harry said, knowing how anxious David was to run the mower and the rake.

"That's good!" David responded eagerly, in anticipation of the fragrant work. But at breakfast, after Ben and Willie had gone, Anna reminded Harry that they were nearly out of water for the kitchen.

"Better drive over to Aaron's," Anna suggested.

"I'd rather get it from town," Harry said, and went to harness Dick into the flat wagon.

David gathered the rusty milk cans that were used in dry summers for water, and scoured them thoroughly.

"If you want to wash the cans better wait until you get to town," Anna reproached him amiably.

When they came to town they stopped to ask Sam Leibowitz if the paper predicted rain. Then they filled the cans with fresh water and started for home. By the time the water was put away in the shed near the kitchen and the horse unharnessed and watered, it was noon and Harry was tired. He decided to put off the hay-cutting. The next day, he hoped, would not be so hot.

But the next day was as hot, if not hotter. A week passed with the heat rising, it seemed. The hay was cut. Too little, Harry said, to be worth the bother. And mostly weed at that. But David enjoyed the cutting and raking; and the coat of tan that he took back each vacation was already tinting his face and neck. They went for water twice, and David helped to devise an ice-box made of rags and boxes. One evening he visited the Jewish neighbours, and there, over tea and jam, heard again their complaint against the Lord. Deep within him David felt a pleasing contentment—

contentment that he was dependent on an employer who paid with checks each week, rain or no rain.

David asked Harry whether the heat might kill the trees.

"To the devil with them! I'm worried about the corn!" Harry said with anger, and David never mentioned the trees again.

Every drop of water that was used Anna watched like a miser, and emptied the slop-pail on the plants in the garden. Once David found himself carrying the pail of used water to his trees. Then as he distributed it, instead, amongst the too numerous tomato plants he felt the joy of being unselfish and good. And the feeling persisted for a day or two.

The cloudless days continued until one morning the sky was overcast and Anna was radiant with the hope of rain. "Thank God," she said, "if it rains now it'll not be too late for the corn and the garden."

It did not rain all day and the following morning the ground was as dry as it had been. But the humidity had increased and the clouds were darker. David came down to breakfast in his city clothes and Anna and Harry looked at him as if he were already far away. He seemed to personify the city to them, the city that in envy they vaguely blamed for all their misfortunes on the farm.

After breakfast Harry brought the wagon to the door and the two men, with Babe between them on the seat, hurriedly drove to town. There David treated Babe to ice-cream and bought a box of candy for her.

"Here," he said softly, "and let me know how the trees do after the rain."

A drizzle began to spray the windows as the train raced through wide stretches of parched land. David had a newspaper in his hand, but his eyes were on the dwarfed corn in the fields, and the dreary squat farm-yards, and the distant trees that swerved by slowly with the passing of the train. The monotonous thudding of the wheels lulled the passengers to brooding silence. David looked calmly at the changing scene outside. The rain might last and the trees be saved. The trees might be saved, he thought calmly, but not with indifference.



THE ARTIST AND THE COWS. BY RUDOLF GROSSMANN

IMAGE AND AFTER-IMAGE

BY S. FOSTER DAMON

Broad sea—broad sky—
The sole perpendicular is I.
Silence . . . but for the thin, incessant
Sparkle and hiss on the long crescent
Of beach that ends, as it began,
Without one single trace of man.

Then I, too, will be naked of
All civilized appurtenances!
The only eye is the sun above:
Off, clothes! from my suppressed physique!
—O gigantic winds of these huge expanses,
Vast air-serpents writhing across the sea,
Come! cool these yet un-sunburned curves.
Stripped, one is almost something Greek.
(If one could but strip as easily
From one's temperament the modern nerves!)

Nothing in Nature ever rankles;
Yet a faint breeze responds. I stand
On this rock that juts out like a shelf
Just under water, and feel the bland
Tide lifting and sinking about my feet.
But look—! wavering from my ankles
The scattered image of myself
Flaps and bulges incomplete;
Knees knock and bandy, head swells to rings,
Corrupting the surface of the sea
With visionary anatomy
In most unGreek foreshortenings;
While bits of sun skip round its head,
Dancing nimbly, higher and higher,

MODERN DRAMA¹

BY WALDO FRANK

THE way of modern drama which is the way of *us*, grows intricately varied. Man is naked. His new inventions, physical and social, cover but do not allay his spiritual loneliness. His quest of principles and powers to make him whole . . . as Catholic Europe had once made him . . . drive him to many attitudes, credos, "isms": and most of them find expression of a sort in the drama. One manifest "way" is the "way back"—the return. Races and nations, thrown upon themselves, seek to recover health in re-experiencing their own mythic childhood. From Schiller to Hugo and Wagner and the modern folk theatres, this romantic necessity is potent; Rousseau's eulogy of natural man gives it its rationale. But in Germany and France, the return is sophisticated by modern doctrines. Perhaps the purest drama of return comes out of Ireland, where John M. Synge wondrously succeeded in the recapture of a people's ethos. We are, of course, considering the drama as an art. The basis of art is order. But order is a whole. Art is a realization in experience of this need of man: the need of order in the multiplicity of sense. Our word *universe* expresses how universal this need is. Man does not say multiverse; man's first experience is of a one which he calls "I": his highest is also of a One which he calls God or Being. These unities are synthetic: they consist of many matters even in the simplest concept. And they are of many kinds. The scientific order or whole is of the mind; the aesthetic order is of the feeling, experiencing person; the religious whole is both of these, caught up into an integration wherein man must act his part, thereby becoming whole or (the same thing) holy. Now, this return which Synge achieved, since it was art, could be no mere sensory reminiscence, no intellectual concept. Synge has effectually withdrawn from the modern chaos into the entirety of the experience of a folk who live entirely in an archaic world. In *Riders to the Sea*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *In The Shadow of the Glen*, et cetera, a universe exists: it has its own gods, customs, sureties, laws, sci-

¹ A selection from an essay on the modern drama to appear in *The New World Series* edited by Professor Baker Brownell of Northwestern University.

ences, and problems. It is a universe in a pocket, a little lake off from the currents of the modern world. And its apartness betokens the onrushing Stream. In no age, where the waters of life are mastered and hence navigable, will there be an art so perfectly aloof as this. But since it is an art—an organic whole—it microcosmically gives an essence of ourselves.

Another instance of this method of salvation is the neo-Gothic drama of Paul Claudel. France is the land where the Mediaeval Synthesis came to most harmonious fruition. Its place, midway between the south and the north, each with its dissident forces that the architects of Christian Europe could not absorb, is symbol of this centrality. Gothic which is the art of the Mediaeval Whole was known as the *ars francorum*. Now, Claudel makes a return to the gothicism which lives in his blood, even as the folk-lore of Erin lived in the blood of Synge. His plays are a return to no sweet ethos straight as a flame in a still dawn, but to an intricate cosmos; to a world which Christ and Paul, Augustine and Francis, Bouillon and Abelard and Aquinas, Gregory and Palestrina wove into a counterpoint as wondrous as the Paradisal white of Dante, in which all colours find haven and surcease. Claudel's language is elaborate as the groinings of a cathedral; his mood recaptures the tones of the *rosace* filtering through transept and dark-carved choir. His action is a dark return, writhing and passionately wilful, to the womb of an old Mother. And here again, as with Synge, the perfectly aloof is a function of the modern chaos. In the true days of the Gothic, there was no drama like Claudel's; in the days of the kings of Aran, no word like Synge's. These are dramas not of a great Past nor of the simple peasants who project it: they are dramas of the present *returning into the past*.

In a cultural chaos such as that in which the Christian Synthesis of Europe was released, values of the individual and of the personal will become enhanced, precisely because the individual, now undefended within the social Body, is endangered. Art, too, will move toward the creating of microcosmic and of special wholes. The personal integer will be relied on, the solitude of the soul will

be ennobled. Social arts will suffer, and the more purely lyric forms will flourish. Architecture and drama are social arts. As they cannot be made alone, to satisfy one man, so their themes are not amenable to romantic action. The architect must build in harmony with his client, with his workmen, with the standards of his city. Lacking such concord, his art suffers—as it has suffered since four centuries in Europe. The playwright, also, must live within the sympathetic context of craftsmen (producers, actors, scene-painters) and must possess an audience so attune with himself that it accepts the premises of his art which in two hours must complete its structure. The greatest drama has been produced in times where the story could be taken for granted: where its content was a common cultural possession. The selective groups which gathered under the tutelage of Louis XIV of France were the last instance of such support. Already with Molière and Racine, the public had grown discordant. Wanting such conditions of health, conceptual and social, the drama, like a disequibrated and ill-nourished body, has fallen prey to external forces, even as the unhealthy body is invaded by bacilli and eccentric habits.

The drama is a pure but complex form of art, in which the *word* is the seed and the flower of the entire action. Its materials are varied: dance, music, plastic forms may be among them. Indeed, the foundation of drama must be a counterpoint of bodily movements. But the word is the culmination of them all, the synthesis of all the life organized in the art. And this will continue to be the case, so long as it is the case with human beings: so long, that is, as men *speak* rather than sing or paint or dance, in articulation, communication, consummation of their social being. Where the word is ousted from this culminant place becoming either a “thing in itself” as in the “closet drama” or a subsidiary value, *there is a disease of drama*. Such maladies were rife in the nineteenth century and, as is often found in illness, the patient was not conscious that he was sick. Other arts, whose use in drama was traditional but mediary, came to the fore and captured almost autocratic powers. Imperious in these dislocations was the work of Richard Wagner. The decadence or isolation of the word is not mysterious; precisely because the word is the flowering synthesis of the play’s organic action, a failure of wholeness will invalidate the word. Why music above all grew aggressive, invading not

drama alone but poetry and painting is a consideration which would lead us astray from the strict pattern of this essay. It suffices to present the clue: the immediate subjectivity and abstract objectivity of music. A world dispossessed of its laws and forms will revert to the subjective logic of the soul, and to the last objective surety of mathematics. Music is an aesthetic union of these two satisfactions salvaged from chaos. Thus, with Wagner, drama became Music Drama. The painters, too, stormed the dwindled centre. Adolph Appia, Gordon Craig, were men of genius who profited by the divided state of drama to divert the invalid into means for plastic presentation. These invaders had two general effects. They did not "kill" the drama; indeed its condition was responsible for their invasion. And in the end, they enriched it. If in the nineteenth century, the drama as pure art appeared to sink under the titanic influence of Wagner, he brought to the form fresh materials and concepts which later men were to transmute and naturalize. His revival of such normal means as the chorus, the dance, the song; his use of historical, mythic, and above all, symbolic stuffs was a treasury of freedom for dramatists who followed. Likewise the scene-painters, although they denatured the drama into mere spectacle or pantomime, served to enrich the palette of both action and actor.

The most significant invader was the *thesis*. The drama became analytic. It made an analysis of life into certain selected elements, instead of synthesizing all elements into life. It became reflective, instead of creative. Consciously, even proudly, it abandoned the realm of creative form, to mirror a torn world. State, church, business, art, science, ethics, politics, entertainment went each its way: and this diathesis was encouraged, instead of being creatively corrected, in the theatre. The disease is already evident in both Ibsen and Wagner, in their too central stress of thesis and idea. Their organic form, however, still absorbed the concept, which, of course, has its place *in* drama as a legitimate part of life. The lessons and symbols of Ibsen seem to us of slight importance, save in so far as, like the handkerchief of Desdemona, they inform the action. We are not thrilled by the Wagnerian doctrine of the *Leitmotif*, when the music is good: we forget readily enough the romantic ideology of the "marked man"—the individual soul with stigmata on his brow that is subtly transformed from Rousseau, Chateaubriand,

and Byron into the Wagnerian symbol. As however, in other men, the organizing genius grew more feeble, such presences began to swarm, to invade, and to denature. Drama became a stricken body on which parasites of "*Tendenz*" battered.

The world which had been One, when religion, science, logic, state, and law *lived together*, was crudely divided into two vast Camps: the one of nature or science which was mechanistic, the other of man which was poetic, an ideal personal flux of colours and emotions. Each Camp arrogated to itself the entire truth and strove to absorb the other. Mechanistic science tried to swallow man, individual and social. Human idealism, with such aids as the romantic movement and the subjectivist epistemology of the Germans, struggled to swallow nature and science by its proof that only logic and dream were real. Drama became involved in this bootless conflict. It became Naturalism—a serf of scientific facts, or it became Symbolism—an anarch of immediate impressions. Allowing no truth upon the other side, each side remained a fragment and produced no master. The naturalists took, as their material, facts denatured of life; the symbolists distilled vagaries of the mind too remote from flesh and blood to be organic. Both schools took much from Ibsen—and with a like distorting of his whole. The naturalists were pleased to find that he depicted sordid and humble family relations: squalor and misery became, because of the Rousseau-istic cult of Demos, the norm for human nature. The symbolists overlooked the body of his work, even as the naturalists his spirit, and were pleased to recall Ibsen's romantic and vaguely mystic symbology of objects.

There proceeded an output of maimed art, in which, because of the false premise, much genius was vaporized or stifled. André Antoine founded his Théâtre Libre, Lugné-Poë his Maison de l'Oeuvre, in Paris. Although the former was associated with the Naturalism of Zola, the latter with the Symbolism of Ibsen, these two remarkable theatres which revived the traditional life departed from the Théâtre Français, served both schools; under Antoine, for instance, evolved François Curot, the French Ibsen. One Parisian

dramatist of genius worked in the Naturalists' mould: Henry Becque, whose plays *Les Corbeaux* and *La Parisienne* had such potency of line, such solidity of colour, that one marvels at what this artist might have done, had he been nurtured by an integral tradition instead of by a schism. In Germany, Naturalism was soon running rampant: since it was but a nether side of the Romantic movement, this was to be expected. Gerhardt Hauptmann produced his Naturalist masterpiece, *Vor Sonnenaufgang* in 1889, and oscillated with ease between this form and its reverse. There could have been no Symbolist movement, without the doctrines of Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Novalis, Fichte. Sensory impressions were to be modelled into personal creations, for the ideal alone was true, and man was solitary in a universe of his own making. To this, add the value of strangeness in a world where the individual was "lost"; tincture with the conclusion that, since the apparent is not real, the stuff of art should be as unapparent as it can be; and you have the ingredients with which France produced the masterworks of the Symbolistic drama. The *Axël* of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the early plays of Maurice Maeterlinck, the *Pelléas et Mélisande* of Claude Debussy, *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* by Stéphane Mallarmé attest the quality of this movement which, of course, produced its equivalents in painting. William Butler Yeats, refracting the folk-lore of his land, carried the cause into Ireland: his *Cathleen ni Hoolihan* is a good instance. The dramatic essence can be well scrutinized in the best work of Maeterlinck: *La Princesse Maleine*, *Les Aveugles*, *La Mort de Tintagilles*. When the first of these appeared, the Naturalistic writer, Octave Mirbeau, hailed a successor to Shakespeare. We have reacted from such excessive praise into an unjust depreciation. Maeterlinck's best works have the exact quality of fine perfume and a form, not more organic than a song's, but no less luminous. They bespeak an exquisite nostalgia for the sources of life, as a soul, stripped by the mechanolatry of science, confused and poorly nourished by the vast Hegelian compensations, would be moved to enact them.

This split into two great opposing Camps of course is but a symptom of the classic dualism of the western world.

PROTHALAMIUM

BY A. J. M. SMITH

Here in this narrow room there is no light;
The dead tree sings against the window pane;
Sand shifts a little, easily: the wall
Responds a little, inchmeal, slowly, down.
My sister, whom my dust shall marry, sleeps
Alone, yet knows what bitter root it is
That stirs within her: see, it splits the heart—
Warm hands grown cold, grown nerveless, as a fin,
And lips enamelled to a hardness—
Consummation ushered in
By wind in sundry corners.

This holy sacrament was solemnized
In harsh poetics a good while ago—
At Malfi and the Danish battlements,
And by that preacher from a cloud in Paul's.
No matter: each must read the truth himself,
Or, reading it, reads nothing to the point.
Now these are me, whose thought is mine, and hers,
Who are alone here in this narrow room,
Tree fumbling pane, bell tolling,
Ceiling dripping and the plaster falling,
And Death, the voluptuous, calling.

AURELIA'S EYES

BY AZORIN

Translated From the Spanish by Katie Lush

CESTONA is an elegant, fashionable, comfortable hotel; Urberuaga is a sanatorium. One might say that Cestona with its wide, symmetrical corridors like salons, is like a modern Jesuit college; while Urberuaga, with its narrow, winding, calcimined, low-ceilinged passages is like a modest Franciscan convent. Each watering-place is similarly situated—in the hollow of a valley; but in Urberuaga the valley is narrower, the stream more impetuous, the chestnut-trees smaller; and an undefined foreboding, a vague oppression—mere prejudice at first—lays hold of you as you reach the door. But force yourself, pretend you have an easy mind, shake off the presentiment, cross the threshold.

Architecturally the building is a congeries of additions, pavilions built on as the years went by and the need arose. The principal block of buildings stands in a little hollow; four steps lead down to it. . . . Now we stand before the door; come with me into the narrow *zaguán*. Behind it is a long, bare passage ending in a space divided by three columns. . . . Here is a small door opening into the crypt in which a crystal-clear thread of living water springs from earth. A few steps further on we find a small salon furnished with divans and containing plants in tubs. We cross a *patizuelo*, find ourselves in another corridor and emerge in another vestibule; here we find the postal-bureau, the office of the medical superintendant and long show-cases full of trinkets and odds and ends. Further still: another salon and another long passage take us to the "pulverization rooms" and vapour baths. . . . We retrace our steps; again we go through pump-room, medical office, postal-bureau, and along the passage we first traversed, in search of the stairway that will take us to the upper story. Arrived there we find ourselves in a narrow corridor lined with small doors; the floor is of hardwood, waxed and shining; a narrow trail of reflected light

loses itself in the distance; our nostrils are assailed by the scent of fresh, aromatic country herbs, of chloride of ether. Why not walk along the passage? Do you know anything pleasanter than to explore a strange house? Do you know a more agreeable sensation than that of surprising one by one, things and actions you are unaccustomed to and that now leap to your eyes?

This passage leads to another. Turn to the right; cross a short salon with a glass door; go up a few steps and you will find yourself at one end of a wide landing facing more stairs which you must descend in order to reach a spacious salon with divans set all round the walls, mirrors on which landscapes are painted, and an upright piano, its red back standing out vividly from the background. Is this enough? Have you achieved a synthetic perception of this new *milieu*? All these corridors, all these landings, all these halls, are silent, deserted; the floors shine; the walls appear calcimined. Now and again, through the silence, you hear a short, dry cough perhaps, or a long, hard cough. And you are conscious of something intimate in the atmosphere, something deeply provincial, something in the network of rooms and passages with floors on different levels, something in the simplicity of the furniture, in the height and depth of the beds, in the frank, simple manners of the servants, in the true simplicity of the cooking. . . . You—and I—are in the mood to savour all these so Spanish particulars. In a little while, when you have been in the place another hour, your palate will be fully satisfied. For you will by then have perceived that the air you breathe is not only profoundly provincial, but is also—the logical, necessary consequence of this—saturated with a dreamy, melancholy romanticism. You have heard of the virtue of these waters, surely? You know that sick “aesthetes” (in the literal meaning of the word) crowd to these springs, do you not? And would you deny the intimate connexion between pallor, dark circles under the eyes, slenderness, and an infinite, tragic despair? If you love these romantic provincial girls, so gentle, so sad, so delicate, so imaginative, girls who weep and sigh and plunge suddenly from joy to grief, who keep at the bottom of some box a faded photograph and letters bearing the stamp of some café or *fonda*, who tend some climbing plant and play the Funeral March of a Marionette on the piano, who read Campoamor and Bécquer from a volume held

in the folds of a newspaper, who flash a glance in a mirror to see whether they have lost their looks, who, on dark winter days, watch from behind a blind the passing of a stranger, a gallant perhaps who will revolutionize their lives . . . If you love such girls, come to Urberuaga. There I knew Eulalia, Juanita, Lola, Carmen, María, Enriqueta. And, above all, there I saw the wide, vague, sad eyes of Aurelia.

"What do you do with yourself, Aurelia?" I heard a young man who was dancing with her ask last night.

"Nothing," she replied; "I watch the water of the river . . ."

Aurelia leans over the railing of the bridge in one of those elegant attitudes of absorption and abandonment in which Gavarni loved to place, on a terrace in a garden, or leaning on the arm of a sofa, the pale, delicate ladies of 1850. Aurelia is looking at the quiet waters of the river; but her absorbed, fixed eyes do not see the quiet waters of the river. Her figure is silhouetted, foreshortened against the pale sky of twilight.

This is the hour the highway claims from visitors to the springs; but you will not conform to their invariable usage. Behind the sanatorium, close to the stream, there is an extensive poplar-grove. It is to this your footsteps turn. The ground is carpeted with fine turf, one slope is covered with chestnut-trees, the other with low, stumpy apple-trees that bend their boughs over the water. Three, four lines of poplars divide this grove into wide avenues. The trunks of these trees are slender, straight, graceful; the foliage begins at a considerable height from the ground, so that you pass through this leafy place as through an intricate maze of columns sustaining a great green arch. And when you are tired of wandering about, you sit for a while on the river bank near a wide pool. Water-spiders skate about over the water in intermittent dashes, their four legs extended, quick and voluble. Now they go forward rapidly, now stop and turn about suddenly, violently. And each of their movements makes a circle in the water that joins or intersects other circles, sketching a capricious, momentary arabesque.

But night is coming on. You must go back to the sanatorium. A bell has just been ringing persistently. You pass again through the ground-floor passages and go upstairs again to the main floor. The lights have been lit and the long reflection on the polished

wood, like a narrow band of quicksilver, loses itself in the distance. A low murmur of voices, as of a humming, tuneful choir, reaches your ears; in the chapel the visitors are saying, as each evening they say, the Rosary. Then, with this mystic chanting in your ears, you go along the corridor and notice for the first time the old-fashioned, charming bells that hang over the doors, venerable ancestors of our mad electric bells. This tiny detail has already sufficed to plunge you in a dream of far-off romance. What more do you require? But the decisive thing is still to come. After supper go to the drawing-room for a moment. Here you find Juanita, Lola, Carmen, Enriqueta, Eulalia, you find the wide, sad eyes of Aurelia that gaze absorbed, unseeing, at the landscape on a fan. A few long, resonant notes are struck on the piano, and all these pretty, pale girls rise, go to the centre of the room, advance and retire slowly, take hands for a moment, retire again with courtly curtseys; dance, in fine, one of those sleepy Lancers that our mothers and grandmothers used to dance in their full skirts. Sentiment, and dreams have their way with you now. The company asks María to sing for them; María protests, smiles archly, becomes serious, coughs, and at length begins a languid, melancholy, plaintive song.

As you go away your soul is charged with an indefinable emotion. The passages are silent. You hear, perhaps, a distant sudden cough, short and dry, or long and persistent. You go to bed and sleep; to dream of the wide, dreaming eyes of Aurelia, to imagine you feel the faint beginnings of love—that last absurdity, that last delusion.

GERMAN LETTER

Munich

June, 1928

OF Dürer, the four hundredth anniversary of whose death we are commemorating in Germany, I cannot think without reverting as well to the pure and exalted name of Nietzsche, who so epitomizes our history and our future that his name evokes in us at once the profoundest memories and the highest hopes. It was through Nietzsche that I was first enabled to behold with sympathy and perception the world of Dürer, to grasp it emotionally. For youth, naturally averse to history, can scarcely approach the archaic but by way of the modern which does not instruct us in the past but illuminates it for us. Does the Nuremberger's name occur in Nietzsche? I could not say. But when he speaks of Schopenhauer, on whose authority Wagner was encouraged to strengthen his feminine art by a principle of asceticism; when he says: "What does it signify that a real philosopher should embrace the ascetic ideal, a truly self-dependent intellect like Schopenhauer, *a man and knight with eyes of bronze, who has the courage of his own identity, who knows how to stand alone and does not look first for predecessors and for hints from superiors?*"—what has he in mind; or if he is thinking of something else, what does he mean by this unusually precise and detailed description of moral spontaneity and manliness? Would one be wrong in writing on the margin of this passage the name of Dürer? It would be well to add the laudatory verses with which Goethe, notwithstanding occasional classicistic disapproval of "turbid form and groundless fancy," characterizes Dürer's art, speaking of its solidity and manliness, its strength and steadfastness:

*"Ihr festes Leben und Männlichkeit,
Ihre innere Kraft und Ständigkeit."*

Dürer, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner—here, in one "place," with two marginal notes, we should have it all at once: an entire nodus of destiny, a constellation, a world, the German

world, with the ambitious dramatization of itself, its magical and intellectualistic disintegration, coming last. Yet not last—for side by side with the great prestidigitator and conjurer, stands the conqueror and seer; coexistent with the play-actor of the myth is the myth itself—heroic and sacrificial, prophetic of a new and higher mankind.

But as for the intellectual premises and origins of the ethical tragedy in Nietzsche's life, of this deathless European drama of self-conquest, self-discipline, and self-crucifixion, with the expiatory destruction of the mind as a heart-rending and brain-rending consummation—where is such to be found if not in the protestantism of the Naumburg pastor's son, if not in that moralistic atmosphere (Nordic, German, bourgeois, typically Dürer) which is exemplified in the engraving Knight, Death, and Devil, which remains—through all Nietzsche's migrations—the native region of his soul? "I like in Wagner," he writes in 1868 to Rohde, "what I like in Schopenhauer: the ethical quality, the Faustian element—cross, death, and tomb." About the same period, at Basel, he heard the Saint Matthew's Passion three times during the week of Easter. . . . Cross, Death, and Tomb! They compose a further ingredient of the Dürer, Germanic mentality. Arms are crossed devoutly, with "manliness and steadfastness," as knighthood maintains itself between death and devil, through Passion, the smell of the crypt, sympathy with suffering, Faustian melancholia—and again the same thing can be an idyllic domiciled piety—a receptive peace—while the sun prints the bottle-glass design of window upon wall, imparting warmth to the death's head upon the sill, and an humble and restricted mind is kept responsive to greatness and the sense of eternity by hour-glass and reclining lion. . . .

What else? What more in the world, and what is it, but love, remembrance, norm, canon, moulding career and character as they descend through a line of masters and are embodied within us all? The *graphic* German: for the *love* of the German artist, plastic or verbal, pertains to delineation, not colour. Then also! much that is magnificent and much that is chaste, much that is proud and much that is hard of acceptance, both aspects evident to all. Is this not the fountain-head of *masterliness* itself, the noblest idea that we possess as a nation, the highest and most honoured, and the one that contributes most towards *unity*? For what rank,

power, honour, or brilliancy would take precedence in the German mind over the homely and subtly majestic ways of the "Master"? And in what could people of various opinions reach fuller agreement, even to-day, than in that idea of integrity, of loyalty to work, of authenticity, of maturity in living and art, of moral and intellectual leadership, which is subsumed under the concept of "Master"? The term combines respectability with that trait of audacity which Goethe ascribes to every artist. Industry here becomes depth, and accuracy greatness. Patience and heroism, dignity and uncertainty, traditionalism and insistence upon the unforeseen all commingle to form a unit. Ah, and what inadequacy—ethnic, innate, inherited from prehistory—what angular clumsiness, is not present in this eternity-ridden world of German art, with its antinomies of disorder and precision, metaphysics and vague meditation, childishness and age, scurrility and demonicism, ashamed yet outspoken? Philistinism and pedantry, strenuous plodding, self-torment, exacting calculation—all unified with that absoluteness, insatiability, and high necessity which courage brings to fruition: this refusal to spare oneself in anything, this inviting of the last difficulty, this willingness to see a work ruined and made unfit for others rather than allow it in any particular to fall short of its utmost.

To think of Dürer is to love, to smile, to remember. Such remembrance implies all that is deepest and most impersonal, all that lies beyond and under the corporeal boundaries of our ego while yet determining and nourishing it. Dürer is history as myth, history which is always present and incarnate. For we are individuals far less than we hope or fear to be.

THOMAS MANN

BOOK REVIEWS

DISSECTING ANGUISH

CHILDREN AND FOOLS. *By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by Herman George Schef-fauer. 12mo. 264 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.*

THE process by which one comes to know an author, or that part of him which appears in his books, is exactly the process by which one comes to know a person in the flesh. One moves from one impression to another; he is this to-day, and that to-morrow; at first he seems predominantly sad, later one finds that this sadness conceals an undercurrent of irony or secret glee; his face is immobile, but one discovers that his talk is full of emotional or affective overtones; or one moves forward from a first impression of copiousness to a second one of essential thinness. And by slow evolution, all these separate impressions fuse in one image. The glee is added to the sadness, the thinness to the copiousness, the mysterious hint to the impassivity. One acquires a single image, in which, if the first magic of mystery is lost, one finds a kind of definite consolation in the fact that it now quite clearly seems to belong to a category.

The present reviewer's acquaintance with Thomas Mann, or his books, has been of that sort. It has been kaleidoscopic, confused, directionless, delicious. *Buddenbrooks* created the first image—solid, distinct, forthright, almost of the Arnold Bennett order. A four-square three-decker, but with a German, or Gothic, distortion. *Death in Venice*¹ broke this image, precisely as a dropped pebble breaks an image in a surface of water. This was something new—here was an affective overtone not experienced before. What, exactly, was this added something? As before, the story was simple and direct and naturalistic. The secondary characteristics were all, apparently, of the realistic school, if one may be permitted so loose a term. But decidedly there was something else. On the surface, everything was clear and simple and distinct. The

¹ Published in *THE DIAL*, March, April, May, 1924.

story—what there was of it—moved with no subterfuges to its tragic and quiet climax. And nevertheless, there was this queer something else, this nameless undertone, deep and melancholy, which gave the story a different quality, and gave the author, in one's memory, a new reputation. Perhaps the easiest epithet for this added quality is "poetic." If one had felt this in the earlier work, here and there, one had forgotten it in the prevailing sense of the real, or (as Henry James preferred to call it) the actual. But in *Death in Venice*, this became the dominant tone; the poetic or allegorical quality was precisely what one most remembered afterward. One remembered a tone, a haze, a vague disquieting tapestry effect, as of the smoke from autumnal burnings of leaves; an atmosphere heavy and *charged*; a feeling of that kind of poetic counterpoint which was habitual with Poe and Hawthorne. The tale was deep, melancholy, almost (in a sense) horrible. Beauty and horror were met, here, in a kind of balance.

The *Magic Mountain* moved one's general impression back again toward *Buddenbrooks*, but not all the way. Is one perhaps right in calling this enormous novel a kind of "secondary" masterpiece? It resembles *Buddenbrooks* in its leisure, its copiousness, its massive employment of circumstance. It differs from it in a slight dislocation toward what one might call the spiritual. This again is a three-decker: one of the finest examples of the really "exhaustive" novel which the present generation has given us. But it moves away from *Buddenbrooks* in at least one particular: one feels in it just a trace of an *arrière-pensée*, a mystic or pseudo-mystic current, barely revealed, a preoccupation with ultimates and eternal. Its superlative leisure, like that of Proust's great novel, annihilates time: it is indeed, in a sense, as the prologue makes clear, preoccupied with the sense of time, or of timelessness; and it is also curiously, and perhaps naturally (given this circumstance) preoccupied with death, and with the scale of values peculiar to the man who stands on the brink of death. Here we have a sanatorium full of tuberculosis victims, all of them obsessed with death, all of them charged with that queer recklessness and detachment which supervenes in such cases, where the approach of death is gradual, and all of them subnormal, as regards energy; the characterization is acute, detailed, profound; the hero, and Mynheer Peepkorn, and Madame Chauchat, are magnificent; and the amount of time, for a patient and cynical review of the world, is unlimited. Except for the slight and intermittent love-story, which comes to no cli-

max, there is no plot: the novel has its excuse first in its richness as a microcosm (which everywhere refers to a macrocosm) and second in its exquisiteness of tone. It is a three-decker with a deep undercurrent of poetry: a kind of William Clissold written by a poet who happens, also, to have a streak of morbidity.

This streak of morbidity comes out most clearly, apparently, if one may safely judge by what has thus far been translated from the German, in the latest of Thomas Mann's books, *Children and Fools*. These are short stories, of which the most recent and best is dated 1926, and the others from twenty to thirty years earlier. In all of them is this queer Gothic something-or-other which one has obscurely felt from the beginning in Mann's work—most definitely in *Death in Venice*, perhaps, but also, as just noted, in *The Magic Mountain*. Knowing little of contemporary German literature, one hesitates to say that this is a mere Germanness: and nevertheless one is constantly feeling how curiously these tales resemble—if one may speak wholly of *affects*—the German fairy-stories which one read when one was a child. Here again is that blending of beauty and horror: of the mystic with the terrible: of life and the most morbid aspects of death. One feels that Mann is a victim of certain obsessions which he cannot escape. He must torture, and be tortured; he must die, and see death; he must be weak, and submit to the brutal; he must manage the scalpel which dissects an anguish, and manage it with a surgeon's scientific detachment. *Disorder and Early Sorrow*¹ is one of the most beautiful stories the present reviewer has ever read: the story of a child's first love, and of the father's jealousy; but even in this is the note of Gothic morbidity. And in the earlier and shorter stories, which are more purely analytical, and less circumstanced—almost, indeed, clinical statements—one detects a nearly unintermittent note of morbidity. They all deal with abnormals—they all deal with psychological disaster. The difference between these and the later stories is simply that the later ones are more poetic, more sublimated. *The Path to the Cemetery*, in the present volume—a story dated 1901—is a bare pathological or psychiatric outline for what might, in 1926, have been another *Death in Venice*.

Eventually, therefor, we begin to see Thomas Mann as a very special and slightly warped figure. But he is a poet, and that is all we need.

CONRAD AIKEN

¹ Published in *THE DIAL*, October and November, 1926.

MORE WORDS

MORE WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN. By Ernest Weekley. 12mo. 192 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

THE famous "Words! Words!" conveys an obvious reproach with it—indeed several kinds of obloquy: but they must be very ungracious readers of Mr Weekley's books on the subject if they let any of the reproaches fall on him. It is of course perfectly true that this subject is not without its dangers—indeed that it seems to have a slightly—on its etymological side a more than slightly—diabolic or at least puckish tendency. In the study of any word-student, "Charing is not *Chère Reine*" should be painted up as a perpetual reminder. But there is not much danger of anything quite like this from Mr Weekley, though there are some pits open in the region of compound or double words with which he is here chiefly dealing. Perhaps even he has sometimes let himself follow wandering fires or refused to follow pretty trustworthy indications. For instance the present writer is not at all certain that "beef-eater" does come from "*buffetier*" but he is by no means inclined to accept Mr Weekley's dictum that that derivation is "a myth" or his argument against it and for the plain acceptance of the spelling. It is all very well to laugh at Little Arthur's History of England, which is said to have diffused *buffetier*: but Archbishop Trench and Professor Max Müller who also accepted it were not exactly Little Arthurs; and moreover were not only scholars but scholars of rather different kinds. Moreover, though there is not the slightest doubt that John Bull has always been a cannibal, why should he be more especially cannibalic in this small body of court attendants than elsewhere? Of course if the dictum of a French-English dictionary written in French that Courtiers ate beef and university men mutton be accepted, it is weighty. But—? No: "*buffetier*" is certainly not certain, but "beef-eater" = "eater of beef" and nothing more is not a little insufficient.

Another of the few instances in which one feels inclined to have a try at singlestick with Mr Weekley is "mealy-mouthed." Here he takes what may be called an opposite line or attitude to that

which he accepts in regard to the title of the Yeomen of the Guard: and will have it that *mel* "honey" and not "meal" is the origin of the first syllable. For this there seems, one must confess, no necessity whatever, while there is a good deal of argument against it and one quotation—evidently not known to Mr Weekley—which is something like fatal. To begin with he does not seem quite to appreciate the meaning of the term in relation to its supposed sources. "The *clogging* effects of meal on the vocal apparatus" surely have very little to do with the matter? It is the *softening* effect of meal on the lips. Again "mealy-mouthed" and "honey-tongued" are certainly not synonyms to-day and Mr Weekley's quotations seem rather insufficient to shew that they ever were: while even if they were once it would not settle the question. Meanwhile though he admits that his most formidable antagonist, the late Dr Bradley, produced an instance from Luther in which *Mehl* is used with *Maul* in exactly the same manner and with exactly the same sense as in our English word, he does not seem to know that Southey gives *enfarinhadamente* as an equivalent in Portuguese. Now though *mel* and *meal* may be very much like each other, *Mel* and *Farina* are not: and no Latin-born language is very likely to confuse them. Neither have there been many writers who knew both English and Portuguese better than Southey: while there is no indication in the passage¹ that he was intending—as he sometimes *did* intend—a joke at the time.

But enough of cavils. It would be pretty to say, "Let us exchange the singlestick for the paper-knife": but alas! the disuse of that implement as an addition to the enjoyment of a good book appears to be getting even more common in America than in England. You can no doubt do your business more quickly without it, but real Epicureans like to take their pleasures slowly.

It is not extravagant to say that there is not a page of the book which is not worth reading, while there are few if any, which will not yield pleasure as well as profit to any one with tolerably wide interests in life and literature. Mr Weekley holds the balance rather more even than the just now so much and so justly praised Oxford Dictionary in regard to "honey-moon." Those who will have it that the reference is only to *waning* seem to forget the waxing. "Selfhelp" is itself little more than a text or title for a very interesting study of other "self" compounds. It will certainly surprise some readers to find that nobody was *selfish* be-

¹ The Doctor, one-volume edition, p. 382, column 2.

fore the middle of the sixteen-sixties: but it makes amends to know that the word is a "Presbyterian coinage" of that date. That the rather obsolete exclamation "hoity-toity" probably has something to do with "hoyden" may give a more out of the way surprise. But, thank goodness, Mr Weekley himself will have nothing to do with that most unpoetical and indeed most absurd effort of misguided fantasy—the resolving of "foxglove" into "*folks* glove" with the further illumination of glossing "folk" as here meaning "fairy." One of our author's very rare slips occurs under "lion-hunter" where he seems to identify "gentleman-commoner" with "titled undergraduate." They were both privileged orders, but separate. Mr Ruskin, for instance, was a gentleman-commoner but in no way "titled" nor entitled to a gold "tuft" though he might wear a velvet cap. But one thanks Mr Weekley for pointing out that "ringleader" which is now practically always a term of depreciation was once quite respectable—Bishop Latimer calling Joab when still G. O. C. for David by it, while Coverdale actually applies the term to the apostles.

The agreeable practice of collecting a certain number of companion words under one heading is scarcely anywhere better shewn than under "jolly boat" where the object is ostensibly to prevent schoolboys from ignoring everything before motors: but the result is capable of wider well-doing. The title-word itself seems to have been a good deal fought over, the Dutch *jol* with the usual *y* pronunciation of the *j* being supposed to be preoccupied by "yawl" and an old word "gallevat" having been discovered. But there were no end to sampling of this kind and we have given sufficient to justify the previous general recommendation. One thing however, or rather two, of more general importance should not be omitted. Mr Weekley draws attention to the very great service which Sir Walter Scott did in restoring good old words to the language: and in particular by refreshing people's vocabulary in this way from Shakespeare. The fact has not been very generally noticed and was well worth noticing. The work of the restorer is sometimes in both senses abused: but in such a case as this it can only do good, and deserve honour.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

THE OXFORD JONSON

BEN JONSON. Volumes I, II, and III. *Edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. To be published in ten volumes. 8vo. The Clarendon Press, Oxford. Volumes I and II, \$14; volume III, \$7.*

THE most conscientious reviewer would find it hard to write in anything but praise, when presented with three such sumptuous volumes as these; and should therefore rejoice to find that the scholarship and critical abilities of the editors deserve the elegance of the printing. This is as fine and as final an edition as any Elizabethan dramatist has yet received; if there are any flaws, they are beyond the competence of this reviewer to discover. The arrangement of the book, first, is one to be commended to all editors of voluminous authors, who aim to combine the functions of scholarship, criticism, and biography. Not only the biography and the general critical estimate, but also the introductions to the several plays, are united in the first two volumes; only with Volume III do the texts begin; and with the first three volumes we have the texts of only four plays: *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Case is Altered*, *Every Man in His Humour*, and *Every Man Out of His Humour*. This is the right method, for it offers two advantages. Readers who cannot afford all ten volumes can buy the first two, and have at least the most final and exhaustive account of the life and work of Ben Jonson. And while we await the rest of the work, volume by volume, we have already assembled in Volume II, critical introductions to all the plays and minor work.

It would be impossible to review thoroughly the information and criticism of these three volumes; one who has already committed himself to a critical estimate of Jonson's plays finds not only much new information, but many critical suggestions to correct or to extend his own. The last chapter of the general introduction, entitled *Final Appreciation*, condenses a sound opinion into nine pages. Against the common view which would isolate Jonson from his contemporaries, and style him "pseudo-classical," we recommend the following passage:

“It is clear that the cleavage between his work and the mass of contemporary production was by no means so deep and wide as his frequent air of aggressive isolation would suggest. To contrast Jonson as a thoroughbred neo-classic with the “romantic” Elizabethans is a very imperfect way of representing his relation to his fellow-dramatists. . . . More than this, a great part of the matter of Jonsonian drama is common ground. Marston and Dekker, Nashe, Middleton, Fletcher, Beaumont, Shakespeare himself, and scores of others, whatever their divergences from him and from one another, are Jonson’s fellows and comrades at one point,—the drastic and humorous representation of the life of Elizabethan England.”

And on the reputation of Jonson the authors are equally good:

“It is founded even now less upon enjoyment or admiration than on the unforgettable image which has come down to us of ‘Ben,’ the most familiarly known to us, beyond comparison, of all the Elizabethans. Jonson, apart from all questions of merit or demerit, is *there*, a personal force even more than a creative power. . . . Only some nine years younger than Shakespeare, Jonson belongs to an England which had grown older by at least twice as many in that swiftly maturing time.”

From the biography, with its notes, letters, and documents, we get an impression of the man essentially the same as that of his tradition, but merely graven deeper. (We repeat with pleasure Jonson’s note on his *Catiline*: “there’s one scene in that play which I think is flat: I resolve to mix no more water with my wine.”) It was through an immensely impressive personality, as much as by the greatness of his work, that Jonson influenced, more than any other one man, the whole course of English literature: it may be asked whether a man of such personality, like Samuel Johnson after him, is not always likely to be read about rather than read. It may be this, as much as the difficulty or asperity of the plays themselves, that has left them to be the reading, and the not very constant reading, of a few privileged admirers.

There is much to be learned by reading the introductions to

the several plays straight ahead, as they are here presented, as a consecutive study in criticism. Among the hints which I have got in this way, here is one point which I ought myself to have observed and emphasized years ago. We are apt to think of Sejanus and Catiline as by-products, as unsuccessful attempts to write tragedy, a mode for which the genius of Jonson was unfitted. But Catiline and Sejanus are no more tragic, in significance, than Volpone is comic. They are variations on exactly the same sensibility as that of the great comedies. Messrs Herford and Simpson bring out very well the capital importance of Sejanus in the preparation of Jonson for writing Volpone and *The Alchemist* and *The Silent Woman*:

“Closely as Sejanus is modelled upon history, none of Jonson’s dramas is more Jonsonian in conception and execution. If he alters little in his historical materials, it is partly because history in some important points played as it were into his hands, providing both a kind of action and a prevailing quality of character singularly suited to his genius and to his art. The advance in coherence upon any of the Humour plays, after the first, is enormous; upon *Every Man in His Humour* itself, it is considerable. He was entering in fact upon a new phase of his art. The immense constructive grip soon to be shown in Volpone and *The Alchemist* is already approached, as their dramatic situation is anticipated.”

The resemblances between Sejanus and Volpone are particularized, and the criticism of the former closes with this paragraph:

“On the whole, Sejanus is the tragedy of a satirist—of one who felt and saw more intensely the vices and follies than the sorrows of men, and who, with boundless power of scorn, was poorly endowed in pity. He could draw the plotting of bad men, their savage vengeance, their ruinous fall; he could draw the fatuities and mishaps of fools; but the delusions which jangle and overthrow a noble nature lay beyond his sphere. Jonsonian tragedy suffers from an inner poverty in the humanities of the heart,—analogous to the wilful bareness of style which masks the poetic core of the tragedy of Ibsen. But the imagination is

nevertheless impressed by this sombre fabric of verdureless flint and granite, too arid and savage to leave any coign of vantage for sympathy.”

This is good criticism, though the analysis could be carried farther. For it does not explain the fact that the satire of Swift, with equal power of scorn, equal perception of folly, stupidity, and evil, moves our feeling as nothing of Jonson's can do. The last chapter of the *Voyage to the Houyhnhnms* is, in its kind, more terrible satire than anything Jonson ever wrote, yet it can move us to pity and a kind of purgation. We feel everywhere the tragedy of Swift himself, we never feel any tragedy about Jonson. Jonson nevertheless remains for us a great personality, as was Swift; but this personality is largely given through the tradition about the man, and nowhere completely in his work; and Swift on the other hand is wholly a terrific personality *in* his work. What is the difference? It is not to say that Swift was a greater man, or a greater artist, than Jonson; nor can we say in return that Jonson's was a keener intellect than Swift's. But the work of Swift came out of deeper and intenser emotion.

What is repellent to many readers in the plays of Jonson, or what at least leaves them indifferent, is perhaps this fact that the satire fails of the first intensity, by not seeming to come out of deep personal feeling. By the consistency of the point of view, the varied repetition of the same tone, by artistic constructive skill, Jonson does create the illusion of a world, and works a miracle of great satire without great emotion behind it. But it is not a world in which any one can live for long at a time, though it is one from the study of which every writer can profit.

T. S. ELIOT

ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT

ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT. *By James Stephens. 12mo.*
199 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

IN *Etched in Moonlight* James Stephens has accomplished the feat, always hazardous for a writer, of passing from one idiom into another. His new book is in a new manner and deals with a new material, and yet it is as vital and personal as any of the books we think of as being distinctively Stephens'. There is nothing of the exuberance of *A Crock of Gold*, or *Deirdre*, or *Irish Fairy Tales*, in the latest volume; it has fantasy, but its fantasy is not now of happening or of character, but of idea. Even the distinctiveness of background has been suppressed in the tales that make *Etched in Moonlight*: the story that gives title to the collection has no particular land for its setting; we may surmise the Irish countryside or Dublin as backgrounds for the other tales, but locality is not stressed at all. The language is no longer highly coloured or quaintly phrased; it is fluent, but it is plain, and where there is abundance the abundance comes from the writer's dwelling with a sort of penetrating reverie upon a scene which has come up before him. What climaxes he leads up to are given in a kind of under-statement. Here, for instance, is a picture of a house where starvation has been:

“Into this place the gentleman called on the following day to investigate, and was introduced to a room swept almost as clean of furniture as a dog-kennel is; to the staring, wise-eyed child who lived in a chair; and to the quiet morsel of death that lay in a cot by the wall.”

What James Stephens gives us in this book are moralities—that is to say, they are judgements of certain aspects of human nature formed by a man who is seeking for some wise way of living. His material and his method are not new discoveries of his: they are developments of a vein that was in previous works—the vein that

is in the *Philosopher of A Crock of Gold* and *Here Are Ladies*. The *Philosopher* in these books was whimsical, spontaneous, and untaught. His creator has become reflective; he has become capable of giving us these penetrating moralities.

As in a morality all the interests, all the relations in these stories are simplified. One story is a narrative of a dream. In another story, the poignancy of a parting comes to us through a woman's dream of a journey to the Arctic: she wakes to find her husband dead beside her. This is the unforgettable story, *Desire*, which was originally published in *THE DIAL*.¹ What James Stephens is probably trying to do in this collection is not to give us a human passion as it is reacted upon and related to the feelings of other individuals, but as it is in itself, as it is isolated. He gives us the baffled desperateness of the starving; he gives us the hushed excitement that comes to a man who is given a glimpse of his life's boundaries and of some prospect beyond; he gives us the queer ruffianliness that might come over us as we heard for the hundredth time the whine of a pesterer; he gives us the sudden hatred that can take possession of a man as a demon might, suppressing the whole of a self that he knew. From these bare and simplified experiences a full, an exciting life rises up, making red-blooded romances and heavily documented accounts of people's lives empty and tame. The incidents which James Stephens records are concerned only with what is constant in human nature, and so the people in whose lives they happen have little of what we call character: I do not recall that any of them have names. Anything that has happened to any one of them might have happened to all of them, although there are those in the stories who are great lords and ladies and those who are lowly, those who have security and those who perish of hunger. And the scene upon which the people look is generalized also—the localities in the book one remembers are the moonlit plain on which the ancient castle stands and the white arctic country—both scenes in a dream. The writer of these stories seems to have turned away from the diversity of the world and to have thought only upon what tragic and ludicrous motions the human soul in its loneliness makes. And the language in which he writes of these things seems to be so spontaneous that

¹ June, 1920.

it might be just speech written down. Etched in Moonlight is like the beginning of literature—a beginning with simple and fundamental situations, with actual speech, with a gravity of outlook. But Mr Stephens has not let go of the humour that is always his. One of the nameless men in his stories is given us in this way:

“His ears swung slightly outwards. The ends of his trousers flopped about his ankles, and from the flop and waggle of these garments one knew that his legs were as skinny as matches. One divined that his elbows were sharp enough to wear a hole through his coat, and that his feet were longish and flattish and that his toes mounted energetically on top of each other.”

PADRAIC COLUM

BRIEFER MENTION

THE ISLAND WITHIN, by Ludwig Lewisohn (12mo, 350 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). All Gentile spectators at that quintessential Jewish miracle-play, *The Dybbuk*, must have recognized the possibilities of intense psychic tragedy in the *modern* predicament of the cultured Jew in a great Western city; and in this rather hurriedly written story such possibilities are roughly but vigorously developed. Where almost all other novels on this subject may be accused of dulness *The Island Within* is written with so much intensity that it holds the reader, irritated though he may be by a thousand aesthetic lapses, willynilly from start to finish.

DAISY AND DAPHNE, by Rose Macaulay (12mo, 334 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50) is at first sight a "stunt novel." Two characters appear through the opening chapters and then the author calmly announces that of course the reader has all the time been aware that they are only two sides of one character. He hasn't, necessarily. But if he has, he has admired the technical agility of the stunt. The rest of the book is the story of the defeat of the brilliant Daphne by the honest, stupid, and cowardly Daisy. Like all of Miss Macaulay's work it is a satire of contemporary society. In this one the mechanism, apart from the stunt, is a little run down, only a few of the many incidents come off properly. For all of that, Miss Macaulay is intelligent and intelligence makes good reading.

WORLDS' ENDS, by Jacob Wassermann, translated from the German by Lewis Galantière (12mo, 278 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). In these five sketches Mr Wassermann may be judged both at his best and at his worst. Indeed, it seems strange that any one who could have depicted with such faultless restraint, such firm and sober insight, the stubborn character of Adam Urbas could have been guilty of the flagrant theatricality of Jost. Perhaps Mr Wassermann is at times too vulnerable to suffering and injustice to be a great, dispassionate artist.

THE MAN WITH SIX SENSES, by M. Jaeger (12mo, 272 pages; Hogarth Press: 7/6) is a speculative novel possessing something of the Henry James approach but little of the Henry James substance. The story of the eccentric Michael Bristowe is set down in a manner so coldly psychological that one's sympathies are not held—although one's interest undoubtedly is. It is as if the author had taken the bare frame of a case history and draped it in the outer garments of fiction.

THE CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY, by Thomas Walsh (10mo, 552 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). Professor Thomas Walsh has ranged far for the flowers he has gathered. Each singer of Catholic piety for the last nineteen hundred years is represented. Catholic poems by non-Catholic poets are also included. This book gives the secular reader an opportunity of appreciating how much our literary culture owes to the church of Rome.

AND OTHER POEMS, by John Mavrogordato (brochure, 12mo, 139 pages; R. Cobden-Sanderson: 5/). Mr Mavrogordato is least satisfying when he speaks in his own person. His lyrical poems are somewhat thin, somewhat flaccid, distinctly decorative and sentimental, and seldom give evidence of much intensity or insight. His translations from Greek folk-songs, in quantitative measures, have charm, however, and are managed with excellent judgement and taste. And in the fragment of a play, *Cassandra in Troy*, Mr Mavrogordato really surprises us (if we come to it last) with his power and severity. This is an admirable thing, and more truly in the spirit of Greek drama than many such attempts which are better known.

FIREFLIES, by Rabindranath Tagore, decorations by Boris Artzybasheff (12mo, 274 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). These delicate moth-wings of elusive wisdom carry a good deal more of the peculiar spiritual urbanity and serene detachment of their author than his longer and more pretentious poems. Limpid as water-colour vignettes, they are characteristically East Indian in tone. Lacking the dramatic intensity of Blake's mystical aphorisms; lacking too the wistful humour of Chinese poetry; they convey to the mind a tender resignation, soft and insidious, like a diffused perfume, suspected rather than poignantly inhaled.

EXILE AND OTHER POEMS, by Theodore Maynard (10mo, 101 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press: \$2). *Three* sincere, authentic, deeply-felt motifs dominate these intense and unrheterical verses: religious faith, revolt against modern machinery, and an intense love of the English country-side. In the poem entitled *Not England*, which is perhaps the most vigorous in the volume, Mr Maynard shamelessly puts out his tongue, from the very shelter of that golden Step-mother's lap, upon the alien sublimities of California! A little more humour, a little more austerity, a little more of some original twist of temperament, and these three motivations could be tuned up to a fine issue.

PLAYS OF NEGRO LIFE, selected and edited by Alain Locke and Montgomery Gregory (8vo, 430 pages; Harpers: \$5) embraces the outstanding dramas of negro material which have been brought forth in the last dozen years. There are twenty titles, of which Eugene O'Neill contributes two, and Ridgely Torrence and Paul Green three each. Such a collection may well dispel any remaining public doubts as to the authentic and vital character of a dramatic movement already rich in achievement, and giving every indication of a sustained and natural growth. What is true of the domain of drama is equally striking in the realm of poetry, as one quickly discovers in turning the pages of *CAROLING DUSK*, *An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets*, edited by Countee Cullen (8vo, 237 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). Mr Cullen has ballasted his selection with representative verse from such outstanding figures as Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, and W. E. Burghardt du Bois, but with equal pride he gives place to an array of younger singers—a buoyant and sensitive throng. By no means the least interesting detail of the anthology is the autobiographical note which accompanies each name.

TREES AT NIGHT, A Collection of Drawings, by Art Young (8vo, 39 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3). Those who see a man in the moon and who also love to detect faces and figures in clouds will relish Mr Young's persistent analogies between trees and people. Sensitive orientals think it an error in taste to liken nature to humanity in this fashion—they prefer to reverse the process and flatter humanity by likening it to nature—but Western and Eastern notions are often at variance and there seems to be no special reason, as yet, why the West should concede to the East in this business. Certainly Mr Young's drawings of trees that look like people are not without unabashed American admirers.

THE SUBSTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE, by A. S. G. Butler, with foreword by Sir Edwin Lutyens, R. A. (illus., 8vo, 320 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press: \$4). One of the phrases most used by architects to indicate high praise of a building, is the term: "It's architecture." To instruct laymen so that they, too, may use the term properly is the purpose of Mr Butler's book. He goes a considerable length in accomplishing this, once he gets started, but it must be confessed he is slow in starting—his first chapters not being seductive to laymen. And occasionally he is too technical—what can the layman make, for instance, of the complicated explanation of the rhythm in the window of the Musée Cluny? The true enthusiasm of the writer, however, is an easy thing to respond to, and there are some definitions of the abstract qualities of music and architecture that are delightful.

THE RUINED ABBEYS OF GREAT BRITAIN, by Ralph Adams Cram (illus., 8vo, 297 pages; Marshall Jones: \$5). As description this essay is to be recommended. Mr Cram's knowledge of church architecture is unquestioned and he writes well. His enthusiasm for England's past glories touches an answering chord in the bosom of the individual of taste, and his contention that the grandest English abbeys were those that lie in ruins at Glastonbury, York, and Guisborough can be accepted. Not so his ethics. His half-repressed plea for the re-introduction of monasteries is not likely to be heard, for a thousand institutions now perform their spiritual offices and the mere sentimental feeling of regret for a beauty that has passed is insufficient argument for the restoration of an order that died, the world now feels, a natural death.

THE INNS OF GREECE AND ROME, by W. C. Firebaugh, illustrated by Norman Lindsay (8vo, 271 pages; Pascal Covici: \$5). A sprightly vein of bawdy scholarship animates this erudite but unbeguiling treatise on Classical Innkeeping. The style frequently lapses into the Pullman-Smoking-Car variety of wit; but the author has certainly collected together many curious antiquarian details, and his quotations from Catullus, Petronius, and Apuleius fall aptly enough and well to the point. The book has its entertaining passages; but no monk of the Dark Ages could have produced a better indictment of the jaded sensuality against which the Early Christians reacted. It is interesting to be reminded that civilization owes the invention of beer neither to Greece nor to Rome but to the remotest Pharaohs of Egypt . . . possibly to Osiris himself!

THE TRAVELS OF WILLIAM BARTRAM, edited by Mark Van Doren (12mo, 414 pages; Macy-Masius: \$2.50). After the surly humours and audacious brutalities of other Nordic travellers the reader of the gentle Barttram finds himself transported into a luxuriant Earthly Paradise where the grave botanical recognition of each specimen of semi-tropical vegetation is offered up as a sort of Addisonian hymn of piety to the Great Spirit. The lavish growths of these green swamps and savannahs of colonial Georgia and Florida are treated with an exuberant reverence at once scientific and mystical. From the iridescent Ephemerae, doomed so soon to perish, to the crocodiles "uttering hissing roars that shake the earth," all the teeming life of these rank places, along with an aboriginal humanity of patriarchal worth, is described with a religious gusto worthy of a W. H. Hudson of the eighteenth century.

SHELLEY, His Theory of Poetry, by Melvin T. Solve (12mo, 207 pages; University of Chicago Press: \$3). One of the three most-written-about young men who have ever lived—the late Percy Bysshe Shelley—has inspired—if that be the word—another college professor to the making of a book. Prof. Solve states, in his acknowledgement, that he is under obligation to "almost everyone who has published in this field," and it does truly seem as though he were. The references to their teachings are neatly incorporated into this certainly intelligent but unduly expanded essay upon the "aesthetic" of the great poet.

APHRA BEHN, by V. Sackville-West (12mo, 170 pages; Representative Women Series, Viking Press: \$2). In this competent biography we are made acquainted with the works and character of one whom we must certainly honour since she was the first woman in England to earn money by her pen. Generous, susceptible, and recklessly outspoken, we follow her career from a pauper's prison to a life of successful and emancipated activity.

NAPOLEON THE MAN, by R. McNair Wilson (8vo, 619 pages; Century: \$5); **NAPOLEON AND HIS WOMEN FRIENDS**, by Gertrude Aretz, translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul (8vo, 375 pages; Lippincott: \$5). There is one thing common to both these books—and to the Emil Ludwig Life that preceded them—they testify to the world's complete change of front in regard to Napoleon. Instead of the scourge of the earth he is now felt to have been the people's friend, perhaps the only sincere one in the troubled period from which he emerges as the chief glory. Dr Wilson is almost sentimental in his admiration of the hero. His Napoleon could do no wrong. It is indeed surprising to discover so simple a biographer among the contemporaries of Mr Lytton Strachey. Dr Wilson has quite evidently explored all the immense libraries of data upon the subject and has assembled his notes into a clear and ordered work that has aspects of the successful text-book. It may be recommended unreservedly to high schools. There is, on the other hand, no immediate necessity for high-school students to occupy themselves with the "Women Friends." Or, at least, one should undoubtedly have read the virtuous Dr Wilson's book first. Then one would have a viewpoint from which to forgive certain friendships which otherwise might appear "light."

THE LIFE OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, by Luigi Salvatorelli, translated from the Italian by Eric Sutton (8vo, 313 pages; Knopf: \$4). The freshest and most valuable portion of this Life of St Francis is its historic and scenic setting. This is delineated with scholarly thoroughness and poetic grace. The weakest aspects of the book are those that might be termed *psychological*; for the saint's character and aims are treated with so much orthodox piety that very little new light is thrown upon the emotional crises of his dramatic story. On the other hand the book is strikingly free from rhetoric or sentimentality; and the purely ecclesiastical problems pertaining to the founding of the Franciscan Order are dealt with tactfully and with skill.

STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE, by Allardyce Nicoll (12mo, 168 pages; Hogarth Lectures, No. 3, Harcourt, Brace: \$1.25). These carefully written studies fall into a special type of critical work and their very excellence in their own *genre* throws an illuminating *aperçu* upon a method which is found betraying its inherent unsatisfactoriness by the curious weariness induced in the reader's mind. The stress is laid on the obvious dramatic "data" of the *psychology* of the principal characters; with the result that the essential genius of the poet, manifested in his diffused magical-sardonic, lyrical-romantic reactions to life, passes untouched and uninterrupted. The "whirling words" of Hamlet lose, for example, their universal application and become just one more deftly introduced dramatic proof that he is really, just a little, *mad!*

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON, with introduction and epilogue by Edmund Blunden (16mo, 424 pages; The World's Classics, Oxford University Press: 80 cents). However much of a failure B. R. Haydon was as an artist—and he seems to have been colossally inept—he was a vivid enough figure in the life of his time and his memoirs provide some thrilling pictures of it. His account of the Paris of just after Napoleon's fall is memorable. Few writers make you see it so distinctly. So, too, the Coronation Dinner to George IV. So, too, the glimpses of Keats, Sir Walter Scott, and the Duke of Wellington. As history his book cannot be ignored, and as writing it cannot be forgotten. The Oxford Press is quite right to include it in its World's Classics and puts the younger artist set, who will thoroughly enjoy this "inside" account of an artist's struggle for patronage, under a real obligation.

SELECTED ENGLISH LETTERS, XV-XIX Centuries, arranged by M. Duckitt and H. Wragg (16mo, 460 pages; The World's Classics, Oxford University Press: 80 cents). These fragments, each one evoking a personality that flashes and is gone, a man or woman once so living, so full of the importance of the passing moment, are rich with implications. Milton describing to his Greek friend Philaras the advance of his blindness, Swift's eager plea for word from Stella, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's account of her first appearance at court, Cowper's effort to be merry in order to avoid melancholy—all leave in their wake a retrospect sad and memorable.

THE THEATRE

“**W**ITH the production of such freshman junk,” writes George Jean Nathan, “the Provincetown Playhouse loses all critical respect.”

The reference is to *HIM*, by E. E. Cummings.

Shortly after this play was produced the Provincetown Playhouse asked me to write an introduction to a pamphlet in which the opinions of the dramatic critics were contrasted with those of the book reviewers who had discussed the play when it was published. The pamphlet raised a row and consequently I may be prejudiced about the whole matter. It still seems to me that the critical reception of *HIM* is at least as interesting as the play itself, and since I have been accused of “being crazy about” the play, I would like to issue a *démenti*. I am not crazy about *HIM* and I am a little crazy about Aristotle.

For the one thing which after many years remains with me is the Aristotelian practice of keeping one’s eye on the object, of criticizing the thing criticized and not the grandfather of the artist nor his taste in haberdashery nor his private opinions nor his previous efforts. And what I had to say about the New York dramatic critics was simply that they allowed themselves to be diverted from the play set before them and that in reporting on it, reviewing and criticizing it, they did not clearly indicate what the play was. They said it was mad and sophomoric and dirty; they put adjectives to it—not nouns or verbs; they quoted an inept programme note, and talked about Mr Cummings’ typography, his poetry, his prose. But they gave no clue to the perfectly apparent character and nature of the play itself.

Here, for instance, is all—absolutely all—that Mr Nathan says on the subject:

“For utter guff, this Cummings exhibition has never been surpassed within the memory of the oldest play-reviewer operating in Manhattan. It is incoherent, illiterate, preposterous balderdash, as completely and unremittingly idiotic as the human mind, when partly sober, can imagine. The author may be identified as a

young man without any thus far revealed talent of any sort who has sought to attract attention to himself by composing verse rid of all sense, rhyme and punctuation, by declining to use capital letters and printing his name in lower case, and by confecting a war novel the big kick of which consisted in the use of a word hitherto more intimately associated with the lavatory than with literature. Professing to detect genius in these obvious monkey-shines, one or two dubious commentators have spilled some ink in celebration of Cummings' gifts, but all that the majority of critics and laymen have been able to detect in him has been a sub-Gertrude Stein in pants, a ridiculous adolescent in revolt against literary tradition with a hair-pin.

"The affair called 'Him' is introduced by the author with the following note: 'Don't try to despise it, let it try to despise you. Don't try to enjoy it, let it try to enjoy you. Don't try to understand it, let it try to understand you.' That'll give you a faint idea of what to expect. If you need a further hint, I may report that the characters include and are named the Missing Link, Six Hundred Pounds of Passionate Pulchritude, the King of Borneo, Second Shape, Mussolini, First Centurion, Fourth Fairy, A Blonde Gonzesse, Nine Foot Giant, First Drunk, Virgo and Third Weird, and that among the twenty-one scenes we find listed 'old howard's conception of roman villa,' 'le père tranquille' and 'semicircular piece of depth.'"

The opinion of the Provincetown Playhouse, quoted above, follows.

Analyse this report, or criticism, of a play. Six lines calling it names, precisely in the rhythm of Ghosts and Gibberings; sixteen lines about the author in totally unrelated matters, and these sixteen full of inaccuracies (the "big kick" in *The Enormous Room* was the author's style, the critics who praise Cummings are neither "one or two" nor "dubious" in standing; the connexion is not with Gertrude Stein, so much as with Joyce) and ending with an appeal to the opinion of the majority which Mr Nathan has specifically ruled out as almost always wrong. There follow four lines quoted from the programme and ten lines about the names of the characters and scenes, in which Mr Nathan is not even fair enough to note that many of the characters he names are in a circus scene, others

in a burlesque, and that the Old Howard is a famous burlesque house in Boston.

I begin—after all these years of admiring Mr Nathan's writing about the theatre—to wonder whether respect is exactly the critical quality it is in his power to give or withhold.

I have quoted all of Mr Nathan's review because it is typical of the whole body of criticism which met Cummings' play. (Mr John Anderson of *The New York Journal* was the outstanding exception—he actually told what the play was, and I have heard that there was an interesting review, which did the same, in *The Wall Street Journal*. I am speaking now of the critics of the daily papers only.) And my point is that even if the play had been utterly worthless, it would still have been the reviewer's duty to define and characterize it—literally, give its essential character—before, or instead of, going on to other things.

The newspaper critic has two specific obligations: to the producer of a play he has to be fair; to the public, he has to be illuminating. There is little room left for the exhibition of personality or prejudice. The critic has to know what the playwright was trying to do and to assay his success; and he has to tell his readers these things and indicate to them whether they would be likely to care for the play. I think that in telling their readers—the vast majority—that they would not like *HIM*, the critics were right; they would have failed in their duty if they had sent the whole patronage of the *FOLLIES* and *THE GREEN HAT* and *STRANGE INTERLUDE* to see *HIM*. But they failed utterly to inform the minority what *HIM* was.

The play opens with a woman being placed under an anaesthetic. After a thousand dream-plays it might be easily guessed that the rest of the play goes on in the mind of the woman and is therefore in a sense the record of delirium. The reappearance of the doctor in scene after scene is a further clue and there are various indications that the symbols are being used in accordance with some of the mysteries of psychoanalysis. Setting this aside, as I did when I saw the play because I did not feel the need of that explanation, the nature of *HIM* still remains perfectly clear. "It is a tragic fantasy . . . the author states his theme and reiterates it throughout the play. The conflict is announced at the very beginning, when the girl says, 'Why should we pretend to love each

other?' and the man says that his life is based on three things—that he is a man, an artist, and a failure."

That the unconscious burlesques our conscious life is a commonplace and in *HIM*, Cummings has specifically not tried to stand a commonplace on its head in order to make it appear novel. He has used it in all simplicity, creating a fantasia in the terms of burlesque, technically even of the burlesque show. It is an eminently suitable technique; for the looseness, the mad logic, the swift changes, the sudden re-entrances of early jokes, themes, or characters, in burlesque shows exactly correspond to features of the subconscious life.

The difficulty for the audience was that fantasy, in general, is either wholly comic or satiric. There were both high and low comedy in *HIM*, but the tragic tension was a disturbing element and Cummings either from wilfulness or lack of skill at times made the mystery more obscure. I say "wilfulness" but, although I know the author and his work fairly well, I am not trying to rival the critics in imputing motives. I mean simply that he may have felt so strongly that certain scenes *must* be as he conceived them, that he allowed them to stand in the face of the certainty that they would puzzle the majority of his auditors. That he ever mystified the audience purely for the satisfaction of doing so, I venture not to believe.

To me the finest scenes were those which seem to take place outside the dream—scenes between the man and the woman, of rare lyric intensity and beauty. Love between men and women on the stage has become so much a matter of convention that actual passion, actual exaltation appear strange and terrifying. They exist in *HIM*—in the long baffling speeches of the man, in the brief sentences and gestures of the woman. The lyricism of Cummings' prose is identical with that of his poetry, and on the stage it is a rare phenomenon.

The Provincetown Playhouse completely fulfilled its function in the production of *HIM*. Its function is not to hold the critical respect of anybody except those interested in experimentation in the theatre. The physical, intellectual, and financial endowments of the Playhouse dedicate it to small audiences who believe passionately in the value of the creative artist. To give such an artist an opportunity to see his work in action, is one of the things the

Provincetown can do; it did it for Eugene O'Neill and it has done it, with courage and a gaiety matching the gaiety of Cummings' own manner, in HIM. The play was terribly hard to do and Mr James Light did it well. Certain scenes seemed to me appallingly dull, but I do not see how they could have been made lighter; the significant scenes were all in the tone and style set by the text. The three chief players—Lawrence Bolton, William S. Johnstone, and Erin O'Brien-Moore (the Doctor, Him, and Me)—were perfectly in command of the meaning of the play and of their parts; the massing and manoeuvring of the large cast was done with ease and skill; and the whole play was exciting and depressing, fascinating and dull, but always itself, an integral creation.

The attack on Cummings has been so vicious that I would like to omit my reservations. In all fairness, they are serious. The unity of his play is threatened by the shift of manner between the fantastic scenes and the scenes between the lovers. Threatened, but not ruined because in every case (but one) the scenes in the room follow the picture-scene of the operating-table and so establish a connexion. And, a more serious defect, it seems to me that at times the material has escaped from the author's hand, that it has rolled away and collected barnacles and that these have been incorporated into the texture of the play. The intrusions, the excessive lengths, are to me no proof of an overpowering individuality—the proof of that comes in the careful construction, in the disciplined use of the material elsewhere. I suspect that with other symbols and some refinement of technique, HIM might have been more effective—and certainly less tiring. It was tiring—it ran full three hours. But when it was over, one felt that that kind of weariness gave an enormous satisfaction.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

WERE we, as a community, deeply engrossed in the study of art—which we are not, alas!—the two exhibitions in the season just ending which would have aroused the greatest interest were those of De Chirico and Picabia. Both of these men seemed to be edging easily and naturally forward into something new and neither had that air of wishing to be new which is usually fatal to spontaneity. Spontaneity, in fact, was their new quality. We have had a Matisse exhibition, and a De Segonzac and a Derain, and all these artists seem to be painting now better than ever before but all of them give the effect of being fixed planets in the sky rather than comets. A planet is something you can pin your faith to more safely than to a comet but just the same something very exhilarating happens when a new star swims into your ken and most people willingly rush to their doors to inspect the phenomenon and thoroughly enjoy talking it over afterward. Picabia's exhibition certainly had a flashing effect that would have brought people to their doorways—were we as a people deeply concerned in questions of art—but, that not being so, it was only the astronomers who got the thrill. They, however, got plenty.

As in De Chirico's case, it was the fact that Picabia is now *painting*, that gave most satisfaction. Picabia used to show here often enough but what he showed were not always certainly pictures. I forget where he comes from—he may be an Argentine, a Spaniard, or a Cuban—but my impression is that he gained a New York reputation as a radical before going to Paris to join in the nihilistic proceedings of the Dadaists. He was not so much interested in construction as destruction. He loved to fling explosives beneath the carriage-wheels of the smug and commonplace. He was certainly of the “bad-boy” type and when he got to Paris he outraged the freedoms even of the city of light. I vaguely recall the scandal of a title he attached to one of his “*oeuvres*” and which, with some assistance from the police, he afterwards changed. Paris loves its “bad boys” and even the city magistrates are never severe upon them, but just the same, Picabia seemed destined for the rôle of “whip” on the side-lines of art rather than

that of a central figure. He distinctly had a genius for attracting attention but lacked that other part of genius—the capacity for holding it.

The recent exhibition implies just the opposite. The half dozen best, and very good, paintings are perhaps not enough to found a lasting name, but the individual who did them is by no means decrepit and the chances are that he could do more if urged. His themes were light and the manner light. He hasn't the horse-power of Picasso. But his mind plays naturally in the modern idioms and there are no check-reins on his fancy. It was the feeling of being untrammelled and knowing perfectly what it was all about that gave the present pictures charm. They had the ease of the sonnets that poor Guillaume Apollinaire used to dash off on a café table at the hour of the *apéritif* to the applause of his friends. They could not have been done except by someone so certain of applause that he was no longer influenced by applause, and as there is no place in the world save Paris where abstract art gets an instant "hand," it followed that these pictures brought us the most distinct whiff of that fair city that we have lately had. I thought there was something elegant in their completion and finish. I thought that an individual of taste who relishes daring and invention and who has no special objection to being slightly in advance of his friends could take genuine pride in possessing them. Some such persons of taste there were, for certain of the canvases sold. My favourite, though, the one called *Les Chiens* which had agreeably composed lines that could be definitely doggy to those who insist on a measure of fact, did not find a purchaser. But I blame myself for this. There were one or two persons still in town to whom I might have telephoned but I didn't—through sheer laziness.

Speaking of sales reminds me that one or two of the artists who are frequently mentioned in *THE DIAL* achieved financial successes, as well as the other kind, this winter. In addition to Mr Kuniyoshi, Mr Andrew Dasburg, Mr Charles Burchfield, Mr Miguel Covarrubias, Mr Marin, and Miss O'Keefe did extremely well for themselves. Those who profess to understand the mysterious workings of the business side of the art game, attribute the furore in the Rehn Gallery over Mr Dasburg's recent output, entirely

to the fact that he won one of the prizes at this year's Pittsburgh International. This may be the true explanation. If so, it is odd enough. . . . Mr Burchfield's success has long since been earned but just for that reason it was also a surprise. Cash receipts and merit are not necessarily consonant. . . . Miss O'Keefe, however, made the profoundest impression of all upon the brokers. A set of small paintings of calla-"lilies"—six, I think—sold to an as yet unnamed connoisseur for twenty-five thousand dollars. This was thought to be some kind of a record. It certainly was, at least, for her. Furthermore, it was announced, these paintings were to go romantically to France where the owner was building a house one room of which was to be consecrated to the "lilies." This event made the hangers-on of the studios gasp but no one has yet ventured to sermonize about it. I, too, at this fagged end of the season, feel unequal to enlarging upon such a subject. . . . Before laying aside my pen, however, there is one other development of the winter that I must mention, and it, too, is not unconnected with business. I refer to the serious sponsorship of modern decorative art by the great department stores. These institutions do as much educating as the colleges and are vastly more flexible and open-minded in their methods. Lord and Taylor's, Macy's, and Wanamaker's have been swift upon the heels of the great decorative art exposition of Paris and this winter have managed to place the "modern note" squarely before the New York public. This public, astonishingly enough, is submissive. So much so that people have already begun to blush at the mention of Louis Quinze and Louis Seize and with characteristic American impetuosity have determined to achieve, if not a native background, at least one that is visibly in this period.

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

POSSIBLY, when we meet with a kind of ambitious tragedy in the work of art, a species of aspiring dignity comprising marked violence and resignation, we should automatically expect as a parallel in the artist's life little that is accomplished (perfected) and much that is beyond his best management. We should not consider his art invalidated by the apparent discrepancy, as the dying "new psychology" was recently tempting us to do with too much promptitude, but should find it in the nature of things that the same proficiency is not consubstantial to both life and page. The success of an artist resides greatly in his skill at arranging the circumstances of his work; he exemplifies his qualities by the manufacture of an environment for them. The environment of his own life, on the contrary, is more irrelevant to his own particular genius, more definitely forced upon him—and as it would be naïve to assume that any quality, even noble temper, is fitted for more than a certain limited range of conditions, we may expect elements which flourish in his work to droop in his biography. If things "fall right," the integrity of the character may be sufficiently maintained, as it is so noticeably maintained in men like Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill. Others will find themselves involved in conditions which tell against them, at least in comparison with the more sheltered. One may manifest great poise in running from a bomb, and his conduct still appear inadequate as compared to those high *allures* of one who had but to walk away from a brush-fire.

We say as much, obliquely introductory to our reading of the selected Letters of Richard Wagner,¹ recently translated into English. Here indeed, for those who do not find Wagner's work itself vulnerable, is the tendon of Achilles grown well up into the thigh. The man's extreme sanguinity and hopefulness, a constant refusal to be discouraged by a lack of receptivity perhaps un-

¹ The Letters of Richard Wagner. Selected and edited by Wilhelm Altmann. Translated from the German by M. M. Bozman. Two volumes. 8vo. 691 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$10.

paralleled in the history of art, is not untainted by incomprehension. There is little consideration of biologic fitness in his unswerving certitude that the required homage *should* be forthcoming, though here perhaps the artist's Messianic attitude towards his own gospel was but a negligible by-product of a purely technical superabundance, whereby brain tissues are so excessively well arranged for musical concentration that life and confidence become synonymous. Debussy has said ¹: "The undeniable beauty of Liszt's work arises, I believe, from the fact that his love of music excluded every other kind of emotion." Something similar can be said of Wagner, as we could situate in such a mentality not only the power (and particularly the inventiveness) of his "music drama," but also his more or less haphazard treatment of the other aspects of his life. When some hitherto unknown person did Wagner a good turn, the artist quickly hailed a new "friend." Dear friend, for now I can call you that. Similarly, resistance to his purposes was invariably explained as corruption, malice, or jealousy. His later charity, as for instance his patronizing forgiveness of poor Berlioz, comes not from the heart, but from a contented stomach. Such centring about the ego had but to continue long enough to be accepted.

What we are left with, then, is the spectacle of a man for whom the process of creating (and of gaining acceptance for his creations) was the generator of all the other standards of his life; whose productivity could, it is true, be impaired by lesser distractions, but was impervious to mental distresses of the first order, and perhaps reached its height when his intense erotic attachments were most strained and endangered. We feel, despite his assurance of discomfitures, that any major depression was really impossible with him. For though he often speaks proprietarily of his sensitive temperament, "my passionate nature," and though the list of his disappointments was exceptional, in his one essential interest, the production of his art, he remained in a continual process of unfolding and advancement, in that privileged state of *Werden*, of "becoming," which is justly in such high repute among

¹ Monsieur Croche, The Dilettante Hater. By Claude Debussy. With a foreword by Lawrence Gilman. 12mo. 212 pages. The Viking Press. \$2.

German philosophers. His triumphs, considerable as they were, seemed even greater to himself. We find him, after years, looking back on Tannhäuser, and making some changes in the instrumentation, but feeling that the libretto was beyond improvement! Indeed, his pride in the unseemly doggerel of his verse is the one region into which we dare not follow him. But we can understand how his productivity as an artist might serve as the prime determiner of a morality, even making that which seems like hypocrisy or opportunism when judged by other codes, quite loyal when judged by his own. We can understand that a different kind of consistency is required of one whose overt purpose is to leave a "gift to the nation," and that he should ask of other people solely those two essential qualities which his work did not originally contain—success and reward. On laying down the letters, one recalls that elsewhere the conditions have been properly arranged. Impatient of plot, music drama, *Weltanschauung*, one listens to things which are made to happen purely as sound. What day is this? Why this, kind sir, is Good Friday—and the music re-sounds Good Friday, repeats, expands, expatiates upon this mood until it has filtered into one's last, most sluggish cell.

It is all very complicated, all mixed up with scandal, and triviality, and even boredom—and so confused, and even obscured to those who in their hearts know better. But there is one test for the supercilious, a test so desolate, so blasting, that we should hesitate to mention it: let them (mentioning it) write two bars of something with distinction. Regrettably, however, the same test would also obligate us to spend rapt hours contemplating some performer on the slack wire.

After the Wagner letters, we turned to Monsieur Croche, by Claude Debussy. It was very nearly the right sequel. For Debussy was so distinctly in the backwash of Wagnerianism, first its champion, then its denier, and ultimately something of both. He knew the quackery of Wagner's verse to perfection, and he also knew that out of this quackery marvellous music had been produced. We find him, in this indeterminate attitude, insisting that the Ring should be performed in Paris, if only to silence the wild reports of the pilgrims from Bayreuth. We find him admiring the

music of Parsifal while deploring its "message," though his opposition leaves it much less glory than does Nietzsche's.

In other respects, these articles of music criticism, which were written at the beginning of the century, are a bit too sketchy and casual to be of exceptional value to-day. They are written with a suavity and skill wholly absent from the Wagner correspondence (if we except the accurate malice of a letter to his first wife, where Wagner suggests explanations of their difficulties which she may make to her neighbours, and under this guise of helpfulness really conveys to her a summary of his own defence). And they contain in germ many tendencies which have since come to fruition, but which now need sifting rather than foretelling. His sensitive notes on Moussorgsky, Dukas, Richard Strauss, and César Franck make one regret that he did not schematize his articles a little more and give us in the field of music a full set of monographs on his contemporary scene corresponding, say, to De Gourmont's *Book of Masques*.

KENNETH BURKE

COMMENT

In der Zeit verliehe mir Gott Fleiss, dass ich wol lernete.
Albrecht Dürer

DÜRER'S Rhinoceros, Pollajuolo's Battle of the Nudes, and various concepts by Mantegna and by Leonardo da Vinci, have for us that attraction which originality with precision can exert, and liking is increased perhaps when the concept is primarily an imagined one—in the instance of the rhinoceros, based apparently on a traveller's sketch or description. The conjunction of fantasy and calculation is unusual, but many sagacities seem in Dürer not to starve one another. St Jerome and his beast of burden the lion, in the room with the bottle-glass window-lights, the St Eustachius, a small Turner-like water-colour of the Tyrol in the Ashmolean, tempt one to have favourites, and the eye is promptly engaged by that sensitiveness to magnificence in apparel which gives us the knight's parti-coloured clothing and pointed shoes, the "drowsing elegance of the sugar-bag hat," and the little hat "couched fast to the pate like an oyster." Dürer's gifts excited "the admiring courtesy of the Italians," we are told; and certain portraits seem to mirror and to gild in mirroring, Italy's almost finer than Oriental politeness. There is danger of extravagance in denoting as sacrosanct or devout, an art so robust as to include in it that which is neither, but Dürer's separately perfect media do somehow suggest the virtues which St Jerome enumerates as constituting the "hous of cryste"—of which he says in conclusion: And good perseueraunce nouryssheth theym. His mere journeyings are fervent—to the Dutch coast to look at a stranded whale that was washed to sea before he was able to arrive; to Bologna

NOTE: Prints by Dürer and his contemporaries are now on exhibition in the print room of The New York Public Library and will remain till the autumn.

One welcomes additional reproductions of Dürer's woodcuts: The Complete Woodcuts edited by Dr Willi Kurth with introduction by Campbell Dodgson (W. & G. Foyle, Ltd.); and of his engravings on copper: The Masters of Engraving and Etching—Albrecht Dürer, with introduction by Campbell Dodgson (The Medici Society).

to learn as he says, "the secrets of the art of perspective which a man is willing to teach me," and in his several visits to Italy. The secrets of Dürer, however, are not easily invaded, the clearness and simplicity of his signature in the adjusted yet natural housing of the D beneath the mediaevally prominent A, being a subtlety compared with the juxtaposed curves of the modern monogram, the printing of letters backward, or the variously arranged inverting of duplicates.

The reliquary method of perpetuating magic is to be distrusted; nevertheless a living energy seemed still to reside in the wood blocks and engraving tools of Dürer's which were exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum some years ago and one values the effort of experts to recover mutilated originals, to repudiate "copies," and to recognize Dürer's many priorities.

Appreciation which is truly votive and not gapingly inquisitive, commits one to enlightenment if not to emulation, and recognition of the capacity for newness inclusive of oldness which seems in Dürer an apparitional yet normal miraculousness like a heraldic flame or separate fire in the air, could have its part in persuading us to think—with him—not too ill of "subtilty," "*ingenia*," and of "artwork which is altogether new in its shape."



Courtesy of Paul Rosenberg, Paris

BAIGNEUSES. BY PABLO PICASSO

THE DIAL

AUGUST 1928

LACONICS

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

MR GEORGE MOORE'S recent protest against the use of the word *pensée* by our writers raises a question of more than linguistic interest. Mr Moore has the Society for Pure English, and all the best authorities, with him when he says that the increasing number of unassimilated French words in English is a real danger to our speech. But this danger can hardly be met, as Mr Moore seems to suggest, by an attempt to put a ban upon these words and have them deported as undesirable aliens. Many of them are necessary to us; we cannot get on without them; and it is contrary to the traditions of our language to reject words we need merely because they are of foreign origin. Indeed, just as we have provided the French with a large part of their political vocabulary, so we have received from them a great number of terms connected with the arts and literature. For many centuries it was our wise custom to enrich our language, and increase its powers of expression, by assimilating these borrowed terms. We did not hesitate to give them English shapes and sounds; and by thus incorporating them in our speech we made them current and available.

This process was at first not difficult: French words like *poem*, *prose*, *fiction*, *narration*, *dialogue*, *essay*, *memoir*, *review* found a ready admittance to our vocabulary. Of late years, however, a pedantic and false ideal of correctness has impeded this process and weakened our assimilative powers: many of our more recent borrowings, like *renaissance*, *connoisseur*, *rôle*, *bizarre*, although we use them, are only half at home among us; while others, like *dénouement*, *éclat*, *flair*, still live on as foreigners in our midst.

It would seem that, of all these words from across the Channel, words which, like *pensée*, have an accented *é* in the final syllable are most incapable of throwing off their outlandish garb. That this was not so in former times the Englishing of *levée* into *levy*, and our adoption of *amity*, *liberty*, *majesty*, *refugee*, and many other words with this termination, is sufficient proof. But such changes of form, though simple enough in appearance, seem almost beyond our modern powers; *banality* has indeed made a furtive appearance, to meet, however, at once the reprobation of our purists; the indispensable words *naivety* and *employee* have acquired the rights of citizenship; but *matinée*, *soirée*, *protégé*, *fiancé*, *rechauffé*, *repoussé* still keep their foreign shapes. It would be hopeless now to try to naturalize *pensée* as "pansy"; while its old assimilation, "pansy," is limited to the flower with that pretty name.

Some of these indigestible aliens are perhaps not needed, and we may do well, as Mr Moore suggests, to deport them without mercy. Others, however, would seem to have their uses: no acceptable alternative for *fiancé* has been found; and there are good reasons why the word *pensée*, or some more available equivalent for it, would be a useful addition to our vocabulary. The word is in fact a word we need: it describes a way of writing and a special kind of book which we are unable to designate and define by any generally accepted term.

The origin in France, or at least the general currency, of this specialized use of *pensée* would seem to be due to the title given by Pascal's friends to that miscellany of thoughts, maxims, aphorisms, meditations, and little essays which they found after his death among his papers. This designation then came to be applied to other similar collections: to La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes et Réflexions*, to La Bruyère's *Caractères*, to the collected writings of *Vauvenargues*; and it was used for the title of *Joubert's Pensées* and other volumes of this kind. All such books consist of detached thoughts and observations put together with little or no system or arrangement, each paragraph or sentence being complete in itself—not fused together with what follows or precedes it. Such books are collections of isolated units of composition; the beauty of form they may possess is, as with collections of epigrams or lyrics, in the art with which each separate piece is phrased and elaborated. These units, however, these separate pieces, can be divided—and the authors sometimes so divide them—into three sub-species or

classes of prose composition. First of these is the *pensée* proper—the paragraph or miniature essay, containing the essence of some meditation, appreciation, or observation. Along with these we often find a series of “Characters,” brief portrayals of some individual, or of some special type or class or way of living. The flower or perfection of these books, however, consists in the witty or profound aphorisms which adorn their pages. All the writers of *pensées*, La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, La Bruyère, Vauvenargues, Chamfort, Rivarol, and Joubert, have concentrated, now and then, and distilled the essence of their thought into tiny lucid sentences, thus enriching the literature of their country with a great store of maxims and memorable sayings.

Books of this kind, composed of characters and aphorisms and little essays, are by no means lacking in our literature, although we possess no accepted designation for them. Several English writers imitated the characters of Theophrastus long before La Bruyère; and Bacon’s *Essays*, especially in the brief form of their first publication, were fragments, as he himself described them, of his thought; “grains of Salt,” as he said in his letter to Prince Henry, “that will rather give you an Appetite than offend you with Satiety.” Ben Jonson’s *Discoveries*, with its aphorisms and its little paragraphs, is a true book of *pensées*, and Selden’s *Table Talk* belongs also to this class of literature. Fuller was essentially a writer of Thoughts, and published three volumes of them; and his *Holy and Profane State*, with its numerous maxims, is really a book of characters and reflections, upon which a loose scheme of arrangement has been somewhat perfunctorily imposed. Sir Thomas Browne is another writer of this kind; his meditations are indeed arranged into chapters in the *Urn Burial*, but are printed in separate paragraphs in his *Religio Medici* and his *Christian Morals*. James Harrington wrote two sets of political aphorisms, but Lord Halifax’s *Thoughts and Reflexions* is our most important and profound collection of this kind. The *Sacra Privata* and the *Maxims of Piety and of Christianity*, which were written by Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, and to which Matthew Arnold gave such high praise, are books of maxims and meditations loosely put together. Lord Shaftesbury claimed in his *Characteristics* the title of a miscellaneous writer, or “Miscellanarian,” as he called it; the *Characters and Thoughts* of Samuel Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, belongs more properly to this class, in which

we may also include Lord Chesterfield's Characters, and the maxims he wrote for the instruction of his son. Sterne's Sentimental Journey is written in the form of paragraphs and tiny chapters; and lastly, among eighteenth-century books of this kind must be mentioned Shenstone's Essays on Men, Manners and Things, which has been recently reprinted by Mr Havelock Ellis, whose description of Shenstone as a *pensée*-writer called forth Mr George Moore's protest.¹

Several famous authors of the nineteenth century can be described—with apologies to Mr Moore—as *pensée*-writers. Most important among these is Coleridge, who, as Hazlitt said of him, spent his life in the momentary pursuit of truths as if they were butterflies, and found in this pursuit his greatest pleasure as well as the freest exercise of his powers. Coleridge sometimes pinned these captured butterflies together in essays and formless volumes; but it is in the various collections which we possess of his disconnected thoughts and occasional reflections, his Table Talk, his Omniana, his Miscellanies, and, above all, perhaps in those extracts from his notebooks, published under the title of Anima Poetae, that we come in closest contact with his mind. Hazlitt was himself an occasional writer, an indefatigable pursuer of the butterflies and dusky moths of thought. His inspiration came to him in intermittent waves; he lacked, as his Life of Napoleon shows, the sustained concentration necessary for writing with success a book of any length. Hazlitt published several collections of detached thoughts and observations, and in his longer essays we find many passages which stand, as it were, by themselves, and could be transferred—as indeed he sometimes transferred them—to essays on other subjects. This self-sufficiency of a thought, this independence of its context, is, Joubert said, the test and distinguishing mark of the *pensée*; those *pensées* alone were perfect, he declared, which could be detached from their context and placed almost anywhere at will. Our last important writer of this kind is Samuel Butler the author of Erewhon, who, like Samuel Butler the author of Hudibras, left behind him a large collection of disconnected thoughts and observations; and it is in his Notebooks rather than his works of more regular composition that his admirers find his most original and most important work.

It will be seen, therefore, that this "miscellaneous" way of writ-

¹ William Shenstone, by Havelock Ellis, THE DIAL, May, 1927.

ing has been practised, and practised with much success, by many English authors. Various titles have been given to English volumes of this kind; they have been called Thoughts and Reflections, Meditations, Miscellanies, Characteristics, Maxims, Aphorisms; but as generic names all these are open to objection. The words "maxim" and "aphorism" are too exclusive to describe the little essay, or the Character; while "thought" and "miscellany" would include too much. "Reflection" is perhaps our best translation of *pensée*; but the word, owing perhaps to Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, has acquired a somewhat didactic and drab colour; we should demoralize so respectable a word by associating it with the worldly maxims of Bacon and Chesterfield, or the sharp and cynical sayings of Halifax and Hazlitt.

If, however, we cannot assimilate a foreign term, cannot literally translate it, a third course is still open to us: in the German fashion, we may find at home, or even create, some available equivalent; and there happens to be an adjective in our vocabulary, the adjective "laconic," which Addison used as a substantive, and possibly in "Laconics," if only we could accustom ourselves to it—and new words, though rough and hard at first, are soon polished and made smooth by usage—we could find, as Mr Birrell has suggested, the designation we need for this way of writing—this brief, disconnected notation of impressions, thoughts, and observations.¹

Goethe was accustomed to warn poets against the great work, the elaborately constructed poem, which, allowing nothing else to thrive in its neighbourhood, tended to repel the thoughts and feelings of almost daily occurrence—thoughts and feelings which, if seized in their freshness, would be sure to prove, he said, of interest and value. This sage advice is not without its relevance to a certain class of prose-writers, who are subject to occasional inspirations, but do not possess the gift of sustained and formal composition. Such writers, in undertaking a great work beyond their powers, will either suppress the impressions of the moment; or else, as often happens, they will attempt to incorporate them into the larger scheme, often weakening and distorting them in the process. We may perhaps find in Emerson's writings an instance of this kind of deformation, this imposition of an arbitrary form upon material unsuited for it. Emerson was by nature a writer of *pensées* and

¹ The word was used in this sense as the title of an anonymous book of maxims and reflections called *Laconics* and published in 1701.

aphorisms, "laconics," as we have ventured to call them; the basis of his work, as with all such writers, was the notebook in which he jotted down in brief paragraphs his thoughts and intuitions—the deposit, drop by drop and day by day, of the lifelong soliloquy of his mind. When he came to compose these formal essays and addresses which were the only means he found practicable for presenting his thought to the public, he would select some title of large indefinite meaning—Fate, Experience, Compensation, Circles—and then turn to his journal for more or less relevant thoughts and phrases. As long as he could group these passages about some vague general theme he judged their order sufficient, and took no more trouble about it. "Expect nothing," he wrote to Carlyle, "of my powers of composition"; his sentences, he said, could not be expected to cohere together—each was an infinitely repellent particle. This method, or rather no-method, of composition makes his essays seem like collections of fragments tied together, as Carlyle said of them, in canvas bags; and it was the patchwork character of his work which made Matthew Arnold—though he considered Emerson's writing the most important work in English prose of the nineteenth century—deny him, nevertheless, the name of a great prose writer. It is indeed in the ten volumes of Emerson's Journals (from which a selection, *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, edited by Bliss Perry,¹ has recently been printed) that we come into most unimpeded contact with Emerson's original and imaginative mind, can watch it flashing to its profound conclusions, and can drink most freshly from that ever-bubbling fountain of lucid thought.

The soliloquy of a profound and original mind, its intuitions, its flashes of thought, briefly and candidly noted down as they occur, without design or ulterior purpose, has often proved of greater value than many more ordered compositions; and it is in this form that we possess one of the greatest of the world's great books. Although Pascal no doubt intended to impose a more definite shape upon his disconnected *pensées*, French critics do not regret that we possess them in all their amazing freshness and spontaneity, rather than digested into a formal volume of Christian apologetics. In works of this kind, as Sir Edmund Gosse has truly said in his beautiful book on three other French moralists, we do not look to find a system; and indeed this unsystematic way of writing has proved irresistibly attractive to many of the world's finest spirits. It was

¹ Reviewed in *THE DIAL*, February, 1927.

thus that Leonardo da Vinci noted down his thoughts on art and science, and Joubert his subtle and profound literary appreciations; the writings of Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Thomas-à-Kempis, and most of the great French moralists are all collections of more or less disconnected thoughts.

These books have an enduring value; their authors, as Matthew Arnold said of Joubert, exercise an immortal function and inspire an eternal interest. There are indeed special reasons why this fragmentary way of composition, chaotic as it seems, has proved an advantage, rather than a drawback, to moral writers and observers of mankind. Experience is always seeking for appropriate literary forms in which its various aspects can find their most adequate expression; and there are many of these aspects which can be best rendered in a fragmentary fashion, because they are themselves fragments of experience, gleams and flashes of light, rather than the steady glow of a larger illumination. The intuitions and impressions which we derive from life form a kind of knowledge "in growth," as Bacon described it; an over-early and peremptory attempt to digest this knowledge into a system tends, as he said, to falsify and distort it. Collections of disconnected but sincerely observed truths about human nature never lose their value, while the ambitious schemes which are built upon them soon collapse and are forgotten. "Life," as Dr Johnson said, "is not the object of science; we see a little, very little"; and the great psychological investigation of himself, which is man's most fascinating as well as his most important pursuit upon this planet, is still in that stage where its observations are empirical and scattered. These observations still find their most unhampered expression in disconnected paragraphs and phrases, and perhaps they will always do so. "I fancy," Dr Johnson once remarked, "mankind may come, in time, to write all aphoristically, except in narrative; grow weary of preparation, and connexion, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made."

This notation of what Johnson elsewhere called "independent and disconnected sentiments" remains, as we have seen, a way of writing for which we possess no accepted name. For the critics and writers of any country it is, however, a matter of no small importance to possess precise designations for the different forms of literary composition practised among them. Critics are enabled by means of such convenient tools of thought to classify these forms;

and writers who are endowed with the gift for one or another of them can derive encouragement and correction from the study of their models. Many of our writers have possessed the gift for this brief, laconic, aphoristic way of writing which the French call the *pensée*; but their gifts have sometimes been impeded or misdirected by the lack of a definite name for this mode of expression—a name which would help them to explore its possibilities, isolate its achievements, and appreciate their interest and importance. While therefore we must agree with Mr Moore that the word *pensée* is a most unsatisfactory addition to our vocabulary, we can hardly afford to deport this new importation until we find, to take its place, some more effective appellation of our own—or at least some less outlandish makeshift.

SAINT SENAN'S WELL

BY THOMAS MCGREEVY

I make a response to lips I would kiss once
 And wonder where tangents finish.
 The sunlit discs are small,
 The end of a tangent is very far away—

I began my rounds with the sorrowful mysteries
 Instead of the joyful,
 Ready, therefore, all ready already
 For the without of glory.

SILENCES

BY ANDRA DIEFENTHALER

OSCAR HESS visited his neighbour, Rudolph Ort, Annie's father, an old man in bed. "To-morrow mornings, send for Pastor Finck, so you be married. I want to see that. Then I can rest. With my Annie it have to be all right before I go."

The old man paused for strength. When he began again he said, "You take down the line-fence. All as I have, is for you now, and for Annie. The land is all right, only she lays full from weeds. You can see for yourself. Three years I can't work it. But from cattle, I have some good ones. My Annie is crazy for the livestock. She have luck from raising little pigs, but she stands too long to watch how they play. And from calves, she helps you fine. The brindle have always first-class heifers. And she is the best from butter cows in this part the country. She is Annie's, the brindle is. Since from a baby she brought her up.

"First with her, comes me, then comes the brindle. You have to keep that brindle, Oscar, so long she lives."

"Yah, sure, Mr Ort."

Oscar was much pleased with the turn of his fortune. He had long hungered for Annie, wanting to crush her spirit and bend her to his will. Had he not tried to in their play as children, and up through their growing years without success? Now would he have her wholly in his power and eagerly he welcomed the battle. Like a vessel of crockery, he would break her.

But would Annie consent to the marriage? he wondered. Perhaps—to please her father.

There was that Franz Lubke. Could it be she wanted him? They were sometimes at the village dances, inordinately happy together, as it seemed to Oscar's jealous eyes.

It was well that old Ort would call Pastor Finck next day. Nothing must get in the way of it.

The sick man was talking again.

"There's money in my big mountain, Old Buck Mountain. Maybe you could make a road up the east side and quarry the stone out. For the new state roads, they need plenty stone now. The

side from the river, never you can work that, so straight up like a wall, and when you walk on top, better you look out. Easy you can fall over and break your neck. Once I have to shut my eyes when an old sheep slides off. The dog, he chased her. So far down is the river, never I hear one noise when she comes to the water."

A tall, rugged, awkward girl with very light hair had come into the room. Her eyes were grey and wide apart; far-seeing eyes.

"Annie, you are here just right. We talk about you. I want you should marry Oscar because I must go from this world soon. You live right home then in Oscar's house where is only stone wall between. That comes away, so all the land is together. You will take him when I ask you?"

Annie was silent.

"He have nobody and you have nobody. Always you mind your old father, and now you give me my last wish?"

The girl, somehow, by her palpable silence had made it known that she would accept this marriage so ruthlessly thrust on her.

Her heavy shoes sounded on the bare floor of the house. She was going out.

Dusk had sifted down over the house and barns. It was October. Cattle lowed at the pasture gate.

Annie went into the cow-shed and carried straw over her head like a big umbrella. She put it down into the stalls for bedding, with thought of the wooden tines on the fork her father had made. He would not make another fork—soon he would be gone. In her heart there was tenderness for her old father. Between them there had always been friendship.

When she had done with the straw, she carried bundles of corn-stalks to the mangers. Then she opened the stanchions and let the cows in from the gate below the yard. They lumbered with heavy udders hitting from side to side against their legs. They were hungry and wanting to be milked, ten in all, old and young.

The warm breath of cattle and the clean odour of straw moved Annie's brain to understand the meaning of talk she had heard in the house. Deep in the brotherhood of dumb beasts! Courage possessed her. She would face the inevitable.

Night had come on. A lantern must be lighted before she could milk. She began with the brindle. The impact of milk streams

upon the bottom of the tin pail, clasped between her knees, made a singing sound. She saw the milk lift gradually and fill the pail, but had no eyes for it, nor for the slanted stream that cut and shattered the foam. The face of Oscar Hess had come before her. She went from cow to cow, milking and seeing him smile. When the work was finished she tossed the milk stool into a corner with a thud. The stool was Oscar.

Later the old man heard her placing the milk pans on shelves in the cellar. He heard her straining the milk into them. Then he heard her heavily walking up the stairs into the kitchen.

"Annie," he called.

The shepherd dog followed her into the bedroom, and slipped his head under her hand. She worked her fingers through his long black hair. In his bushy tail burdock burrs clung in a tight mass. Annie noticed that his right eye was growing whiter with blindness. One day he too would be gone. All would go. . . .

The old man spoke: "Oscar wants to come out to the barn before he went home, but I told him he have to let you think how you want to, now. To-morrow everything is all right. To you, I think he will be good. He works hard. Some day he have something. His father was like that—saving. For the mother, I used to feel sorry. She was awful afraid from him. He could be too hard on her. Mean he was, that man. But of Oscar, I see nothings wrong. I know who is not right to my Annie have to look out, that's all.

"You are willings I should send for Pastor Finck to-morrow? He could bring his wife for witness."

"Yes, he can come. I will take Oscar, but I don't want you should die."

Emotion shook the clumsy girl. She laboured to conceal it.

"That's all fine now, Annie. We don't feel bad. You get me my supper. And the lamp, she waits for oil; almost the wick don't touch."

On the wall a huge beast stood with its head low. It was the shadow cast by the old man's knees and the extra quilt heaped on the foot of the bed. The shadow came down off the wall and followed Annie out of the room.

In the kitchen she held an oil-can above the glass lamp. The oil gurgled slowly into the blue bowl. As if out of a mist, there

arose a yellow-painted house beside the Delaware river. It was Franz Lubke's house. Franz had tried to kiss her one pleasant day when she had carried mail to the post-office. "Next time I will," he threatened. When he saw Annie again he merely said, "You like better maybe that Oscar Hess should walk home with you."

Annie was, as always, silent.

Four years had come and gone.

Now the lamp was running over with oil. Annie mopped it up and screwed back the burner upon the neck of the blue glass bowl. Between thumb and finger she rubbed brittle char from the wick, and lighted it. Carefully she replaced the brightened chimney between the brass clamps that received it with a ringing sound.

No use to think of Franz Lubke now. It was too late. And, but a day or two ago she had heard her father say that very little was to be made out of the butcher business. What could it matter? Franz had said no word to her of marriage. With her father it was a law that a man must get along. He had often spoken with favour of the thrift and ambition of Oscar Hess. Might it be that they had planned together for some time? But to her like the swift-ness of lightning the whole thing had come to pass. Her father had asked her and she had not refused. Let it go that way. Since she could remember he had known her to be loving—obedient. It would not be different now, now when he lay dying.

She carried the lamp back into the bedroom. The gleaming light found its way to the old man's face. He was smiling there on the high, wide bed.

In December the body of Rudolph Ort was carried to the Lutheran Churchyard in the village of Crow Valley.

Now winter had all but gone, and April had come, dismal April. The land lay soaked in old snow, dingy with the wear of many months. Over all was a sullen mood.

Near the wood-shed Annie knelt beside a chestnut log. Oscar knelt on the other side of it. Between them there was a cross-cut saw.

"Hold up your end there," Oscar shouted. "Pull on the saw. When you think we get through this log? That corner's waiting long enough for a new leg. The other three are almost gone. We saw four while we are at it."

"I can't. I feel sick," Annie told him.

"Sick! What kind of talk is that from an ox like you? Maybe you think I pay out money to hire a man to do the work now? Don't try to play me tricks. I suppose you want to go in the house and sew on baby clothes. My mother, she sewed at night when the work was done. We don't begin wrong. I tell you that from the first, so you know. Sick!"

The saw rested midway in the log. Annie had let go of the handle at her end.

"Why you don't say something?"

"Yes, I say something, Oscar Hess. Your mother was 'fraid from your father, and you try to make me 'fraid like that. Since we are married you try always something so it should hurt me. You think I don't notice that, or maybe you think it hurts me more as it does."

Oscar interrupted her. "You wanted your father should make me marry you. And he asks me to take you so *he* should be satisfied. Ain't it? Maybe I should be meaner yet, and get me a club. You want I should be a fool—a hell of a fool."

Annie arose from the log and brushed the saw-dust from her black apron. Oscar at the same moment got to his feet and struck her. It was as if he had hit a tree. Silently, slowly she walked toward the house. Oscar laughed. It was the best he could do, with his fear of her.

When he came for his dinner Annie stood at the stove stirring a thick soup of beans boiled with pork and onions.

Oscar drew a chair to the table and put it down with a force that threatened to make kindling of it.

"Sick!" he sneered.

Annie filled a bowl with soup and placed it before him. Then she went to the window where she finished salting the freshly churned butter.

"You don't talk yet, henh? Maybe I make mistake about that ox. You are more as three quarters mule, I guess. When I go down to Crow Valley to-night I have to ask that old nigger teamster for Kramer's Mill, how it is he handles mules."

Oscar drove to Crow Valley that night, not to see the mule-driver, but to bring the doctor back, for Annie and her child.

That spring Oscar kept to his fields, ploughing. He had a new hindrance now, Annie's devotion to the baby. Jealousy possessed

him. With the child, he had thought a bond of love would come, but he saw now, only absolute isolation.

Annie became more of a oneness than ever with the soil and farm creatures. She was with the blood of animals, the heart of seeds, the roots of trees. They were of one flesh together. Annie walked in strength, alone with the child. Of this new intensity Oscar had fear. It confused him. He laughed. If only he could reach through her resistance and break that high freedom!

The boy grew and followed his mother over the farm and through the barns, tending the cattle and the brindle's yearly calves. When he was old enough, the brindle was put into his care.

"Always the brindle! Always the boy!" Oscar said to Annie in an unguarded moment.

Passionately he wanted this woman who would not talk; who would have none of him.

The day had come and gone on which Oscar had sold the brindle to the butcher. Annie's words, "If you could be dead, I would like that," were eating into him. They kept beating at his mind. He walked, dragging his feet. Only when he drank he felt his manhood, and boasted that no woman was iron enough for him.

Pretending that Annie's silence and indifference were of small consequence he worked long days in the field, until exhaustion overtook him. He was overwhelmed with unhope.

Then came the morning he heard Franz Lubke talking with Annie in the kitchen.

"My boy tells me what nice Easter eggs your boy brings to school; some from red, boiled with onion skins, and some from yellow out of the tea-pot," said the butcher.

"You don't come here to tell me that. No;" Annie replied.

"No, I don't. Your boy says to mine how you feel so bad about the brindle. I am sorry. Oscar don't tell me the brindle was your cow. Never I would take her when I know that. Annie, what I *can* do, I *will* do. You let me know."

Annie put up her broom and looked gratefully at the butcher as his long, muscular fingers fumbled at his hat. He was uncomfortable. His hands gave Annie the sharp sense of him. Then something warm; something swift passed between them. Both

were sensitive to it. Annie sank into a chair, and the butcher got up to go.

His towering form filled the doorway as Oscar came from the barn. Oscar's figure below the sill suggested a fat palpitating bull-frog.

He looked into Annie's face. It was blank.

"You paid me for that cow, didn't you?" he said in an ugly tone to the butcher. Fires flashed in his small black eyes.

"Yes," answered Franz Lubke, "full price."

"Well, then, that's the end of it."

Oscar walked away, in the direction of the barn.

When the butcher had gone, he came back and said to Annie, "I want you should keep Franz Lubke out of here. Maybe you think I don't know in you is something men run after. He lost his woman last summer, now he is right away after another one. And the brindle he talks about!" Oscar laughed.

Let seasons pass. Jealousy for Lubke, for the ten-year-old boy, Carl, and hate for himself filled the long hours of his day. He sought to forget Annie. Night after night he stumbled home drunk and slept in the barn. There in his fancy Annie lay with him, near and breathing. The depths of the hay were her bed in the house, where he dared not put his body down. She was silent, always silent.

Draughts crept through the hay and he drew the woman closer. Now he was master and she was yielding and sweet.

He had but got her when he must let her go, for horses pounded in the stable below; dawn had come. He could see a star fading through the loft window. What was a star? What was Annie?

The rainy Sunday afternoon that Oscar climbed Old Buck Mountain, he slipped on wet moss, and clung to saplings to keep his foothold, for the way was steep.

"I don't break her down, no, I don't break her down. She breaks *me* down. Look how I am! What I can think of myself, anyhow, no more as nothing!"

With much struggle he achieved the top. Looking down the side of the rocky precipice into the silver-black river, he thought of the old sheep Annie's father had seen tumbling into space. Bare blue

rocks jutted out. Perhaps the sheep had hit them and become unconscious. He wondered, and remembered the old man's words. "Easy you can fall over and break your neck."

No, it would not be easy. His courage was going.

He sank at the foot of an old scrub pine away from the edge.

"She wants me dead long enough, now; well, she gets her wish all right. And when I am gone, nobody will know she is glad. She's smart—she says nothing, that woman from iron. In her is something else yet, something from sweet, but not for me, not for me, that sweet. Never for me."

He looked through the rain at a sprawling bush that clung to the rim. A humming-bird's nest, a tiny thing swayed on a twig in the light wind.

He would wait a while.

When he had emptied the flask of whiskey he flung it out over the rim and listened for splinters on the rocks, or for splash of it in the river. There was only silence, silence—as if Annie's silence had followed him and was in league with the silence of rocks and mountain-top. By his death he could break it. That would be a way to reach her!—regret!—punishment! A pleasant thought.

Slowly he slid from his position against the pine-tree until he lay flat on the rock floor of the mountain-top. He reached for his hat and covered his face. The rain was no good beating down like that. Gradually sleep came on him. He twitched. Then leaping to his feet he thrust forth a threatening fist.

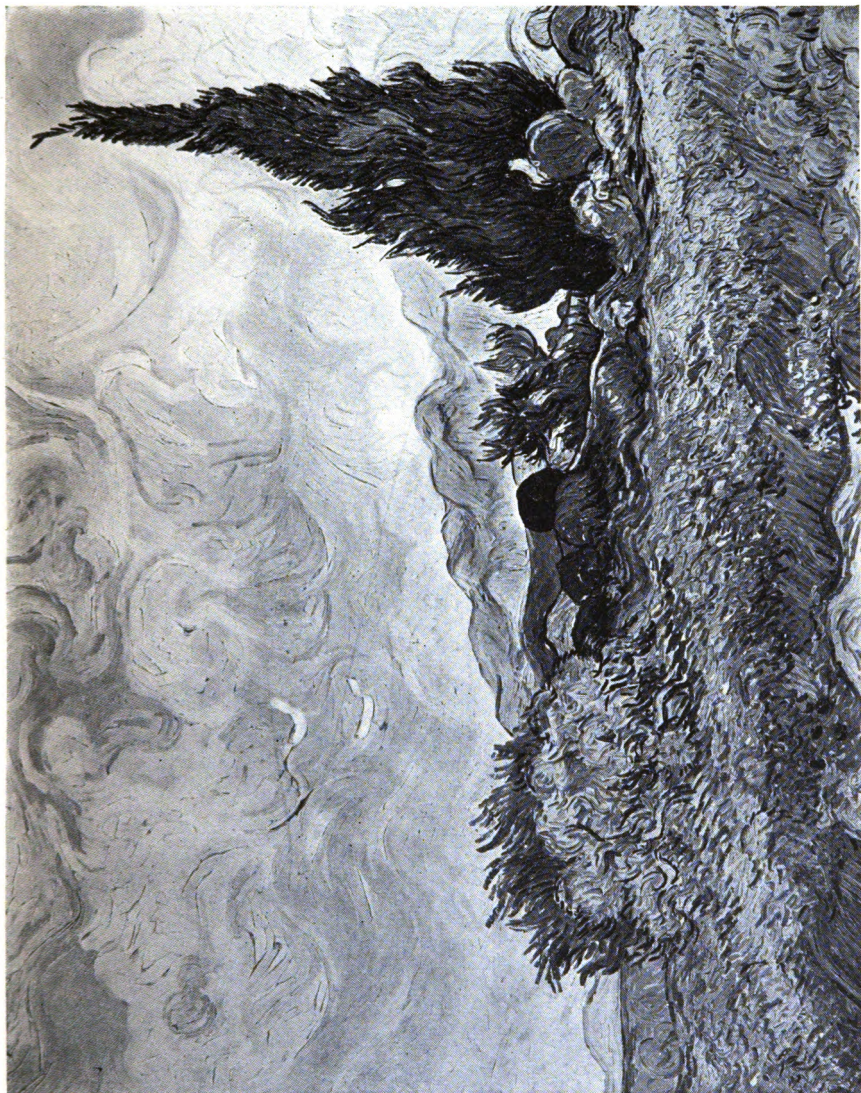
"Take that . . ."

He stood, swaying.

"You think I got 'fraid from a butcher? You like to see blood run? Yah, sure, you see it every day. Look by your face. I see how I fix you, all right."

He moved aside and backward. It was the butcher's turn now. Oscar stepped back, working nearer and nearer the sharp line that marked earth from space. Too near.

There was no sound but the beat of rain. It would fill the hat that lay by the stunted pine. The hat would dry, and winds would send it down into the river. Nothing remains on Old Buck's top but the scrub pine; a deep crevice in the hard rock grips it there.



Courtesy of Paul Rosenberg, Paris

LES CYPRES. BY VINCENT VAN GOGH

SEVEN POEMS

BY W. W. E. ROSS

Music for our ears
 our ears

Seldom is it that one hears
Fit music for our ears.

 Music
changes from day to day;
it will take our souls away;
music runs on from day to day,
music makes the mourner mourn.

 Music
played mournfully today
tomorrow shall make gay.

Music changes day by day;
music shall take our souls away.

Fairy kings
and fairy queens
are no longer
seen on greens.
They are gone,
it would appear,
to some country
far from here;

To some land
where firmly stand
in full leaf
trees of belief
in fairy things.
There fairy kings
and fairy queens
are seen on greens.

SONNET

This water runs so smoothly and the green
 Reflected in it so distinctly shows,
 It must appear to one at hand he knows
 That he, below, another world has seen,
 There in the water's heart, where in between
 The upper and the low the surface flows
 Without a flaw. Above, the summer glows
 As we together watch the stream serene.
 The day is delightful on this river shore
 And in the sunlight everything is near.
 The river in silence at our feet has made
 Its course, it seems, for ever and an hour;
 While Death, in the distance, meaningly may nod
 And whisper to us. But we shall not hear.

An iron railway bridge. The view
 Extends along the level track,
 The ties, stone-ballasted, the two
 Lines of steel rail polished, black,
 To where around a distant curve
 Will soon appear, surprise indeed!
 The locomotive's clanging swerve
 With careless, tireless speed.

Let me hear the coming train,
 See the swift splendour of its gait,
 Feel as the first inventor when
 He watched his work, erect, elate,

With a divine encouragement,
 A feeling of triumphant mind—
 The locomotive as it went,
 The sluggard smoke, trailing behind;

Or let me seated in a car
 Watch the straight poles flicker past,
 The dull fields extending far,
 The clouds coming not so fast

As the engine, gliding down
 The changing grade, or wheeling past,
 With sustained whistle, each small town
 Into the terminus at last.

IMPRESSION OF NEW YORK

Tall streets
 flamboyancy of size
 and noise
 of a million rivets
 ..
 Steady roar
 of traffic past the door
 streaming along the avenue
 in full view
 ..
 Darkness waits
 but not here
 Night is day here.
 ..
 On Broadway night is day
 ..
 Air
 of the ocean where
 ships come and go
 ..
 Below
 the taxis go
 rushing in swarms like young fish
 ..
 Where
 is rest or quiet? Not there.

Lions elastic
 leaping
 great cats great cats
 Lions
 playfully in sport they play
 elastically

SEVEN POEMS

Who fears a lion today?
 Bullets bullets
 shall drive the lions away.

Lions

great cats sport and play
 They are yellow tawny
 they are yellow in the desert
 they run faster than a bird
 flying
 they run slower than a bullet.

Lions

leaping on the plain
 shall not chase man again
 great cats lions.

Flowers

revolving in the sun
 spinning colours
 whirling
 colours yellow
 red and blue
 and yellow

Flowers spinning in the sun
 make the garden make one
 garden in the sun.

These

upon stalks rotating
 red brick-coloured
 blood-coloured blue
 yellow and pink

Flowers rotating in the sun
 make the garden make one
 garden in the sun.

AN HIDALGO

(The roots of Spain)

BY AZORIN

Translated From the Spanish by Katie Lush

IT is the year 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, or 1522. He lives in Toledo; the unknown author of *El Lazarillo de Tormes* has given us the story of his life. The house is large and spacious; it has a rather dark *zaguán* paved with little round stones; over the street door is a great stone scutcheon; inside the building, on our left after we have passed through a vast hall with a little door at the back of it, we see a light, clean *patizuelo* paved with large tiles between which weeds grow. And in all the house there are no carpets nor chairs nor seats nor chests nor branched candelabras nor pictures nor tables nor curtains. Nor are there—and this is the important thing—any saucepans or stew-pans or frying-pans or dishes or glasses or jars or knives or forks. But the hidalgo lives happily; life is, after all, no more than the idea we have of it. In the great hall, on our right as we enter, there is a stretcher with a rug over it; this is the bed. In the patio, standing in a corner, we see a *cantaro* filled with water; these are his provisions.

A profound silence reigns in the house; the street is narrow and winding. The rhythmic, almost imperceptible humming of the wheels of the cotton-spinners next door is faintly audible—you have seen these charming wheels in Velazquez' picture; every now and then you hear the cadence of a song, perhaps some old ballad like those the Segovian pilgrims sing in *El Donado Hablador*; or, in the afternoon, the clear pealing of bells may shake the air—bells rung in Toledo by Franciscans, or Dominicans, or Mercedarians, or Augustinians, or Capuchins; if it be morning when the bells ring, our hidalgo rises from his couch. It will be six o'clock, half past six, seven. At one end of the wretched bed are the breeches and doublet of the hidalgo; they have served him for a pillow; he puts

them on, takes the coat, shakes and brushes it; then picks up the sword. And before he buckles on his sword-belt, he holds the sword itself in his hands for a moment, gazes at it as he might gaze at one he loves. This sword is all Spain; this sword is the soul of the race; it speaks of integrity, dignity, valour, audacity, silent endurance, pride, contempt for pettiness. Lacking this sword, how, think you, could he live tranquil, happy, content, in a house without chairs, without a table, without pots and pans? He gazes at the sword, and again he gazes; he passes his hand affectionately over the wide guard, brandishes it in the air; and to the boy who serves him, and who is watching all these manoeuvres round-eyed, he says:

“Ah, my boy, if only you could know what thing this is! The gold is not minted that could buy it from me.”

With these words, he belts it on to hang at his left side, takes his cape up from the bēnch on which he had laid it carefully the night before, shakes it well, and proudly wraps himself in it.

“Lázaro!” he admonishes the boy, “take good care of the house; I am going to Mass.”

And he goes out into the street, walking slowly, holding his head high, but wholly without insolence in his manner; one end of the cape is thrown over his shoulder, his left hand has sought the pommel of his sword and answers lovingly to the feel of it; the contact intensely, intimately satisfies him. The dull bang of the door echoes through the street; his neighbours, the spinners, have left their wheels for a moment to come out on to the balcony.

“Look, how fine he is!” says one.

“You can still see there traces of the fine gentleman,” chimes in a second.

“He’s an aristocrat, all right,” comments a third.

And all these dainty, gay Toledans, whose vivacity Brantôme was extolling about that time in his *Vies des Dames Galantes*, laugh rather lightly perhaps, rather irreverently, at the proud, dignified, good hidalgo who walks slowly, majestically, step by step, away into the distance. Don’t you think this thoughtless, gay laughter rings symbolic? Don’t these spinners, working at their wheels all day and making fun of their neighbour the hidalgo, an upright, dreaming, valiant man, but a man without

food, do they not bring home to you the painful contrast that will endure while the world endures, between the real and the ideal, between prosaic work, without which there can be no life, and an ideal, without which as little can there be life?

But the bells of the Franciscans, of the Augustinians, of the Dominicans, of the Mercedarians, of the Capuchins, of the Trinitarians, are calling to Mass. Our hidalgo enters one of those little silent white Toledan churches; at the back through the open spaces in the screen you may see the white or black shadows of nuns coming and going. Mass being over, what could be pleasanter than a walk through the outlying parts of the town? It is a clear, warm, radiant, autumn day; the trees are beginning to change colour and the leaves to fall, fluttering, blowing, whirling noisily about in the wind. Against the brilliant blue sky the city's domes, towers, golden walls, blackened walls, high *miradors* and pillars stand in strong relief; in the distance opposite us, on the other side of the deep ravine in which the Tagus flows, is a panorama of wide-spread orchard land, parched, sober, intense—dull blue, faded ochre, dark green—El Greco's colours. In this peaceful morning hour these old nobles, Don Rodrigo, Don Lope, Don Gonzalo, may come out of the city and walk among the verdant gardens; they are carried out in litters and then walk for a while, bent, stumbling, burdened with the weight of their glorious campaigns at the side of Doña Isabel and Don Fernando; or those gallants with wide, pleated ruffs, who dream of an expedition to Italy or Flanders and write love-letters quoting Catullus and Ovid; or those charming young girls, hidden under voluminous cloaks, who in their all-enveloping black only allow a white hand to be seen, soft, satiny, long, tapering, ornamented perhaps with a ring of gold filigree work made by Alonso Nuñez, Juan de Medina, Pedro Díez, fine gold-workers of Toledo; or those septuagenarian or octogenarian duennas with their big slippers, wide bonnets, with perhaps a suspicion of a moustache, who go from house to house with lace and jewellery, who know the curative virtues of herbs and may even be able to supply you with the tooth of a hanged man, or rope from the gallows. . . . Our hidalgo walks in the midst of all this press of lovers and beloved. You have seen, have you not, in one of Velazquez' pictures—The Fountain of the Tritons—the deport-

ment of a gallant bowing to a lady? This supreme, deferential yet proud gesture, sober, without any offensive extremeness, without the French savour of affectation, discreet, elegant, light as air, this unique gesture belongs alone to Spain, this gesture, this slight inclination, is the complete, ancient, legendary courtesy of Spain, this gesture is Girón, Infantado, Lerma, Uceda, Alba, Villemediana; this gesture our hidalgo makes before some veiled ladies who are walking among the trees. Then he converses with them, talks discreetly, laughs, smiles, tells of his adventures. Perhaps these ladies, chatting in this way, insinuate—you know how—a wish for some refreshment, or a cool drink; then our friend, ill at ease for a moment, alleges a matter of urgent business that cannot be postponed, and bids them farewell; they smile into their cloaks; he walks off slowly with gallant bearing, his hand clenched on the handle of his sword. The morning is passing; twelve grave long strokes have sounded from the Cathedral; he must go home. At this hour, in every dining-room in the city, tables are being spread with white linen or damask cloths; our hidalgo returns to his mansion. At this point a painful scene is to be enacted. Have you yourself, at some time when you were worried and upset, paced a room in your house, silent, abstracted, unaware of your surroundings? You are not angry; not indignant; no reproach, no complaint is uttered by you; the anxiety you feel is something quite intimate and personal, a phase of your destiny you find it difficult to acquiesce in. . . . So our hidalgo paces the rooms and corridors of his house. While he is thus occupied, someone knocks at the door; it is Lázaro. If his brows had been knit before, his countenance is now serene.

“Lázaro, why didn’t you come in to dinner?” he enquires with a smile; “I waited but you didn’t come; so I dined alone.”

Lázaro has not had his dinner; but he has brought in some broken bread and a calf’s foot begged in the city; this he admits.

“Lázaro,” the hidalgo says, “I do not wish you to beg; people might think that you were begging for me. . . .”

But Lázaro sits down on the bench and begins to eat. The hidalgo continues to pace up and down watching him.

“You’re dining well, Lázaro,” he comments. “Is that a calf’s foot?”

“Calf’s foot it is, *señor*,” Lázaro replies.

"I confess there's nothing I like better," the good hidalgo observes.

Then Lázaro, who knows well that his master is fasting, offers him a piece. The hidalgo hesitates; but finally—forgive this derogation of his pride—finally, he eats. What, in that moment of hesitation, passed in this brave man's mind?

In the afternoon he walks again through the streets of Toledo; he chats for a moment with some friends—though he always says he has no friends, another of the traits that attach us to the man—or perhaps from the *acantilado* he watches the flowing of the soft red waters of the river. Then the convent bells ring again. Will our friend go to a Novena, or a Benediction, or a sermon? When he gets back, he says to Lázaro:

"Lázaro, it is too late to-night to go out for provisions; to-morrow will be plenty of time to replenish the larder."

Then he takes off his cape, shakes it well, folds it carefully, and lays it on the bench, undresses, and gets into bed.

This was in 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, or 1522. In this same century a woman, a great discerner of souls—Teresa de Jesús—wrote these words in her book, *The Foundations*: "There are persons of honour who, though dying of starvation, desire the more urgently that no stranger should pity them."

This is Spanish greatness; simplicity, fortitude, capacity to suffer long in silence beneath a serene exterior; national attributes of ours that seem to be vanishing.

THERE IS A VASTNESS

BY MABEL SIMPSON

There is a vastness in a death,
A dignity of space,
Untroubled even by a breath
The proud imperial face

Discloses nothing, and the breast
Where changes will occur
Goes down into the dust to rest
With no interpreter.

NOT DEATH

BY CHI-CHEN WANG

It is the wailing that chills me,
Not the wind.

It is its shadow that haunts me,
Not Death.



NEW YORK. BY A. WALKOWITZ

PHOENIX

BY PHILIPPA POWYS

GLORIOUS was the morning along the western shore. Bright grew the buttercups amid the early grass. Rich and red stretched the cliffs on either side. Blue lay the sea below; while bluer still rose the high vault of heaven above.

Who could forget? My soul forbid it. What had come over me this early summer morning? An awe beyond understanding, a rapture more stirring than sunshine! All remembrances became as naught! Here was the birth of a great joy. It rose with the salted smell of lain seaweed; it brought the music of slow breaking waves. It lingered in the curved lines of the boats, it played with the light of the sun on the water. It gathered with the waves, and it rose with the wings of many sea-birds. I stood and I trembled.

What was the meaning of the joy of my soul? My mind was perplexed beyond understanding. Why was I conscious of a strange wonder, a nervous excitement; while within me arose an exalted happiness?

At the same time my father stood black-coated beside me. He was tall. He looked straight before him, gazing at the sky and at the far horizon. Very still we stood. Presently in a solemn voice he exclaimed: "Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

I caught the echo of his word to my soul, for at that instant far below us I saw the moving figure of my lover.

There where the heat struck the round stones of the beach, there where the fishermen mended their nets, he appeared. There where the birds clamoured and whirled for offal, he came. It was as if he walked not. It seemed that his feet touched not the ground. There as he lingered between the boats and the sea, the sky grew still brighter, the waves played faster, and the gulls mewed and soared above him. The very elements knew that one blessed had come among them.

My father glanced below, and he spoke and he questioned: "Who goes there? A fisherman?"

I made no reply, but in silence my heart shivered. I could only watch. I saw then the beams of the sun strike the sides of boats

with a still stronger light; and with fearful strength it bore down on the ripples of the waves, on the steepness of the cliffs, and on the houses which crowded the valley. Glorified by the blue of sea, it fell over him as he handled the nets with the others upon the shore.

My heart was stirred within me, and I made as if I would go down to him, but lo! the arm of my father out-stretched before me. He stayed me. Then did I feel the rim of tears behind the clear sight of my eyes, even as blackening clouds of thunder approached unnoticed behind the inland hills. Perceiving them my father pointed again, and his long black arm looked more menacing than the gathering storm.

“The Lord have mercy upon us.”

Forthwith as he turned aside, a flash with sharp intensity revealed the massed purple of the vapour; while across the grassy inclines came the muttered sound of thunder.

I looked below where the sun still shone upon the shore. Yes, the powerful rays of the solar world were yet aslant upon the boats and upon the fishermen. In the pure nimbus of heaven they were made manifest. My soul rejoiced exceedingly, for where the sea-waves fell, sang the joy of days to come.

Bright evening light; peace and rest.
Borne away in a fishing boat.

Rise and fall; gurgle and ripple.
Hear the sea break against the sides
Rolling fast in from the ocean-fields.
My head on the ballast, I see him watch,
Keenly alive to the lights abeam,
Or trailing the line, he anxiously waits.

Drift and float. Haul hard and pull.
Hands on the long paddle, or pumping at stern.
Heave the net to, and unmesh the fish.
The waters all silver with flickering tails.

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I dreamed a dream one night; most terrible; so vivid, so real, that it came before me as a vision.

Thus it happened in the midst of my fearful imagination that day-time was turning to later noon and I was clinging to a lonely rock, surrounded by deep waters and torn by great waves. Fast they rose above me, covering me with foaming showers. Like the hissing froth from a monster's mouth they reared to drench me. Cold and cruel they fell upon me. Mightily afraid, I held in terror to the structure of the rocks, so jagged and yet so smooth. The palms of my hands were bleeding, they were more sticky from my own blood than from the saltness of the spray which overspread me. My feet slipped upon the moist weed as they strove in vain to escape the swirling force of the riven sea.

Many clouds over and around me filled the sky; dark and ferocious, racing clouds, wolf-like. . . . They gathered around knowing no mercy, for no mercy they knew. Their wild gusty breath came in panting fury from their bellies, confounding the countenance of the sun until it turned from fire to milk-white, pale as a mid-day moon. When from its sides came forth long arrows of anger, spurring the water to further wrath, hastening the winds to jealousy until they thundered forth in chaos and madness; bringing in their rear the great rains, which fell in sheets upon the billows and upon the sharp sides of the rocks.

Tremendous and terrible was the tumult from which I shrank. Shattered and broken was my soul within me.

All, all was evil; all, all was bent on destruction. What merciless flood-gates had broken? From whom could I receive salvation? To whom could I turn to be saved?

Only to the rock could I cling. Only in the tempest could I lift up my voice. In great trouble I cried aloud, but my call was as that of a piping bird, as that of a grasshopper in rustling corn. There was no one to succour me, no light to give me hope; and no miracle to bring peace to the sea.

But in violence did the waves rise in rapid approach; while colder than ice froze the beams of the departing sun. A darkness worse than night pressed its mad hands towards me; barrenness and death surrounded me.

What was the meaning of this wild desolation? Where was my call in the churning waste of water, in this wind-driven sky?

Of a sudden there came as if a voice from the mass of flying clouds . . . "Let go thy hands, who aught can save thee?" While I raised one, a great ship neared. She heaved towards me through the eternal rush of waters; with sides blacker than the vapours

above, she tossed. I sounded my voice, but there came no answer. Two arms reared upwards, only to be lost with the ship in the troughs and hills of tormented creation.

Thus was I forsaken! Thus had God forgotten me!

Bleeding fast was the blood of my hands, and drenched was the hair of my head; the strength of my legs was even as that of a new born calf.

Who could survive? Who could rally? Better to be thrown among lions; to be hurled from a high steeple; where forgetfulness would be established in death, and peace in unconsciousness.

How long, how much longer before the waves would envelope me, and the howling winds possess me?

To my soul there came no comfort.

Listen! What did I hear beyond the shriek of the wind? What did I hear beyond the pounding of the mighty waves? The voice of the man I loved, or the voice of his mate who lived with him! Only in fancy could it pass with the flying foam, with the long cords of the whipping rain.

No! To my astonishment I heard the call again. How had they seen? How had they heard?

Upon a raging sea they launched off their boat. By the fire of lightning they directed her. Upon the sides of the great waves they steered toward me; in the jeopardy of the gale they held their lives. Only to save me by the whirling of a rope, by the swiftness of an arm to deliver me. Thence I was assured from the ravages of a storm, and from the onslaught of the tempest I was gathered.

In the tossing fleeting craft I at last found safety; in a fishing-boat of wood and tar I regained my soul.

No longer will the roaring winds alarm me,
 No longer will the strong waves rear over me.
 Though soot-black clouds surround me
 And beating hail-stones fall across me,
 I trouble not:

I trouble not,
 For on a bed of nets I lay me down,
 Among pearl-like fish I find repose.
 To forget terror in the sound of the rowlock,
 To find sleep in the fall of the oars.
 He brought his arm forth to protect me,
 His wisdom found me out.



MISS MERRIAL HOPE. BY FRANK DOBSON

A DECLAMATION

BY KENNETH BURKE

I HAD become convinced that, by the exercise of the intelligence, life could be made much simpler and art correspondingly complex; that any intensity in living could be subdued beneath the melancholy of letters. And I tried to realize that we should all be saviours of mankind if we could, and would even slay one another for the privilege. I felt that the man who strove for dignity, nobility, and honour should have his task made as difficult and as hazardous as possible, and that in particular he should be forgiven no lapses in style. The day was long since past when I drew moustaches on the pictures of pretty women, though I still warmed to find that a new generation had arisen to continue the tradition, to carry on the torch which we had handed down to them.

On looking back upon one's life, he may sometimes feel that every moment of it was devoted to discomfiture, marked by either pain or uncertainty. Yet it is possible that by a constant living with torment, we may become immune to it, and that disintegration will fall only upon those whom adversity can overwhelm as a surprise, making little headway against those others, protected by cowardice, who would accept even prosperity with bitterness. For when I have heard much talk of the world's growing worse, I have known that this was indulged in by persons who had thought that it could grow better. And in any case, the belief in human virtue is no cause to neglect the beating of our children.

I finally came to hold that one cannot distinguish between friends and acquaintances—and from then on my converse became a monologue. I sought those who would listen, when I could not go without them, and did not scruple to avoid them if ever I became self-sufficient, believing that in these unnecessary moments they would be most likely to do me harm. It is obvious that I came by preference to talk most intimately with strangers, and to correspond with my friends on postcards. I discovered that in confessing a reprehensible act, I would sometimes add a still more

reprehensible interpretation, and that my own judgements upon myself had been scrupulously cherished against me.

Not as by accident, but rather as though some voice had called me, I would awake in the night, and thereafter there was no sleeping. Could vigilance, under these circumstances, be an advance retribution for some yet uncommitted act? Though not by earthquake, people are driven into the street, pawing at one another, gentle and even courteous when necessary, but in the absolute crude, direct, revolting—and it is this panic, or should I say this glacier movement, that must be considered. Did we not go on a premature search of an already premature spring—and did we not find the skunk cabbages well thrust up, and brooks temporarily crossing the road from every field, while the same Eumenides still rode upon the shoulders of both of us? Who, seeing us munch chocolate, would have thought us dangerous? As a precaution, we carried not pistols, but rum. Feeling the flask against our moving leg, we were assured, aiming to protect ourselves not against the malignant bite of snakes, but from the benign mordency of the season. (Oh tender psychopaths—if you be young and one of us, and it is spring, you suffer beneath the triple proestrus of climacteric, personality, and calendar. I the while being condemned as an apologist; as though he who speaks were more goaded than he who remains silent!)

It was at this time also, while travelling south alone, that I met a man who attracted me by the obvious disquietude of his movements. As he sat facing me, we were finally able to talk with each other, though the conversation was an unsatisfactory one; for between long pauses, while both of us looked out the window, he would sigh and say, "Death is a strange thing," or "I should not fear to die," remarks which seemed to demand an answer as strongly as they precluded it. The real meaning of this, I came to understand in time, was that he was hurrying to a woman who was near death. After he had spoken at length, and in particular had talked with much understanding concerning suicide, at my suggestion we went to the back of the train, where he explained to me that he was religious, and believed firmly in the process of the Eucharist. Then, as we stood swaying with the car, and watching the tracks untwist from beneath us, he said that he had prayed, and that he was sure this much of his prayer would be granted—that he would arrive at the woman's bedside either while the life was yet in her,

or before the animal heat had left the body. This, he insisted, would be solace. It is in such matters as these, I answered, that we may feel the divisions between us: for I could be certain from the way he spoke, that he had thought a great deal upon this matter, and that his preference was a strong one—yet for my part, without the assistance of this death to sharpen the imagination, I did not see how he could feel so niggardly a concession to be the answer to a prayer.

I talked with him further, asking him questions as though he had come from some strange region. And upon my enquiring as to what he feared most of the future, he answered: "Destitution. Destitution of finances, destitution of mind, destitution of love. The inability to retort. The need of possessing one's opposite in years, sex, and texture of the skin; and the knowledge that by this need one has been made repugnant. The replacing of independence by solitude." His reply, I said, suggested that he must be well versed in this gloomy lore. I was sure that had I invited him further, he could have discoursed with authority on many aspects of fear and undemonstrative disaster, though every conclusion would have been drawn solely from the laboratory experiments of his own biography. With him, surely, each adversity would have its parallel in thought, its ideological equivalent, its sentence. And I knew that the world would hear no more of him.

Need one, his eyes shifting with humility, need one who is uneasy on finding himself in two mirrors, need one whose pity of mankind is but the projection of his own plight, need such a one relinquish however little his anger with those who cross his interests? Would a gifted daisy, from thinking upon his crowded slum conditions in the fields, find thereby any less necessity for resisting the encroachments of a neighbour? We must learn to what extent our thoughts are consistent with our lives, and to what extent compensatory; to what extent ideals are a guide to behaviour, and to what extent they are behaviour itself. We would not deny the mind; but merely remember that as the corrective of wrong thinking is right thinking, the corrective of all thinking is the body.

You moralistic dog—admitting a hierarchy in which you are subordinate, purely that you may have subordinates; licking the boots of a superior, that you may have yours in turn licked by an underling. To-day I talk out to you anonymously, not because

I should fear to tell you this to your face, but because my note of scorn would be lacking. And I would have you perceive the scorn even more than understand its logic. I would speak about you as a gargoyle would speak which, in times of storm, spouted forth words. Further, I have many times changed my neck-tie to go in search of you and explain to you my resentment, meaning to give you at once an analysis of yourself and an awareness of my hatred—but when I found you, lo! we were companions, exchanging confidences, congratulating each other, and parting with an engagement for our next meeting. I have watched you each year come to consort more irresponsibly with God; I have seen you take on ritual dignity, as the impure take on ritual cleanliness by laving the hands or by spilling goat's blood with the relevant mummery. I have seen you grow brutal under a vocabulary of love. If you wanted to thief, your code would expand to embrace the act of thieving. Feeling no need to drink, you will promptly despise a drunkard. Nor do you hesitate to adopt such attitudes. Yet he who flicks a weed unthinkingly is to be condemned as heinous, while a crime brewed in protracted spite is pardonable—for the doer, had his equipment been directed otherwise, would have been capable of great pity.

It is true that you are absolved of guilt through your disinterest in these matters, where I am guilty through too much husbandry of my despite. That a stranger, asking us each about the other, would receive from you a kindly, regretful account of my errors, and from me an explosion of venom against you, a credo of vindictiveness which would turn him from me in loathing. This third person, this "disinterested party" (and I already contemn him like yourself!) would further think it significant against me that, for every item of good fortune which has been bestowed upon you, he may find a corresponding item of failure in myself. But since even humility too consistently maintained becomes a boast, how could I expect otherwise than that my accusations against you should redound upon their author? Yes, I have shouted in still places that this aversion is beyond our clashing interests, that it is not rivalry, but *ars poetica*, and as such would necessarily entail rivalry as a subsidiary, but far subsidiary, aspect.

For all such reasons, and primarily because I was not minded to discredit my position through the difficulty of finding an account of

it which could also serve as its justification, I have been silent, until I can be silent no longer. I have waited, trusting that from somewhere would come a formula, which I could point to, saying: That figure there is you, and this other is myself. But despite much persistent praise of patience, I feel forced into a choice. And I have remained apart from you, that I might not be weakened by your good nature.

Yet there are times, in the very midst of such preoccupations, when my retaliation is of a different order. Both of us, and even my recurrent melancholy memories, seem separated from me, as I find myself busily at work upon my utterance. I would, on such occasions, deem it enough to place antinomies upon the page, to add up that which is subtracted by another, to reduce every statement by some counter-claim to zero. Did each assertion endow with life, and each denial cause destruction, at the close of my deposition the message would be non-existent; but, by the nature of words, after this mutual cancellation is complete, the document remains.

A GARDEN

BY GEORGE WHITSETT

The frozen camellias upon their litter of glamorous pain;
The froneded aurora, gossamer, dampened with rain;
The timorous lips of the river, whimpering among
 the leaves;
The gorge, palsied and austere;
The wounded palm that grieves.

The step that is mocked and forsaken;
The hand that is covered with shadow;
The lintel that a wind has shaken.

THE SEAL

BY L. A. G. STRONG

JUST before six the rain lifted, and Rosamond started off to the shore by herself. George had been loud in his outbursts at its continuance, and after tea had sat down to write some letters. There had been all day in which to write them, but he would not begin; he kept pacing up and down the little farmhouse sitting-room and watching the sky. Now, characteristically, he would not come out till they were finished. He liked company when swimming, so Rosamond was going down to the shore to wait for him, in case he got the letters done in time.

She crossed the road, climbed a low fence, every wire bright with raindrops, and went slowly along the path through the broom. Now and then she brushed against a branch which sent off a delightful shower. A rabbit, hopping up the bank in front of her, left a little track like smoke on the silver grass. Even the burn below her, running dark and passionately full, made hardly a sound.

After the room at the farm, which on a wet day was dank and stuffy and on any day too small to hold a large fretful man, Rosamond's sense of escape was complete. She would have liked a walk in the rain by herself, along the rocks, and up by the headland; but George wanted her company when he went out, and if the weather had cleared while she was gone, he would have spent the evening trying not to have a grievance: a generous effort, so patent, and so unsuccessful that she could not steady herself even by concentrating on its fairmindedness. She was glad now that she had not come out before.

There was a sound across the burn. Old Mrs McLean had flung open her door, to feed the chickens. Rosamond waved, but could not be sure that the old lady saw her.

It was Rosamond's country and everything had always been the same. Mrs McLean's door had always made the same noise, and when she called her dog home in the evening it was always with the same call, for each dog had the same name, although this was the third Darach Rosamond had known.

Last summer, on their honeymoon, she and George had only been able to manage a bare ten days, but George had sworn the loss should be made good, and had dedicated the whole of the next holiday to the farm. That was one of the nicest things about George; he did want one to be happy. Still, he enjoyed the place too, tremendously, so that Rosamond need not reproach herself.

The broom stopped short, and she came out upon the sand. Flowers grew upon it until the final slope of the sand-hills, where only the reeds could live. Beyond was the beach. The thick carpeting of moss felt delightful, quite different to her bare feet, from the grass.

Since she had married, the place seemed somehow changed. Its immediate beauties were obvious, but there had always been a great deal more for her than the lights and colours which called forth George's "By Joves" and "I say, Rosamonds." George's personality was so loud—well, so vigorous—that one often needed a good while alone to let his echoes die away. It was lovely to have him interested in what one did, and he took a real, intelligent interest: yet the result was rather like his trick of taking up and continuing, in a hearty baritone, the tune she was humming quietly to herself as she did the housework.

Almost imperceptibly, the rain started again. She reached the sand-hills, turned to her right, and went through the gap beside the burn. She loved the sudden sight of the Islands one had this way, and, even though she remembered that to-day they would probably be invisible, she did not like breaking the pure face of the sand-hills with great sliding foot-marks.

The smaller Islands were lost, but a dark strip of Skye showed beneath a layer of woolly cloud. The sea was flat, and pale as a sheet. There was not even a bird on the beach: and the only sound was the indefinable whisper of soft rain upon sand.

She went very slowly down to the sea's edge, scooped a dry place—it was surprising how soon, even after a day's rain, one reached dry sand—and sat down, spreading her mackintosh about her like a tent. The rain was quickening: it began to patter audibly on the mackintosh, to collect in little gleaming rivulets, and run down jerkily into the sand. All was still and intimate. She looked slowly about her, and then down again at the rivulets.

Some instinct made her look at the sea. At first there was nothing, and then a dark object broke the surface. It looked like the

float for a lobster-pot: then it moved, and she saw that it was a seal. It was looking at her. She did not stir.

For a moment the head moved indecisively. Doubtless the seal could not make her out. Then, with a snort which carried perfectly over the still water, it dived again.

"Oh," breathed Rosamond, heart-broken, "don't go away"; it seemed that her own country was rejecting her, if the seal could not trust her. She scanned the surface in an agony, and saw at last an unmistakable dark shadow, clear over the white sand: and there he was again, with a sort of oiled suddenness, away to the right, but definitely nearer, staring at her. Without moving, Rosamond began to whistle, in low, clear, liquid notes, like the rain. The dark head became motionless. He was listening. Then she put into the notes her very soul, her childhood, all that meant happiness: she was calling to her own country, in one of the Island tunes she loved. Her soul and breath were one, and even in the uttermost of her appeal she had a sense of ecstasy, as of an artist consummating his vision alone, with none to praise him.

Then, slowly and softly, the big seal swam towards her, his dark head sleek on the water, his wondering eyes fixed upon her. Tears started to Rosamond's eyes.

"Oh," she breathed. "Bless you. You darling."

When he was quite near, she began to sing, in a low voice, the Seal Croon, and the Sea-gull of the Land under Waves, and all the time the great nursery creature stared at her with soft eyes, in attention and vague delight. When she stopped, he blew, and made a commotion in the water.

She began again, but something had alarmed him; and even as she realized this, she heard a hearty voice behind her, and George came charging headlong over the sand-hills, bringing down avalanches with each leap.

"Dr-ink to me o-o-nly—"

The seal gave him a long look, then it looked at Rosamond, and was gone, silently, a black shadow, detached from land and sea.

"By Jove," bellowed George excitedly, "there goes a seal—look, Rosamond—see him?—There he goes—there!—By Jove, a whopper!"

He plunged up panting to where she sat.

"I'd no idea they came in so close," he cried. "Did you see him?"

"Yes," said Rosamond.



SIAMESE CAT. BY DUNCAN FERGUSON

TWO POEMS

BY HAROLD LEWIS COOK

THE QUEST

I, who made of love a rope
To hang me by,
Can find in all this world no place
Wherein to die.

And I, who long have made of Time
A tumbril cart,
Cannot, however great my strength,
Make the wheels start.

Where is the tree grown tall enough?
Where is the hour?
Till then no pity in a leaf,
No music in a tower.

TURN AWAY!

This play of wind in the trees,
What is it to the dead?
And what is the sun to them,
Or white stars overhead?

So long have they slept here—
An eternity alone—
That, sleeping, they have changed:
They who were flesh are stone.

And the soft worm that creeps
Has turned away again,
And the sharp mole, and roots,
And all sound, and the rain.

TWO POEMS

And now men turn away
Forgetting who lies here.
The graves have sunk. Oh none
Any more goes near

Save only the dipping moon,
And a snow of stars at night,
Save only the toad and the bat,
And time, and spring, and light.

MATTER AND THE JOYOUS ART

BY H. M. KALLEN

HISTORICALLY, materialists are a sad race. It is true that Democritus their forefather was called The Laughing Philosopher, but his laughter, I am pretty sure, came through the other side of his mouth. It was not from the joy of life he laughed. Resigned to Necessity and Death, he savoured a dour satisfaction from feeling superior to those who fancied themselves free and immortal. He laughed at them that he might not weep for himself. The classic Epicureans who followed him were moved in the same ways. They feasted out of no joy in the feast, but out of the fear of death. Their pleasures were not a yea-saying to life, but an anaesthetic against the terror lest they lose it. That which they affirmed, when they affirmed anything, was quietist, ascetic, and withdrawn: vision without hope, pity without endeavour; regretful acquiescence in the inevitable fate which natural law imposed and true reason revealed. And ever since, Materialists have either been sad and sensual like Omar Khayyam or pitiful and puritan like George Santayana. Matter by itself they might have happily enjoyed; but the laws of matter, their inexorable compulsion, their fatality never-to-be estopped, the weakness and helplessness of man before their power, these were reminders of death which set up and kept up the prevailing materialist mood.

Time was when also Bertrand Russell walked among the prophets mourning human fate before the ark of natural law. Then he glorified the liberty which a man could win by insight into the ineluctable bondage. He wrote of such a free man's worship, regretted death, and made a consolation against the weakness and alieny of our spirit in the world of nature by a philosophy which commended acknowledgement, understanding, and resignation.

But that time was before Einstein had traced the geodesic of

NOTE: Philosophy. By Bertrand Russell. 8vo. 307 pages. W. W. Norton and Company. \$3.

The Analysis of Matter. By Bertrand Russell. 8vo. 408 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$6.

a new heaven and Bohr had laid out the electronic ground-plans of a new earth. Since these re-creations, impenetrable matter has become dissolvable into something more like mind; imponderable mind has become condensed into something more like matter; law has ceased to be so inexorable and determinism so determinate. The perspectives of mind have entered into the constitution of matter; the causality of matter has become a point of reference for mind. Man and nature are seen to be more akin than was formerly thought. Idealism has gained new arguments furnished by physics, though because physics furnishes them Idealism can hardly be truer than Materialism. Rather do both point to a *tertium quid* which is the neutral stuff whence matter and mind both emerge. This neutral stuff consists of "events." Matter is a series or process of such events in Einsteinian time-and-space. Mind is another series of such events culminating inside our heads. The laws of mind are as atomic as the laws of matter, but the forms of matter are there defined by physics, and the forms of mind are there revealed, ultimately, by introspection; they involve especially memory and images, the subjectivity of individual perspectives. For this reason the Behaviorist account of mind, although it is to be used to the limit, cannot be an ultimately correct one. Mind and matter meet and overlap in perceptions. These we take twice over; once as events in our experiences, again as events in the external world in which the laws of physics verify themselves or fail to. In them are the ultimate data of our knowledge, neither mental nor material, neither true nor false, but organizable into matter or mind and by their uses, verities or errors.

This, I think, is the novel phase of Mr Russell's current teaching. Some of it he has said before, but he says it here with a new emphasis and new significance. To no small degree moreover, Philosophy is a plain man's summary of the specialist's account of matter in *The Analysis*. To a still greater degree it is Mr Russell's own latest summing-up and present arrangement of things he has said elsewhere more fully and technically. That there also should be much that is novel and debatable goes, of course, without saying: Russell is among those rare philosophers who rethink, rather than repeat, and who are not afraid to change their minds and say so. If there were space, there are several propositions I should like to argue with him: especially the one that the mind is inside the

head, and his notion of a static "truth." Even if we could come to no agreement on these subjects, I should be inclined to welcome him among the pragmatists. If he has not arrived, he is on the threshold. But that he can pass it I am not sure.

The obstruction lies, I think, in his subversive logical skill rather than in any radical differences of perception and insight. I have already called attention, in *THE DIAL*,¹ to a certain incommensurability between the cubistic angular architecture and transparency of Russell's style and the confusion and opacity of the world it applies to. To those actually working in matter or operating with mind, the clear order of *The Analysis* must have the thinness of a dream; the structure of the *Philosophy*, the pattern of a picture in a frame. It may be, indeed, that Mr Russell is himself convinced that the world must be prevailingly a clear order behind the dark confusion, for he suggests that we know so much physics and so little anything else because the structure of language is an adequate sample of the structure of time-and-space. Hence, even when he is acknowledging the reality of change, or recognizing the fringe of vagueness that attends the clearest thing, he gives an impression of something unchanging, static, and finished, as more important. Old habits of language and logic seem sharper than new convictions about nature and man; words and symbols stand each outside the other in unyielding arabesques of thought designed to name and point to a world all sequences of "events" that compenetrates and overlap. The happier order of the language can hardly fail to infect the troublesome movement of the vision that occasions it.

But the general effect of this vision on the temper and tone of our philosopher has a savour no reader should miss. Philosophy is a gay book, given its theme. In it the author is not only at ease, but at play. It neither exhorts nor denounces nor warns; it enlightens. With natural law and scientific determinism still at the heart of its vision, it comes, not as a catechism of consolations, but as an adventure toward the good life.

"The world presented for our belief by a philosophy based upon modern science," Mr Russell concludes, "is in many ways less alien to ourselves than the world of matter as conceived in former cen-

¹ *Logical Form and Social Salvation*, *THE DIAL*, December 1927.

turies. The events that happen in our minds are parts of the course of nature, and we do not know that the events which happen elsewhere are of a totally different kind. The physical world, so far as science can show at present, is perhaps less rigidly determined by causal laws than it was thought to be; one might, more or less fancifully, attribute even to the atom a kind of limited free will. There is no need to think of ourselves as powerless and small in the grip of vast cosmic forces. . . . No doubt there are limits to our power . . . but we cannot say what the limits are except in a quite abstract way, such as that we cannot create energy. . . . What is important is to be able to direct energy into this or that channel, and this we can do more and more as our knowledge of science increases. . . . History, science, and philosophy all make us aware of the great collective achievements of mankind. . . . Philosophy should make known to us the ends of life, and the elements in life that have value on their own account. However our freedom may be limited in the causal sphere, we need admit no limitation to our freedom in the sphere of values: what we judge good on its own account, we may continue to judge good, without regard to anything but our own feeling. . . . Love, beauty, knowledge, and joy of life: these things retain their lustre however wide our purview. . . .”

The knowledge of matter which is science, then, sets us free for the affirmations of life. Materialism, which had begun in a realization of human helplessness and a contemplation of death is herein transformed into a realization of power and a vision of freedom and excellence. The philosophy of matter becomes the practice of a joyous art.



MISS MERRIAL HOPE. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP

MEDIAEVAL

BY OLIVER LA FARGE *2nd*

WE left San Juan Bautista, mosquitoes, cafés, dysentery, late in the afternoon. The hot day dissolved into soft evening, full of gracious coolness and the scent of green things. We were strung out between the trees in single file. Night silhouettes never seem clear-cut in the tropics but velvety at the edges. The stars themselves are bigger, less definite, and faintly golden.

I caught up with the pack mules and whistled them into life. They disappeared again before me. Where roads forked, our head man would wait, a cigarette gleaming and fading, someone half seen on a moving horse ahead of the pack train, calling in Spanish, "This way." It was so nearly dark that when I pulled hard at my cigarette, for a few seconds afterwards I could not see the trees.

At the Rio Colorado we woke the boatmen, unpacked by the light of a kerosene lantern, and led the animals down the bank—wide-nostrilled, doubtful. Saddles and packs were piled into the long narrow dug-out. The lantern followed. Horses and mules with high heads and erect ears moved reluctantly into the dark ripples. The dug-out left the bank, we saw the spot of light recede, the heads of animals, and the outline of the man in the stern, erect, with his twelve-foot pole like a spear, all surrounded by a sphere of blackness.

My turn came; I sat on a saddle amidships with a couple of halters in each hand. The canoe was just of a width to let my knees spread normally, yet those two men, bow and stern, stood high and calm. We made a trickling sound in the water. Beyond the reach of the lantern it was oily black. The horses were like chess knights, mere outstretched heads and distended nostrils. They pulled the halters taut. We travelled through nowhere, then we grounded and the animals heaved forward with a rush.

We packed, saddled, and went on. This is the way people used to travel in the Middle Ages, I thought, we have penalized ourselves with good roads and bridges.

The air was full of the warm caressing night and the growth of things. There was Orion in his winter position, high up. The Bears cannot compare with him; he is the Lord of Nostalgia.

White houses on each side of the trail showed ghostly. They became frequent, closed together to line an unreal street. We turned to the left. Our head man had stopped under a lantern. The pack train bunched up behind him, standing in their tracks, heads low.

"This is Nacajuca, we can sleep at the Guest House here."

Ahead of us we heard a guitar. Our horses' hooves rang on cobble-stones, we were riding with a gentle clank of iron shoes and whisper of bits and spurs, between white-colonnaded shuttered houses. There was another lamp, and three men under an archway seated before a fourth playing a guitar, the night watch. One of them took us across the plaza, past a simple church with an outside stairway to the belfry making an eccentric arc of shadow against the white wall, past the market, just a square roof on white columns and cross-beams of structural necessity, which a lantern within turned into a vastly significant, modern design.

We stopped by another colonnaded house. The watchman hammered on the door.

"Doña Teresa, Doña Teresa, aquí vienen gente para posar la noche!"

For a long time silence; then a light, and whispering behind the bolted door. We all shouted.

Something was said from within. There were explanations and hesitations. At last the door swung open, and Doña Teresa inspected us, candle in hand. We rode into the front room, unsaddled, and drove our horses through a dark second room and an archway behind, that might have given on to the Pit. We had travelled so far, we arrived so late; she made a motherly bustle as she prepared cocoa while we slung our hammocks.

PRELUDE

BY RALPH CHEEVER DUNNING

Seeing this ulcer redden to a head
I will aloof and draw a parallel
Under the Lion and out towards Hercules
Along the frontiers of the false eternal
So when we meet in hate or part in love
We'll know not which is under or above
Nor any word that any tongue can tell
Shall make this corpse of honour seem less dead.

*Use the old values, speak the old jargon still
Life is a rigolade, a dream, or what you will.*

I have no friend that I should say farewell.
A lonesome heaven and a separate hell
Divide my soul. Bastard of Chance
The Comet of a Phantom Universe
Too fond to bless and much too proud to curse
Still wouldst thou live and let thy memory die
In souvenirs of opium afternoons
Lying at ease till evening and a moon
So big it made a margin of the sky
Covered thy loves and dawning wish to die?
Who shall forgive the laugh thou wouldst not laugh
And pride that stiffened at a kiss as such?
"Not modesty but scorn" thine epitaph
Thy lying epitaph who loved the world too much.

THE WATERMELON AND THE SAINT

(For Lyle Saxon)

BY LEON SRABIAN HERALD

I NEVER saw my father with a spade or a hoe trifling with other crops for so much as an hour, but have seen him come out of the watermelon-patch with soiled greenish hands. Boastfully he would show us the weeds he had extracted and would watch his sons weeding the patch as if he could see the death of every tare being added to each vine as life.

He would explain to us that most great things have humble lineages. The good melon vines were an example, and akin to the human race. Human beings bearing the standards of Time have been nurtured by humble parents as had these luscious watermelons.

To the son that was fired by such analogies to work hardest, the father made a promise: "This summer on the Feast Day of Saint Ouleanus you shall take a load of watermelons to distribute to the worshippers." This pledge meant little to any but the one who received it. For Saint Ouleanus was only a poor saint, the patron of the neighbourhood. He was so poor that he owned not even a small monastery. Nor was he known to the people, either through books or on the wings of folk-lore. The Armenians—essentially a water-worshipping people—had given the name to a sweet little spring which bubbled out of the rock. Why should children be jealous of their brother? Almost every spring coming out of a rock was christened, or sanctified by a name—was called a saint. Indeed, aside from the cognomen nobody knew anything about him. His shrine was close by our land. The only offerings denoting a saintly presence were the native shrubs decorated with innumerable rags or ribbons which people had torn from their clothes or brought with them in homage to the unknown martyr.

My father's love for his watermelon-patch was greater than for all the rest of the crops. The watermelons—kings of the realm of the fruits—were to him as gold to a miser. It was not his wish to keep them to rot but to be with them, to give them away with his

own hands, and to boast of his new crop, or hear others praise it. How often I have contracted the joy that was his as I watched him artfully manipulating a watermelon and opening the heart of the fruit—as if it were his own heart—to serve to an appreciating friend.

To be able to convince him that it was necessary he should be in such and such a place, even for one day, rather than abiding by his patch was difficult. During the entire summer not more than half a dozen matters could challenge him to leave his hallowed post. If the people saw him in the village during the summer months they would attach a mysterious meaning to his visit. How could he prefer them to his watermelons? And they would devise a cause with dimensions.

To guess his grief in detaching himself from his watermelons was easy. But his joy on returning to them was inconceivable. On his return then, how befitting a miracle in relation to them! He would fall among the vines as a parent after a long absence embraces his children. Criss-cross, the breadth and length of the field he went several times, arranging each vine that had been disturbed by the wind, apportioning the ground equally among the vines which were tender, pulling a large weed here or there, straightening himself, with a victorious snort—a sign also that he was in good humour. Then simultaneously he would make a pompous show of the tares as if they were thieves or destructive animals he had captured, and would cast them on top of a promising young melon to protect it from the sun, and as warning to the uninitiated.

He would then take slow and courteous leave of plant, blossom, and fruit, and begin his tour of inspection. First he noticed a freshly excavated rat-hole on the rim of the field. The cursed rats always know the rim from the field! Well, that could be settled; he would have someone flood the hole. A little farther on hoof-marks arrested him—as irritating as rat-holes. That son of his should not graze the oxen so close to the vines! Inspecting every dale, hill, and tree, he would make his circle wider and wider, as an eagle in search of something gyrates until he reaches his apex.

I recall a time when he left his field for a day and a night. A cousin had been appointed in his place to guard the watermelons with me, and in Put Aringe a cousin was more sociable with a cousin than a father ever could be with a son. When I was with my father

sleep always came early to sharpen the dulness. But a cousin's quips were more powerful than sleep. We stayed up until the late moon was out. That was the first time I had seen the big watermelons in the moonlight—animals more mysterious than minotaurs—drinking the moonlight, slowly expanding. It was only after much joy that fun and sleep were reconciled.

Cousin left early in the morning and I went to irrigate the turnips and cabbages. While I was guiding the water, oblivious of everything, the previous night's vision of the watermelons was re-created in me—of the watermelons like giant elephants drinking moonlight. I hastened to open one of the fruits with my long knife. I had never before given a thought to what the real watermelon was. But no sooner had the fruit revealed its remarkable red pattern than I remembered the untrustworthy stream, and looking, I could see it tear the side of the field as when a live wire comes in contact with a human body. I left the watermelon and hastened to the accident, forgetting to observe the almost animate designs of the fruit, forgetting to drink moonlight, forgetting my celestial breakfast.

My father's impatient form burst from the opposite horizon as the sun all at once, standing on its rays, illuminated the field. Man and the sun embraced the watermelon patch at the same instant. One could not tell whose was the glory. My father's hands, which were clasped on his back, fell pendulous to his sides. He had seen the divided watermelon. He looked all around. Could someone have played a trick? The only human outline was his son's a field away. The fruit was freshly cut; his son would have had no reason to abandon it. He sat on his haunches and let himself think. Finally he arrived at a startling conclusion and pined that one worthy of a miracle should hear it.

The thought was sent out; the answer came in the person of the venerable miller. All millers are venerable. As in winter a priest is being sought, so in summer is a miller expected—either to come, or to go to. The village mills were near because the stream of water was close by our land. The miller had brought for my father, a cake made by his own hands, which was a proof that he had not come simply to be treated to a watermelon.

Having finished my morning's duties, I went to my father who

was sitting under the tall poplar-trees with his friend, to answer what questions he considered necessary to ask. But he did not seem to be interested in asking questions. He was in a reverent mood. I thought: Is this mood in honour of the miller?—this miller whose grey beard reached down as the branches of the trees reached up, and was sensitive to the wind as the poplar-leaves. This miller, it was said, was never known to have buttoned the breast of his clothes even in the bitter cold of winter. He looked reverently toward the melon field, then at my father. "May God wither evil eyes ere their greedy looks wither a single leaf of your bountiful patch!"

"Aye, aye, friend," assented my father, "God has already established your wish." The miller stroked his beard with both hands for having expressed God's wish so appropriately.

"It is a miracle, no less," continued my father and the miller was awed as if he had already been told of the miracle. "I have been looking around the field and have found no trace of robbers, no foreign foot-tracks, no plant disturbed. Yet, friend, on yonder hill is a freshly cut melon, as sweet as it looks. It seems not to have been touched by human hands. Had this been the work of human hands, the man would have tasted it, would have taken it along with him, would have done something. . . . It would be false for me to have any belief but that Saint Ouleanus has visited this humble patch, has selected a small fruit yet undoubtedly one of the finest, and has opened it for the birds that they might help themselves . . ."

I sat clasping my wet legs with my bare arms, watching rainbows in the waterdrops that were rolling down my legs—embryos of rainbows implanted in the drops by the morning sun. The prisms rolled down and disappeared—were shattered about my feet.

"Aye, aye, friend," sighed my father, "so it must have been!"

"Aye, aye," said the vibrant beard of the miller, "so it must!" the intonations of their voices sounding sweeter and sweeter. My father gave me a side glance to see if I were moved, weeping. But at this moment I detached myself from them. A gigantic egoistic feeling was beginning to arise in me and I was forced to slip away from the spellbound narrator and his audience—to laugh.

The story so faithfully sown, took root in the miller and grew

JUNGLE RIVER

and spread till it became one of the most famous and accepted of miracles. The miller stated that he had seen the very Saint with his earthly eyes, had observed the martyr in the patch and the manner in which he had cut the melon, how he had prayed with outstretched arms, and finally drifting away, had disappeared in the air.

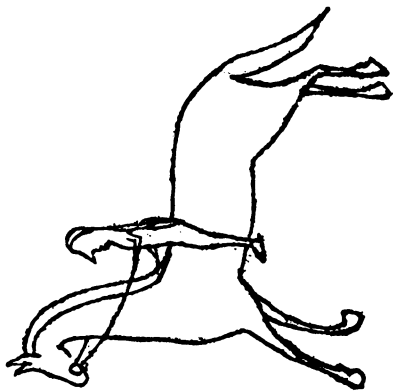
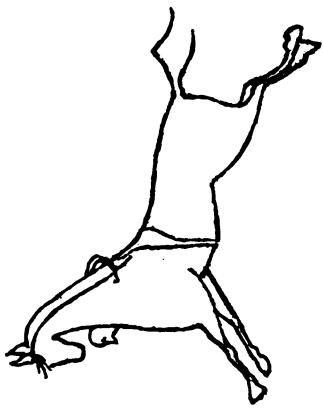
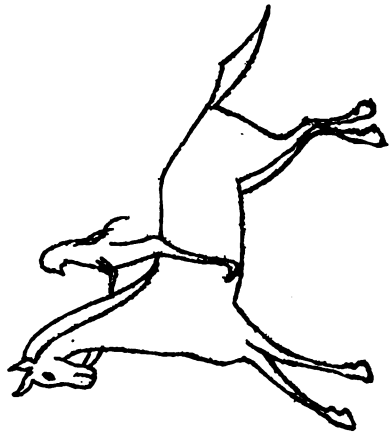
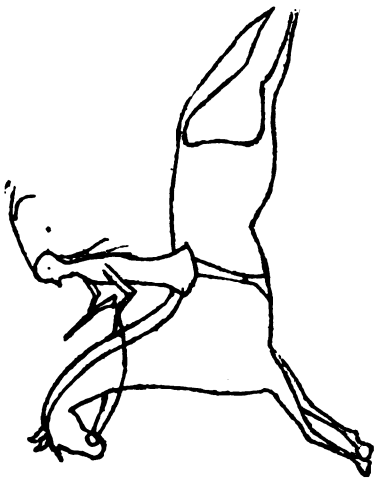
As a result the miller was given the privilege of taking unto himself as many watermelons in a year as he could use.

JUNGLE RIVER

BY GLENN WARD DRESBACH

The hot moist breath that tropic earth exhales
Is held in jungle by the heavy air
And colours glinting like a serpent's scales
Creep out of shadow-patterns everywhere.
And under boughs that coiling vines have bent
The oily silent river slides away
Into the insect-whirl, at last to vent
Its yellow poison in an azure bay.

On each dead limb a buzzard's silhouette
Observes the drifting log turn crocodile,
And in a hollowed log a back of jet
Streams and the paddle dips another mile
To some half tipsy wharf where produce piles
And black girls wait with moist inviting smiles.



IRISH LETTER

July, 1928

THERE are still two Irelands, and I only accentuate this statement when I say that if you ask a patriotic Irishman—whether the final product of civilization in Ireland is exactly a patriot is another matter—if any progress is being made towards unity, he will answer, Certainly, meaning that it is his Ireland which is prevailing. The Ireland which calls itself “Irish Ireland,” and is still strong enough to enforce the teaching of the Irish language in the schools, professes confidence that in a generation or two Ireland will be an Irish-speaking community; while the Anglo-Irish, elated by the victory of their ideals, are at least equally confident that less and less will be heard of the old language as Ireland profits by the lessons of responsibility. It is hardly possible to doubt that in this matter it is the Anglo-Irish who are right. Ireland has been saved by the sensible conduct of the old Unionist population, who have given their whole-hearted support to the new government. When we consider their admirable behaviour, and contrast the good humour with which they have adapted themselves to an unwelcome situation with the vague and still clamorous dissatisfaction of those who have brought it about, we must conclude that Unionism has proved the best school of nationality.

“Irish Ireland,” however, possesses one important advantage over its rival, similar to the advantage enjoyed in a divided kingdom by the party which retains in custody the person of the monarch. The old Irish language belongs in a special sense to this party inasmuch as it is this party which would make the language, with all its indefeasible claims to an ancient inheritance, the supreme arbiter of the situation. “No Irish language, no Irish nation”; “it is impossible,” says Mr De Valera, “to imagine Ireland free without its being Gaelic.” The Anglo-Irish are willing to maintain the old language, to put its name to all public documents, to give it comfortable days in honourable retirement, but it is “Irish Ireland” which wishes to revive its absolute sway. What then to do with

this inconvenient claimant? I have a private impression that the newly constituted Free State government is seriously embarrassed by this problem, and would give a good deal to be rid of it. I hardly think that the language is now much loved really for its present self: in itself it is rather a cross-grained ignorant old survivor, addicted to cursing and to crooning snatches of ancient song in a voice which makes one feel creepy. There are indeed many who love it for what it was; and when, like Edmund Spenser in his day, we cause the passionate love-poems written in Irish even one hundred years ago "to be translated unto us," we cannot but feel towards this old language as we might feel when gazing upon the withered age of some village crone, renowned in former days for her matchless beauty and romantic history.

It is a pity that Ireland has never produced a writer with a philosophic cast of mind, at least one to whom people in Ireland generally have been disposed to listen. From the cultural point of view they possess one great advantage in the presence amongst them of an ancient language, and of a closed literature reaching back into a past which continually piques and baffles the historic imagination. This was enough to give Ireland, for literary purposes, the full status of nationality. It is impossible to over-estimate the advantage of this possession as a source of rejuvenation and distinction in the use of the work-a-day English language. But to see advantages in their proper places belongs to the philosophic mind, and this gift of the gods to Ireland has become a veritable apple of discord, simply because there is no one in Ireland who knows precisely what to do with it. It was an evil day for Ireland when Eris the goddess of discord (politics in a word) snatched at this great cultural gift; for in abusing the gift, Ireland is as likely as not to forfeit its use. No one indeed could perform a greater service to Ireland than to show convincingly what Ireland should do with it. Politics interfered in this matter where it had no real concern. The whole argument of "Irish Ireland" is extremely questionable, and it may very well be that the deliberate change by a nation of its language is a far more powerful demonstration of national vitality than the most tenacious preservation of a language from century to century could ever be. We see this in the history of Ireland, where in the time of O'Connell, with as much delibera-

tion as nations use in such matters, the Irish-speaking population, wearying of that ancient world into which the language closed it took to English, rising at once into a political self-consciousness, which proved highly embarrassing to its imperial neighbour. Contrast in this respect Ireland with Wales, where no O'Connell rose to convince his compatriots that they were "the finest peasantry in the world," and that to demonstrate their equality with the English they had only to wear top-hats and to talk English at least as well as the yokels of Yorkshire and Sussex. Wales indeed has had its Lloyd George if not its Parnell; but where are its Bernard Shaws and George Moores, its Yeatses and AEs? I have never been able to get rid of an impression of the spiritual status of Wales acquired one evening long ago in Bangor, when to beguile the tedium of waiting for a train I walked up and down the main street and was presently joined by a man who proved to be a village schoolmaster. As we walked, he confessed to me that he had suddenly felt the need of talking to somebody in English—"in Corwen, where I live," he said, "they talk of nothing but farming." Yet if a Welsh O'Connell were to persuade his countrymen to give up their language, the impoverishment in the cultural resources of the British Islands would not be negligible.

When a writer finds that a suggestion of his own, which received no attention when it was made, has occurred later on by force of circumstances to others, he may perhaps be allowed to quote himself, just as Cassandra may have been allowed the melancholy privilege of saying, I told you so. Writing in the first series of *The Irish Statesman*, in 1919, I suggested that the old language should be granted a strip of Irish territory. "If it could only be managed, there might be a solution of the Irish language problem in the regular establishment of an Irish-speaking community in a province of its own—answering to Wales in Great Britain—say, a large slice of Munster and Connaught. Even the most confident Gaelic Leaguer must occasionally have his doubts of being able to do in Ireland what the Czechs have done in Bohemia. Let them begin with an Irish Wales—it might really be managed, even to the point of obtaining assistance from the British Government, which might be glad enough to see a movement thus disposed of, which is a large part of the inspiration of Sinn Féin. The Irish language,

within a territory of its own, might more hopefully attempt the conquest of the rest of Ireland. Heaven knows whether we should not all in time want to go and live there! . . . The Irish language will never command the respect due to it until it has a bit of land of its own." There is now some talk of a separately established Gaeltacht, and this appears to me to be the ideal solution of the language problem.

There died lately in the Isle of Wight an aged man with whom passed away a form of idealism belonging not so much to Ireland as to that period in England which was marked by a response to the influence of Carlyle—now, as it would seem, altogether spent. Kingsley had the same sense of heroism in the past as Standish O'Grady, and in several respects the two men might be compared: in their boyish high spirits, in their love of the Elizabethan period, and even in their literary styles. An Anglo-Irish Kingsley O'Grady might have remained, writing Carlylese sociology and books for boys, but for a memorable "Wet Day" which kept him indoors in a large private library, where he stumbled on O'Halloran's account of pre-Christian Ireland. The Irish Literary Movement may almost be said to have grown out of that "wet day." O'Grady had a delicate, might I say Christian sense of heroism in the past, and in lighting upon a virgin subject-matter, lying close to his doors, was more fortunate than Kingsley, who had to turn back to the Anglo-Saxon period and to Greek mythology, with little hope of finding anything new and strange. It was O'Grady who discovered the true use of the ancient Irish language and literature for any national literary development, which, as he never thought of doubting, must be in the English language. Yeats, AE, James Stephens, even Arthur Griffith and P. H. Pearse, have avowed themselves his disciples. The names last mentioned remind one that a good many things which O'Grady's sad old face contemplated with disapproval took direction partly from his influence. He had dreamed of an Ireland with a spiritual mission, and the old Unionist order was the setting to which he had accustomed his expectation.

JOHN EGLINTON

VIENNA LETTER

July, 1928

IT IS awkward to speak of one's own work, but to do so is a temptation; and the moment of launching has its special suspense. In attempting to unfold an idea we soon realize how much is hidden even from ourselves, who should find it all plain before us. A work never seems so self-sufficient as at the instant when we supposed we were going to be able to make it subserve this or that unholy end. The most "likely" as they say, commentator on one's work, is also the most handicapped, the least empowered to unravel the network of motives. For he has made every effort to interweave the internal with the external, strand by strand, and to leave no loose ends. So he is in difficulties at the outset.

We hear of poet and musician working toward a common end—Corneille with Lully, Calzabigi with Gluck, Daponte and Schikaneder with Mozart. That such instances exist would hardly justify any one's expecting, however, that I should of necessity resort to such an expedient. There is in Nadler's *Literaturgeschichte*, I notice, a passage concerning my work, which states that my earliest dramas had unconsciously felt after music, a trend which the word "lyrical" denotes but approximately. And the author is right; but to my mind the word is accurate. The French call an opera a *drame lyrique*, and in this respect they are doubtless instinctively closer to the Ancients than we—they never wholly forgot that ancient tragedy was sung tragedy.

And so the result was this collaboration,¹ which in the course of eighteen years has gradually become a matter of habit. But there have been pauses in the progress—a period of eight or nine years in the last instance—yet certainly not through any loss of interest in the concept—it was merely that other things were needing to take form: a comedy, the Salzburger Welttheater, a tragedy, the as yet unpublished beginnings of a novel. Since 1920 a certain subject, a certain group of characters, had played in the imagination, glittering and intangible, like a half hidden stream—the very material of the work just completed: the home-coming of Helen and

¹ Egyptian Helen, with score by Richard Strauss, to be produced in New York the coming season.

Menelaus. A certain curiosity had taken hold of the imagination, centring on these mythical characters as if they were real people about whose lives we knew something, although at important points the connexion was missing. The night the Greeks swarmed into burning Troy (since 1914 it is easier to picture the terrors of such a night) the night Menelaus found his wife in one of the burning palaces and carried her out through the tottering walls—her, his loved stolen mate, the most beautiful woman in the world, cause of the war, of those ten terrible years, of the plain filled with dead, of this conflagration; widow of Paris, and friend of Priam's sons—these ten or twelve now dead or dying—and thus widow, as though it were not already enough, of these ten or twelve young princes! To be confronted with all this! It is unimaginable—and is safe from every dramatist: no text, even that of Shakespeare, could do it justice, and I am sure that Menelaus himself kept silence as he bore to his ship this woman who remained, as before, the most beautiful woman in the world. We do not know what followed. But years after, when he was travelling through the kingdoms of Greece to seek news of his lost father, Ulysses' son came to Sparta—and the fourth canto of the *Odyssey* gives us the clearest report of what he found there, in colours as fresh as though applied yesterday. He finds Menelaus in his palace, a kingly, hospitable man, "stately as a god"; and Helen, the house-keeper of the palace, beautiful as ever, a queen—apparently happy—in this peaceful setting. They are celebrating the marriages of their children, a son and a daughter. They speak of Troy and the war, as things of the past, Menelaus with calm dignity, as of one of the major experiences of his life, but Helen with that elate, sovereign air which Homer imparts to her always—touching on past events and the subject of her guilt, lightly and elegantly, as when she says of the war (by way merely of indicating time): "When ye Grecians came to Troy because of me, immodest one, arousing fierce war . . ." she says it quite lightly: "When through my hapless adventure this story came about which is too well known and too unworthy to linger over."

Astonishing to treat so famous and dreadful an event so lightly. And another word is on the tip of our tongue: how modern, how near in expression to our own times. But one asks involuntarily, what had happened meanwhile? What has intervened for these two, between that night and this serenity in which Telemachus

finds her? What can have occurred to make this union once more peaceful and halcyon? It is extraordinary—even making vast allowances for heroes and demi-gods. Sufficiently keen curiosity, furthermore, can be transformed into inspiration. There was a theme here—if curiosity could be made productive—perhaps a lyric theme in quest of music, though at first I did not realize this. The subject occupied me from the year 1920 on. We have, of course, the *Helen* of Euripides, the only ancient poem that treats of this interval—of the return of Helen and Menelaus from Troy. In it the theme of a “phantom” Helen emerges—a second Helen who is not Trojan, but Egyptian. We are in Egypt, or on the island of Pharos which is a part of Egypt, before a royal castle. Menelaus enters, alone, on his return from Troy. For months his ship has been wandering, blown from coast to coast, but always driven off the homeward course. Helen, his reclaimed wife, has been left behind with his warriors in a concealed cove and he is seeking counsel, help, some oracle to tell him how he can find the way home. Then from the columns of the castle Helen emerges, not the beautiful, sadly compromised Helen left by him in the ship; but still another who is yet the same. And she will have it that she is his wife, insisting that the other Helen in the ship, is nothing and no one, a phantom, a make-believe, whom Hera had put in the arms of Paris to delude the Greeks. For the sake of this phantom a ten-years’ war had been waged, tens of thousands of the finest men had perished, the most flourishing city of Asia had sunk into ashes. Meanwhile she, the real Helen has been borne over the sea by Hermes, and has lived in this royal castle, honoured and protected by the aged Proteus. Now however his son is on the throne, and his one desire is to marry her. Menelaus therefore, to whom she has always been faithful, must quickly and secretly steal her away. The preparations for this flight, its execution, and finally the appearance of the Dioscuri who pacify the enraged Egyptian monarch—this is the plot of Euripides’ play.

It is easy to see why Menelaus should not immediately have full confidence in this creature who appeared before him to tell him that he had spent ten years in the field for the sake of a ghost, had sacrificed the blood of tens of thousands of Greeks to a ghost, had set fire to a great city in behalf of a ghost, and was now journeying homeward with a ghost as his companion. They engage for a long time in sharp Euripidean argument; and now he utters the beau-

tiful and accurate words: "I trust the burden of past sufferings more than I trust thee!" Indeed this must seem to him too easy a shedding of grave responsibilities. But at this moment a messenger arrives and really announces that the creature who was thought to be Helen has disappeared from the vessel, dissolving in a wisp of fiery air. What is there for Menelaus to cling to but the one Helen who is left—her purity and unguilt superadded—and to flee with her before the Egyptian king can deprive him of her also? So far Euripides. But if the Trojan war was waged in behalf of a spectre, and this Helen of Egypt is the one true Helen, then the Trojan war was a nightmare, and the whole falls into two halves, a ghost story and an idyll, which have nothing to do with each other—and all this is not very interesting. I forgot Euripides, but my imagination continued to dwell on the episode of the two returning together. What dread thing could have happened, to bring about their reconciliation? It was to me so puzzling; perhaps the only solution was witchcraft; but witchcraft solves nothing for our emotions. The powers of nature would have to participate—an atmosphere of industrious beings at once indifferent and helpful. Less to cure the half-goddess than for Menelaus, so distraught, confronted by such fatefulness, such complications and guilt—and he but human. I immediately perceived the noble, tragic aspect of this much derided figure. He was for me the embodiment of the West, and she the inexhaustible strength of the Orient. He stood for law, marriage, fatherhood. She soared above all that, the mysterious, enchanting, never-to-be-fettered goddess. Years ago I entered in my note-book a sentence from Bachofen: "Helen was not endowed with all the charms of Pandora merely to resign herself to the exclusive possession of one man." What demonism pervades such a statement! It could stand on the title-page of Wedekind's *Erdegeist*. Wedekind was the man to bring out the full purport of such a sentence, and to make of it something remarkable and terrifying.

Two or three years later I asked Strauss to wait for me in his office at the opera. "I want to go over a two-act plot with you," I said. "When the curtain rises we are in a palace, or kind of villa on the sea. The palace belongs to a handsome young person who is the daughter of a certain king and the mistress of Poseidon."

"Does Poseidon appear?"

“No, Poseidon does not appear. No gods at all. Accept everything just as though it took place two or three years ago, somewhere between Moscow and New York. This young person, whom I call Aithra, is often left alone by her lover. But he may arrive at any moment. Thus, every evening she has the table set for two—and it is set for two now, and the stage is brilliantly lighted. She has servants and a well-furnished house, but not much company.

“Among the appurtenances of this room there is a mussel which is aware of everything that happens at sea; and in order to amuse Aithra, it tells her everything it knows.

“One evening the mussel announces that in a ship close at hand a remarkable thing is occurring. A man on this ship entrusts the helm to another, goes below, gazes on a very beautiful woman who lies there sleeping, gently covers her beautiful face with a cloth, then draws out a peculiar curved dagger, and prepares to kill her. ‘Send a storm,’ cries the mussel, excited by its own tale. ‘And be quick! Or the woman is lost!’”

“Can Aithra do that?”

“Yes, she is magician enough. The storm swoops down, lashing the vessel till its timbers groan; and thus the murder is prevented. But Aithra has first asked hastily who the man and woman are, and the mussel has said that they are Helen of Troy and Menelaus, her husband. Aithra cannot contain herself for joy and passes from prose into a rhapsodic little aria. Then she rushes into the next room, hides, and directs a servant to lead the shipwrecked couple there by torch-light. For the mussel has also announced that the man who was about to slay his wife is now—since they have both been washed overboard—making every effort to convey her to safety; and Aithra has immediately commanded the storm to abate.

“Thus the stage is empty, and in the doorway of the brightly lighted room a man appears, holding a curved dagger between his teeth, and leading a most beautiful fair-haired woman by the hand. For as soon as he feels solid ground under his feet, the murderer and avenger in him is aroused again, and he is once more ready to take his dagger in hand and make an end of her. Helen knows it; she knows everything that is going on in his mind. This is her strength; it is what enables her to remain mistress of the situation; otherwise she would not be Helen. Going to the mirror, she

arranges her hair; and as a table stands there beautifully set, and with two chairs—as though in readiness for a king and queen—she invites her husband to be seated and to join her at supper.”

“And Menelaus?”

“For nine days and nine nights—as long as they have been on the way from Troy—he has neither taken a meal with her nor so much as touched her with his finger-tip. For nine days he has been trying to decide whether to kill her on the ship or to sacrifice her the day after reaching Sparta. For he knows that she must die—at his hand—and by this same curving dagger with which he has cut the throat of Paris. And she also knows it—as she knows that he loves her to despair, but that he must act regardless of his love. This knowledge and understanding of the man she loves (and she loves the man to whom she belongs, so long as she is his)—this constitutes, as I have said, her strength. Besides, Aithra is present.”

“How can Aithra save her from this predicament?”

“By a stratagem. Menelaus is in a state near to madness. He can no longer bear up under his experiences of the last nine days. He is deranged by the proximity of his wife, the sense of having her again in his possession, and the unavoidable necessity of slaying her with his own hand. And a little ruse of Aithra’s serves to make his distraction complete. It occurs to her to summon her elves, lemur-like semi-human creatures, more malicious than kindly, crouched outside in the moonlight on the rocks of the beach. She directs them to contrive something to bewilder Menelaus, for the time being at least, since the dagger is drawn and everything will depend upon the next moment. The elves are quick and expert, they raise a savage, warlike din, and Menelaus imagines that he is again hearing the Trojan signals and the clatter of Trojan armour. He clearly distinguishes the voice of Paris challenging him to combat. His exhausted brain can no longer resist this bit of magic and he rushes out, to slay Paris again—or, if it is a ghost, to strangle the ghost. The two women, the mistress of the house and her guest, are alone. After a few words, they understand each other. Aithra has a wondrous potion, an exceptional sedative made of lotos, which induces forgetfulness. Helen drinks, becomes quiet as a child; under the calming touch of her friend, lifts like a half-wilted rose put in water. She has all but forgotten what awaits her, when her husband returns with the dagger. But Aithra has

presence of mind enough for both. She tells her maids to lead Helen away to rest in her own bed; then turning, and with profound calm, she confronts Menelaus. For he has come storming in, brandishing the dagger which, to his eyes, drips blood (though we see that the blade is clean and dry); for while he was gone he stabbed in the back two spectres which he mistook for Helen and Paris. He cannot explain how Paris should, after dying, have returned to embrace the living Helen; he cannot make such things fit together logically. He is no madman, but is in that state of confusion observed in hospitals during the war, among men who had gone through too terrifying a strain. On the other hand he is not so beside himself that he would fail of respect towards the young lady who now stands before him and in whose home he evidently is—the less, that she addresses him by his title, King of Sparta, and begs him to sit down. Aithra now tells him a fairy-story which, with feminine tact, she adapts to his present state of mind, the mood of a distracted man who no longer trusts his senses and reason, and to whom almost anything seems possible, imagining as he does that he has himself committed the most frightful and impossible act. For ten years, she tells him, he was the victim of a phantom which he carried from the burning city that night of the conflagration—a ghost for which thousands of Greeks have died, which he bore about his neck out of the sea, and which he has just now seemed to stab. At the same time she pours for him some of the potion which calms the nerves and lulls the consciousness into a gentle, rhythmic state of dream. Then she begs him not to speak too loud lest he disturb the beautiful woman now asleep on her bed in the next room. . . .”

“What beautiful woman?”

“None other than his wife, his own Helen, the real Helen (again she extends to him the goblet of lotos juice) that only Helen, she whom the gods stole away ten years ago. ‘In sleep she was borne across the sea to us here in Egypt, to the castle of my father. She has spent the years sheltered, half slumbering, never aging, with ever that same smile on her lips. She thinks that she has fallen asleep in your arms; but soon, soon, she will awake. Prepare!’

“Suddenly the adjoining room is brilliant with light, a curtain divides, on a broad couch Helen is just opening her eyes, refreshed by sleep, younger and more beautiful than ever—as fair as on her

wedding-day. How could a heart self-tormented like Menelaus', resist this wealth of un hoped-for happiness? Across the darkened mirror of his mind flits a fear that it may be the spectre of his wife, long dead and now conjured up by a witch and necromancer. But misgiving succumbs to the brilliance of the vision; the potion is working in his veins: a gentle forgetfulness of horror and suffering, an inner harmony, an unutterable peace. He approaches the lovely creature; she inclines toward him, her head touches him; it is she, Helen of Sparta—knowing naught of Paris. Their voices mingle, and the clear voice of Aithra adds itself."

"The play is over then? What is there left to happen in the second act?"

"It could be; a frivolous little comedy in that case, in which a husband, after frightful adventures, is duped by two women. But these characters were not so meant. Do you think so? This Menelaus and this Helen did not look as though this were the end?"

"No—but how?"

"Nor are the elves of the opinion that the play could end there. These elves are always present as an invisible chorus; they see it all as drama, and this conclusion is too mild for them. They are not willing that any one should come out of the business so cheaply. Invisibly but audibly, they jeer at the plot. 'Never!' they hiss. 'Not so easily!'"

"And the second act takes place, I suspect, the following morning?"

"Yes, but not in the house of Aithra."

"Not there?"

"A long distance from there, in the wilderness, not far from Mount Atlas. Towards the end of the first act Helen asks Aithra in a whisper, if she could translate her and Menelaus to a region where not even the name of Helen has been heard, or any rumour of the Trojan war. She craves solitude that she may enjoy the felicity she has so perilously regained—safe from notoriety. And Aithra says: 'Nothing could be easier. When you are both fast asleep I shall lay my magic cloak over you and it will bear you to a place where you will be quite alone.' But the whispered conversation has not been heard by Menelaus. So they wake in solitude, in a beautiful palm-grove at the foot of Mount Atlas. I shall not go into detail about the second act, but give only the main points. They are not long in solitude. As nowadays, nomadic,

knightly chiefs range the desert and one of these, with his son and retinue, chances upon the two strangers. And though her name is unknown, the most beautiful woman thus finds herself in a situation identical with that at home: both father and son fall in love, want to snatch her from Menelaus, and are prepared to kill each other for her. But this is a detail. I am coming to the heart of the matter—namely, Helen. The strength of this woman, her genius, lies in the fact that she must wholly possess the man to whom she belongs. The apparently successful ruse, however, has restored to her but half of Menelaus or less than half. He regards her, after the night of love, with uneasiness; he is really afraid of her. He is engrossed with the thought of the woman whom he thinks dead, the woman who has caused him so much grief, for whom he has suffered nights of horror, for whom he has slain Paris—and whom, that last evening on the island, he murdered with the same frightful weapon, his curved dagger. For in his confusion he still believes that he killed the real, the guilty Helen—and that this other, so young and innocent-looking, this mirage, this Egyptian siren of air, has been given him by the enchantress as solace. But he is Menelaus of Troy, the widower, the murderer of Helen. She is everything to him, he is bound to her by a world of guilt and suffering; and the beautiful siren before him is nothing.”

“And Helen?”

“Understands him once again, knows him more profoundly than he knows himself, and makes a decision.”

“What?”

“She resolves to awake him, as from a trance, and to rid him of his illusion, that he may recognize her as the guilty one he must punish. She will, that is to say, reconstruct the situation of the previous evening.”

“And does she?”

“She succeeds in everything she turns her mind to. She has a demonic power. And Aithra coming to her assistance, provides, as Helen wishes, a potion to counteract the potion of forgetfulness. Helen approaches and places herself beneath the drawn dagger, sure that Menelaus will kill her, and smiles at dagger and murderer, in the exact posture of twelve hours ago on the island.”

“And he?”

“At last he has come to recognize her, to recognize her fully.

at that last moment—and letting go the dagger, falls into her arms.”

“It is an opera—for me, at any rate, if not for others. And what a part for Jeritza! You haven’t mentioned it to any one? It is besides, astonishingly modern. Have you never thought of making a prose play of it?”

“Yes, I feel myself that beneath the hand of a French or American author it would become a society drama. By slight changes the mythical elements could be eliminated. And the bits of magic—the potion, the forgetfulness and restoring of memory—are mere short-cuts abridging mental processes. The elves stand for the subconscious censor. All this could have been dialectic; and so have become standard psychological society drama: marriage as problem, beauty as problem, a tangle of problems.”

“Well?”

“I don’t like very well dialectic motivation in drama and doubt that purposive speech can convey the dramatic. Words can ruin our best effects and I am wary of them.”

“Yet a poet can give his characters life only by making them speak. Words are to him what tones are to me, and colours to a painter.”

“Words, yes—but not purposive, deliberately schematized speech. Not what is called the art of dialogue, or psychological dialogue, which seems to have stood in such high repute from Hebbel to Ibsen and further still—and in Euripides—and also in Shaw, though as here tempered by a predilection for wit, it neutralizes the dialectic quality of the dialogue.”

“And in Shakespeare?”

“Not a trace! For him speech is expression, never information. In this sense Shakespeare wrote pure opera; he is wholly with Aeschylus and miles from Euripides. But has it never occurred to you that in life nothing ever is decided by talking? We are never so alone, never so convinced of the hopelessness of a situation, as when we have been trying to help it with words. The deceptive power of speech is so great that it not only distorts, but even dissolves, the character of the speaker. Dialectic forces the ego out of existence. A writer has, I insist, the choice of creating conversation or character!”

“A little paradoxical for me! For the playwright has no medium but speech.”

“Yet, there are other resources; most mysterious, most precious, least known—and the only effective ones. He can do anything when he has given up the idea that his characters should substantiate their existence by direct communication.”

“What medium is that?”

“By the turns of the plot he can convey without informing. He can make something live in the audience without the audience’s suspecting how this has come about. He can make people feel the complexity of the apparently simple, the identity of the seemingly disparate. He can show how a woman becomes a goddess, how something living emerges as something dead—he can give a premonition of the vast agglomerate which the mask of the ego transforms into a human being. Thus the Ancients designated both mask and person by the same word. He can convert the reticent into the eloquent, make what is far distant, near. He can allow his characters to exceed themselves and become gigantic, for mortals do this on signal occasions. But there is no room for such things in a ‘naturally’ conducted dialogue. ‘Realism’ is projecting elusive experience upon an arbitrarily chosen social plane. Human nature, its cosmic influences and its encompassing of time and space, cannot be captured by realistic means.”

“But what kind of medium is this? Will you not define it?”

“By developing the plot, complicating the motive, giving voice to the hidden, and allowing things once uttered to disappear again—through similarities of character, analogies of situation, intonation which often says more than words.”

“But that is my—that is certainly the medium of the musician!”

“It is the medium of lyric drama, and the only one, it seems to me, through which the atmosphere of our time can be expressed. For the present is, if anything, mythical. I know of no other term for a reality which is being enacted before such wide horizons, for our place among the centuries, for this confluence of Orient and Occident within our ego, for the vast internal breadth, the frantic inner tensions, the Here and Elsewhere, which characterize contemporary life. It is not possible to capture such things in clumsy dialogue. Mythological opera is, you may be sure, of all forms the most authentic.”

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

BOOK REVIEWS

A GOLDEN BOOK

THE GOLDEN BOOK: The Story of Fine Books and Bookmaking Past and Present. *By Douglas C. McMurtrie.* 4to. 406 pages. Pascal Covici. \$6.

IT probably does not fall to the lot of everybody to come into possession of one of the dummy books, bound in buckram or something of that sort to the exact format of a proposed edition, and filled with the exact number of pages of the intended paper but quite unprinted, which publishers occasionally construct for this or that object. The businesslike possessor very likely uses them as convenient memorandum books, albums, or the like: a more fanciful one, unless or until he finds some special opportunity of that kind, may keep them as suggesters of fancy in its proper variety. In that case some of the variations would certainly include the origin and history of what we have now for nearly five hundred years understood by "a book"—a thing of which the supposed dummy presents the simplest and most generalized form.

To such a person, as contrast at once and suggester of additions, nothing could be a better companion than Mr Douglas McMurtrie's not too proudly named "Golden Book"—a comely small quarto of some four hundred pages, agreeably bound, beautifully printed, lavishly illustrated in its own special kind and subject, and quite remarkably cheap, with absolutely nothing of the nastiness which sometimes at least proverbially accompanies cheapness.

It is indeed difficult to find anything but praise for Mr McMurtrie's work. It conducts the history of printing and bookmaking in the literal and not invidious sense of the term, if not from China to Peru from China to London and New York. It handles contested points—such as the never to be finished case of Coster *v.* Gutenberg as inventor—with good information and in good temper. Very few people except those who are already spe-

cialists will read it without profit: while it may without ill nature be suspected that in regard to a subject with so many parts not every specialist in one or more of them is also a specialist in every other. Here you may go from "pictographic" writing (a form of early art not always beautiful in itself but at its worst hardly deserving such a very ugly hybrid ticket) to wood-pulp paper and you may learn something of the biography of famous printers, especially those who have had to do with English from William Caxton to William Morris. Oddments of all sorts crop up—for instance an account of early printing in, of all places in the world, Mexico. The actual processes of typesetting, printing, and binding are not left undescribed and the whole is done with a singular absence (or rather a double one) of undue heaviness on the one hand and superfluous lightness on the other.

It must however be admitted that in all probability—except to persons of unusual virtue and less than usual (if it may be said without flippancy) power of enjoyment—the principal charm of the book will lie in its abundant illustrations—mostly full page and dealing with the work of artists from Egyptian scribes somewhere about four thousand years before the Christian era to Mr Bruce Rogers, typographer to both the Cambridges in the twentieth century after it. One supposes that as there is said to be no sort of beauty that is universally acceptable to the human race, there must be people who do not see much if they see any, difference between an ugly page (provided the printing be not mere "pie") and a fine one: but fortunately there are also some who do. The source of the beauty they perceive is not mere ornament though ornament—suitable ornament—may add to it, while "illustrations" proper are of course even more additional. Printing is a kind of architecture: and as in other architecture proportion is the great secret, though there may be others of which colour is certainly one.

This delight of proportion which is in itself rather multiform, arising from size and shape of type, attitude of page to margin, spacings, and other things, only comes to perfection when we reach the Renaissance. The early Chinese blockprinted things possess it in a way but it is the way of drawing and painting rather than that of architecture, though a very agreeable Chinese Charm given here (opposite p. 48) is decidedly architectural. But of course the mere printing even with separate types of the innumerable lan-

guage-characters of Chinese in columns gave little opportunity. They might be terrible as an army but they wanted some sort of banners to make them beautiful. Whether we got printing in Europe through playing-cards or not there is very little doubt that at first the picture was the principal thing and the letter-press quite subordinate, as you may see in the St Christopher woodcut of 1423 also handsomely reproduced here. But that, even before the block gave way to movable type, text could be well separated from picture and occupy an independent page, you may further see from a page opening of the famous *Biblia Pauperum*. And the page though of course black letter, is a very good page—the lines perhaps a little too closely spaced for the size of the individual letter, but not much.

As may have been hinted above the Gutenberg-Coster fight, even if you bring into it the otherwise immortal name of Fust and others still may perhaps not interest some readers so much as, though it may interest others more than, the rare devices which they devised. It is a pity that black letter is so dazzling to some eyes even those that have not passed their grand climacteric, and to most that have: for though thus treacherous it has, like some other dazzling but treacherous things, considerable attractions of its own. The great "42-line" Bible of 1456 has a gorgeous appearance, though it may prick the eyes and is almost severe in comparison with the Psalter of next year with its far bigger type of a splendid design and its elaborate initialing. Some time later comes an example of almost fully romanized letter from the Subiaco Lactantius which may call up in some minds the pleasant picture in *The Cloister* and the *Hearth of Sweynheim* and *Pannartz* at their work, and which presents the first example of Greek type printed—a matter again for thoughts to people who can and care to think. And then we come to a multitude of interesting things not capable of being sampled here to any but the smallest extent. Such are our own beginnings in England; the larger interspersions of woodcuts in text; Aldus and the Venetians; all manner of delightful matter generously illustrated. "The Study of Incunabula" which very properly has a chapter to itself must in that self elude us for lack of space. If a humble reviewer may be permitted the expression of his personal taste I should say that the most beautiful printing of any age known to me is that of the middle of the French six-

teenth century connected with the names—as type-designers, wood-engravers, and printers—of Geofroy Tory, Garamond, Colines, Estienne, and others. For a plain page the instance given here at p. 173, for bordered ones the two at pp. 184-5 are incomparable.

But others may like others better and ten times the present space would not suffice for the whole. Caxton and Baskerville and Morris—there is a trio that will take some beating from any other country. The history of the Printing Press in the United States before the quarrel is certainly not interesting to Americans only, or only for the fact—though that is interesting enough—that not the least important person at the time of that quarrel was a man very much “in the printing line” (as literature and everything connected with it was once described by a Cambridgeshire villager) and was content after all his multifarious employments to call himself in his will, “Benjamin Franklin, Printer.”

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

MR FRY'S FLEMISH ART

FLEMISH ART, A Critical Survey. *By Roger Fry.*
Illustrated. 8vo. 55 pages. Brentano's. \$3.50.

AS MIGHT be anticipated by those familiar with the contained competence of Mr Fry's discourses, his lecture, now printed, on the exhibition of Flemish art at Burlington House (1926-7) is selective both in what is discussed, and in the discussion as such. The exhibition had a great popular success, due at least partly, he suggests, to the superlative fidelities of the Flemish picturing. With the glitter of painted jewels and sheen of brocades, however, Mr Fry has no concern. He is interested to consider in Flemish art the subtler poetries of appearance (where they have been achieved), those discernments, both deeper and more abstract than anything imitation accomplishes, which belong to disinterested vision and to it alone. Such preoccupations as this, doubtless, more than the requirements of brevity in a lecture, more than the fact that their pictures may not all have been included in the exhibition, have led him to omit discussion of such figures as Gerard David, Patinir, Dierck Bouts, Hugo van der Goes; and to condense his version of such others as Pol de Limbourg and Hans Memling. With the time and room so gained he can enlarge upon matters of more developed moment, upon the language of lines, planes, and volumes, and so far as he may, upon the clue which that language is to the imaginative and intellectual force of those using it.

Thus in his consideration of the Van Eycks he is less concerned with the supremacy of John's rendering of literal fact than with Hubert's command of composition, and the instrument it is in the hand of a great poetic originality. With Rogier van der Weyden the traits remarked are the artist's means of expressing his devotionism—his capacity to set forth dramatic ideas through linear rhythm and disposition of pictorial masses. Hans Memling is rather briefly dismissed for a defective sense of plastic values, while the clear space realizations of Petrus Christus receive several paragraphs. Among the Italianate Flemings Quentin Metsys is amply examined for the pictorial organization he achieves in his use of the

“atmospheric envelope.” And though by Mr Fry considered an illustrator of tragi-comedy rather than the melodist of form and colour which a painter should be, Pieter Brueghel is still noticed at length for the clarity and sharpness of his expression of psychological realities. Finally, with the sumptuous and sonorous Rubens it is lucidity of organization, rhythmic sweep of utterance, depth and power of tone that receive comment—temperate comment indeed if one recall here the lyric rhetoric of M Faure. These matters are technical, perhaps too technical if the more ultimate prospects of criticism are to be attained. Yet the character and power of the artist, it would seem, are not manifest apart from their objects and means of effect, are not discovered except through examination of the modes and achievements of his expression, if in fact in that way.

When such points as these have been reached and occupied, the strictly aesthetic standpoint, no matter how mature and lucid, becomes somewhat unsatisfactory. Mr Fry has dwelt so much for its own sake and so well on the pictorial language and its various absorbing developments in Flemish painting, that he has tended to neglect the artistic personalities to which that language might critically be taken as the clue. They are mentioned indeed—perhaps as much as would be possible in so condensed a review—but mentioned as the background, so to say, of their works. Thus it is that the critic’s very accomplishment in technical matters plays into the hand of lecture requirements, and tends to interrupt the further quest. The more effectively the potentialities of the aesthetic point of view are exhibited, the more obvious becomes the fact on the one hand that the aesthetic types of thought have capacities of significance beyond their own immediate sphere, and on the other that the aesthetic standpoint is at its best when taken up into more inclusive points of view—the more obvious it is, in brief, that the tale of criticism does not end in aesthetics. This is not to suggest that Mr Fry particularly is at fault. The defect, it would seem, is in criticism at large. Mr Fry’s broad and admirable aestheticism merely makes the psychological deficiencies of our general critical armoury the more apparent.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

SONS OF LEARNING

IRELAND AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF EUROPE. *By Benedict Fitzpatrick. 8vo. 451 pages. Funk and Wagnalls. \$4.*

WHEN Gil Blas, on the road to Salamanca, engaged in altercations with fellows to whom disputes never came amiss, he was meeting in those clans of Irish the last representatives of a learned exodus. It had begun with Columbanus in the Merovingian age. Benedict Fitzpatrick's *Ireland and the Foundations of Europe*, gives us a great deal of information about these wandering and pious professors whose work for the rehabilitation of European culture has been given so little notice in the text-books that the ordinary reader is familiar with. The book is informative and the chapter on Johannes Scotus Erigena is valuable: one can never get over one's amazement at finding such ripe scholarship, such sound judgement as Erigena showed in those blind times. But Mr Fitzpatrick's book is uncritical, and it is spoiled on too many pages by a perfervid nationalism. What good does it do to rate the Irish teachers so far above the Saxons? The Saxons possessed their Alcuin who was certainly the equal of any Irishman of his time. And Mr Fitzpatrick fails to acknowledge the fact that the impulse which eventuated in the Irish missionary activity was due to a Romanized Briton in exile amongst them—Saint Patrick. He fails to take into account the possibility that the exodus of learned men from Ireland might have been due, not to the heightened culture of the country, but to a great gap that existed between the intellectuals and the ruling classes and the people under them. That possibility forces itself to be considered when one reads such a tract as *The Vision of St Adamnan*—St Adamnan stayed in Ireland and wrote about Irish affairs, and laboured to free women from conscription for war. The conditions that he describes towards the end of the seventh century might well be given as a background for Ireland and the Foundations of Europe.

WALTER MENNLOCH

POETIC ENFRANCHISEMENT

CITIES OF THE PLAIN. By Marcel Proust. Translated from the French by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. Two volumes. 12mo. 352 and 384 pages. Albert & Charles Boni. \$15.

WITHOUT our knowledge or concurrence we are, each one of us, a little closed system of preconceptions, our imaginations hobbled by custom, our thoughts as sedately guarded, as carefully regulated, as those long lines of pale orphans in their black uniforms led out for their daily walk by the unsmiling head of the establishment. Our illusions, so sedulously garnered, so anxiously cherished, so bitterly defended, are the props by which we live; habit, the prison through which we move; fear, the sentinel that foils us in our endeavour to issue into a universe too vast and frightening for our uncertain nerves.

It is the privilege of great and original minds to let down for us those bars held in place by the unconscious conspiracy of a timorous and torpid society, and to guide us with firm directions into a more audacious view of existence; it is the greater privilege of the artist, not only to heighten our vision of that reality beyond reality, the truths which lurk so fugitively under the ordinary accepted aspects of the objects surrounding us, but to charm and fructify us at the same time, to rouse our own dormant potentialities, to force us into creative thought, to render us more aware of the implications of our own lives, to indicate the greatest disaster that can befall us, apart from disease, destitution, or death, namely, that of losing our capacity for fresh and penetrating response. This no author has done to a more marked degree than has Marcel Proust. Open any of his volumes at random, and you are led on from sentence to sentence, from page to page, from chapter to chapter, until stirring within you is a new power, a more bold and delicate insight, a whole fresh set of interests and appreciations, and at last an entire world of people takes sensible shape, a world more vivid, more intimately realized, more interesting, than any you have known or will probably ever be privileged to know. This, to a certain extent, might be said of any novelist, of Henry James to whom Proust has by an authoritative English critic, been un-

favourably compared. But how restricted, how narrowly genteel, how lacking in humour, is *this* master of the social situation, rare as his gift to us will always remain, compared to the unfettered perspicacity of the disillusioned Frenchman. And of the two it is certainly not Marcel Proust whom one can accuse of snobbishness. Only the most obtuse of critics could have started such a rumour. He has chosen to portray that portion of society which, since it is the most aristocratic, is also the most historically interesting, in which more diverse and complicated types sooner or later appear, and where the assumption of superiority being greater and the play of wit more fierce and more light, the challenge to discrimination is proportionately more exigent. But he has, at the same time, parallel with this privileged upper world, depicted with an insight heretofore unequalled the world that serves it, that must bow down to its whims—the valets, the cooks, the bell-boys, the coachmen—a world made up of the same types as its masters, as arrogant and as limited, but rendered servile, cunning, and affable through necessity.

In these last of his volumes to be translated, alternating with the themes already familiar to us in his previous writing—the tortures of normal attraction with its unrelenting doubts, its ennui and its sudden rewards, all so fleeting and all so important; the outward pretentiousness and the malicious undercurrents of a small, homogeneous group; the delicious sensations of the country; the changing aspects of the sea—is the major motif of a love heretofore banished from the pages of fiction. By society at large sexual inversion has been regarded either as a vice so revolting and unnatural that a conspiracy of silence has prevailed, or so dangerous that it must receive immediate public castigation. Since the newer psychology has explained it in terms of a malady, another attitude has among the enlightened come into fashion, but even this attitude, so supercilious in its tolerance or so vulgar in its frivolity, veils a contempt which betrays a sense of superiority and a limited sympathy. No writer before Marcel Proust has dared, or has perhaps been permitted, to touch with so free a pen on so dark a subject. We can imagine no author who could have possibly done it with so relentless yet so tender an understanding, with such consummate art. And be it said, we are not among those who discover a “defect” in his “moral sensibility” because of the inclusion of certain much discussed episodes. Candour absolves everything, and for the artist curiosity, combined with spiritual detach-

ment, is essential. Sensitiveness is the unique virtue, and the passionate weight of certain pages of this profound and revealing book should cause hesitation to those who judge certain other passages with too great temper. As alert to the conflicts of his characters, to their sufferings, their pitiable subterfuges, the nervous masks through which their telltale eyes look out, as a lover to the steps of his mistress, Proust can never be accused of moral insensibility.

To follow the possessed divagations of the Baron de Charlus, the sly, self-interested deceptions of Morel, is to be initiated into a life as fantastic as it is absorbing. Tragedy and comedy alternate with so swift and so equal a balance, and our shocks are so softened by our increasing perceptions, that presently our dispraise dissolves, and only our understanding remains, our instructed and compassionate understanding. Moral indignation has no place where the instincts are seen striving, with the desperate zeal of necessity, to create within the small space allotted them by a withered or frightened society the very breath of life itself.

To blame or criticize Marcel Proust because his philosophy is one of despair is to miss much of the intensity of his writing. Because he never forgets death he equally never forgets life. Unlike Leopardi, "*pâle amant de la mort*," Proust seeks to extract from life each little drop of experience it has to give, to bathe himself in it; he does not court death, he covets life, but at the same time sees it, like the wild ass's skin, shrinking hour by hour. His descriptions of nature are like those of a convalescent returning to the strange and overpowering revelation of an existence which only one who realizes its dreamlike quality, its fleeting duration, is able to achieve. It is largely the secret of his rich, rash, and subtle meditations, this constant accompaniment in his mind of the knowledge that suddenly each sense, so swift to his bidding, so perfect an instrument of ravishment, will be blotted out, extinguished, and darkness will prevail. It is why his observations of the ephemeral niceties of an artificial society, its colossal illusions, its sentimentalities, and its crudeness, are so acute. All is nothing and therefore anything is everything. That he withdrew from life was due to his illness and it was only because he had lived with so submissive and dedicated an attention to the minutest measurement of experience that he was able to build with his art so splendid and so enduring an edifice.

ALYSE GREGORY.

MR LEWIS AND THE TIME-BEAST

TIME AND WESTERN MAN. By *Wyndham Lewis*.
8vo. 469 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$5.

MR WYNDHAM LEWIS is a kind of jack-of-all-trades. He was one of the founders of Blast, that singular, and now so old-fashioned, organ of the cult known as Vorticism; for a time one associated him with Marinetti, with futurism, with concerts in which cannons were fired or guinea-pigs compelled to squeal, and with paintings which resembled rather minor and obscure explosions among bric-à-brac. That he had a vigorous and individual mind was evident enough; and that he could draw was admirably attested by occasional exhibitions of his work at the Leicester Galleries in London. Some of these—notably those drawings in which he was least doctrinaire—were characterized by a singular delicacy and purity, a quality which one might suggest by saying that it was a blending of the feminine and the mathematical. In fiction, he has now produced a novel and a book of short stories,¹ both of them energetic and original, both of them somewhat marred by his passion for dogma, his love of controversy, or, in short, by his spleen. In the realm of controversy itself, he has been increasingly a kind of angry sharpshooter of his generation. In this regard, he has somewhat resembled Mr Ezra Pound, with whom he was early associated; but the resemblance has been (if one may put it so) antithetical. Mr Pound's love of new "movements," and of being in the forefront of aesthetic battle, is well known. He has been one of the most striking *entrepreneurs* of our time: a brilliant, if occasionally misguided, leader of rebellions. Mr Lewis, on the other hand, if he has shared with Mr Pound this passion for novelty and for positions conspicuously dangerous, has differed from him in his emotional reason for doing so. For whereas Mr Pound has always been what he himself has described as a "broken bundle of mirrors," a sort of reflector of this and that and the other, Mr Lewis has remained singularly and truculently himself. He

¹ *The Wild Body*. By Wyndham Lewis. 12mo. 298 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

has wanted to be there, in this advanced position, but for a purpose of his own. Sufficiently a prey to this herd-instinct, and to this *Zeitgeist*, to desire a part in its "show," he was nevertheless somewhat annoyed (or so one guessed) at his weakness in obeying so base a desire. He was, in short, an individualist who had, willy-nilly, been swept along with a crowd whose components he could not wholly admire.

Something of this division has shown itself in all of Mr Lewis' work. One always feels in his criticism that he is himself a sort of exasperated victim of the very things which, with so magnificent and vivid a gusto, he attacks. He has become a professional enemy: one almost feels, indeed, that at times he merely attacks because only in attack can he become reassuringly aware (by a kind of negative assumption) of his own identity. One does not go to him for that Greek or Chinese serenity which, in his new book, he claims to admire; hating the philosophy of the dynamic, he is nevertheless typically dynamic himself; at war with chaos, he adopts the language of chaos; desiring peace and assurance, and hungering for perfect *rest*, that perfect rest which only an almost religious conviction of the permanence and value of the ego can give, he contributes, in *Time and Western Man*, the most violent and confused and restless and peaceless of contemporary books of philosophy.

Mr Lewis' latest *bête noire* is the Time-doctrine of Spengler and Whitehead and Alexander, and of modern science in general. The present reviewer is not a metaphysician, and cannot presume, and does not particularly desire, to follow the argument in all its massive and chaotic detail. Suffice it to say that Mr Lewis hates the idea of flux and change and relativity; that he fears the consequences of such ideas; that he prefers the comparative calm and order which one may suck from the pure subjective idealism of Berkeley (a choice with which his reviewer is cheerfully but unexcitedly in sympathy); and that he attacks this latest time-ghost with an almost unexampled ferocity. Not only does he attack it with ferocity; he also, like a man obsessed, sees it everywhere. If we are to take Mr Lewis' word for it, this time-beast is devouring us. It animates the pages of Marcel Proust, it deadens the pages of Mr Joyce's *Ulysses*, it prattles in the person of Miss Loos's Lorelei, it stammers in the protracted and posed and iterative

longueurs of Miss Gertrude Stein, it even kicks its heels in the timed and timeless heels of Mr Chaplin. This is, to say the least, a singular collocation. Is one right in suspecting that Mr Lewis is so fixed on this notion that he has lost all sense of values? Is he merely, in this, following not so much a logical method as a method of which free association is the basis? At all events, the connexion becomes, at times, extremely attenuated; one suspects that there is no connexion at all, save in the emotional picture of our brilliant author. One is irresistibly reminded of Mr Rank's description of the habits of thought—or feeling, to be more precise—of the dementia-præcox, or schizophrenic, type of mind: of his suggestion that such people think in terms of "quality complexes," allowing the unguided mind to flow from image to image in obedience to feeling-associations. Thus, Miss Stein is clearly enough interested in the psychological idea of time; and she also prattles, iterates, stammers, is a kind of false-naïve child. We proceed therefor from the child-idea, and discover Miss Loos, who adopts the same pose, (in the person of her heroine) and assimilate her to the Stein-complex: and *ipso facto*, Miss Loos becomes a part of our idea about "time." From Miss Loos, it is only a step, or a frolic, to Mr Chaplin; and so on, and so on. And in the end, we have a kind of vague notion (extremely vague) that Mr Chaplin has something to do with Mr Spengler; which is very far from being the case.

Mr Lewis, in other words, is not to be trusted. He is brilliant, entertaining, fertile in suggestion, full of fine phrases, and bursting with energy; in the item, he is acute to the point of incandescence; he can knock on the head a Hegel or a James or a Heraclitus with as emphatic a maul as was ever wielded; but in the end one feels that he is a man obsessed, and blind to whole patterns. One begins to wonder what it is, in this harmless preoccupation of the present with the notion of time, which so upsets him. Is he terribly afraid of something? Is he afraid of flux? Is he afraid of the unknown? Why is he so insistent that the external world should be fixed? Why must he, like the mollusc, be so determined on a retreat into the positively apprehended of the ego? And will he carry this retreat further, or will he ultimately seek satisfaction in one of those grand orthodoxies, like the Church—where he can be absolved of all responsibilities, and simply *accept* a reality? . . .

The truth is, I suppose, that Mr Lewis is a dyed-in-the-wool romantic. He is part and parcel of his age; and while he attacks it, he is indelibly conditioned by it. Incapable of achieving the "long" view of man's place in the world, disquieted by scientific analysis, of whatever sort, horrified by the prevailing doctrine of change and flux (which is no newer than Heraclitus) and frightened by modern psychology, as much as by relativity or the quantum theory, he lashes out against everything that is not the quietism of the idealist. And nevertheless, there is nothing of the quietist in him: nothing whatever. Here is no Platonic serenity, but the gesticulatory vehemence of the dynamists whom he would depose; he is tainted, and deeply, with the excitements, the fashions and fads, of his age; too much himself a victim of the Time-beast, he is therefor largely a reactionist to the moment; he lacks the calm independence (?) of the scientist, on the one hand, and the poet on the other.

CONRAD AIKEN

BRIEFER MENTION

THE UGLY DUCHESS, by Lion Feuchtwanger, translated from the German by Willa and Edwin Muir (8vo, 335 pages; Viking Press: \$2.50) carries one forward from one climax to another with such biting and relentless intensity that the mind—unaccustomed to such velocity and impact—tingles as though exposed to a current of electricity. Perhaps the most conclusive proof of the high attainment which marks Feuchtwanger's second novel to be translated is that it evokes comparison with his first rather than with the work of any one else. Here the glamour of mediaeval times and the sinister plotting of ambitious princes are painted in full colours, while in the foreground stands the rocklike figure of Margarete of Tyrol like some strange creature half mythological, half modern.

THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY, by D. H. Lawrence (12mo, 307 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). Mr Lawrence reduces all humanity to Adam and Eve and studies them in the nude. Not a hint of a fig-leaf, though the stories date distinctly from "after the fall"! Lords and ladies, bootblacks and kitchen-maids are, at bottom, just Adams and Eves. Nudity is undoubtedly interesting to a perhaps over-dressed populace. A naked man can have a *succès fou* on any city street but in the end too much nudity, like too much of anything else, surfeits. Readers, even sympathetic ones, now begin to smile when Mr Lawrence's characters undress. However, this writer's gifts are undeniable. He enchains the attention instantly with his vivid dialogues and still more vivid landscapes, and if, as Mr E. M. Forster says, his moral lessons are sometimes obscure, they are, at least, never dull. He is certainly in the first flight of contemporary story-tellers.

THAT BRIGHT HEAT, by George O'Neil (12mo, 303 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). "But I ask you, Henri"—it is Mr O'Neil's hero speaking—"could you really believe in this patching together of uncomprehended fragments—this meaningless experience that goes on perpetually? Henri, life is unspeakably forlorn. Here in this sunlight burning fertility into the earth, drowning us in radiance, we're cold, in the dark." "Rot!" Henri said dryly. Mr O'Neil's novel—like his hero—is too impetuous to be quite credible. He tosses everything he can lay hands upon into the furnace of his fancy, and what one is chiefly conscious of is the glare. What remains is a sharply etched impression of life in St Louis in the 'eighties, and here the author has composed his materials with a deft and admirable skill.

POEMS, by Clinch Calkins (10mo, 69 pages; Knopf: \$2). Although a voluptuous defiance, pontifical not discursive, weights them and hauteur sometimes pervades too unhaughty a fabric, these poems are poems. Trueness to key, resilient verbal antitheses, "small birds swinging aloft on the precarious leaf" are here, and other small things that in poetics are not small.

THE BRIGHT DOOM, by John Hall Wheelock (12mo, 80 pages; Scribner's: \$2). Too often the poet's sharp vision is blunted with rhetoric, his ecstasy lost in a fog of pantheism, his dream reduced to an extended metaphor too crowded with abstractions: Life, Love, Time, the "old wonder," "The lust and hunger of the centuries." In the first poem, however, and in a few of the others, his emotion leads him to heights of eloquence which our poets rarely attain.

COLOR OF WATER, by Marjorie Meeker (12mo, 61 pages; Brentano's: \$1.50) ripples over the smooth stones of imagery with a murmur of melancholy. The poet sits in the twilight "spinning silver unquiet trickery." "Silver" and "unquiet" and "harsh" and "unfaith" are her favourite words, and she fits them into the pattern of her verse with so little discrimination that they inevitably lose precision—a minor flaw in what is otherwise authentic expression of poetic feeling.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1927, edited by L. A. G. Strong (16mo, 259 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2). Their editor must be given high praise for this fascinating selection. The underlying test which has been drastically applied to the immense mass of last year's verse in England and America seems simply to have been *interest*. Hardly a dull page in the book!

SEXTETTE, Translations from the French Symbolists, by Dorothy Martin, with preface by L. C. Martin (8vo, 99 pages; The Scholartis Press: 10/6). As aware as Dr Johnson that poetry cannot be translated, Miss Martin nevertheless ventures to put De Nerval, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Laforgue into English. She merely hopes to initiate certain mystified foreigners into the cult. This ought to be disarming; but will it be? No. There will be fierce critics to pounce on any particular rendering, such as, "Sunset and dawn within your eyes are fair," for Baudelaire's "*Tu contiens dans ton oeil le couchant et l'aurore*," and declare it terrible. But Miss Martin does often get astonishingly near to the rhythm of these French geniuses; erring, when she does err, on the side of over-clarity and over-reasonableness. The accompanying essays on the poets are admirable and will entice when the translations do not.

FIVE RESTORATION TRAGEDIES, edited by Bonamy Dobree (16mo, 450 pages; The World's Classics, Oxford University Press: 80 cents).

"Oh Pierre! thou art welcome!
Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st
Lovely dreadfull, and the Fate of Venice
Seems on thy Sword already."

So speaks the tragic muse of Otway. Is it not an ornate language? Though it be Racine-gone-to-seed with a vengeance, it will surprise certain young people, no doubt, to discover we have ever been so formal in English. For that reason they should try Otway, or better yet Dryden, who is also included in the little volume, as a corrective against the opinion that Pepys was the whole of the Restoration. Dryden, of course, is immeasurably above Otway. You will find no "lovely dreadfull" phrases in *his* plays!

THE PATRIOT, A Play by Alfred Neumann, adapted by Ashley Dukes, with introduction by Hendrik Willem Van Loon (12mo, 142 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2) was one of the spectacular failures of the past theatrical season. The published version has two introductions which are interesting; but one who has seen the play gets nothing fresh from the text; and judges that a reader who has not seen the play will find it as difficult to follow as most historical plays are.

It is hard to read **THE PLAYS OF GEORG BÜCHNER** (12mo, 274 pages; Viking Press: \$2.50) in spite of a spirited translation by Geoffrey Dunlop and in spite of Büchner's genuine intellectual gifts. He was an antimantic before his time; but there was chaos in him. Turning therefore to a known play, *Danton's Death*, one is pleased to find it much more consistent than Reinhardt's version of it as played last year—and equally dramatic.

FOUR PLAYS, by Serafin and Joaquin Alvarez Quintero (12mo, 260 pages; Little, Brown: \$2.50) have been translated by Helen and Harvey Granville-Barker. They are selected from the hundred and fifty plays written by these living Spaniards. They are "a simple picture of life in a little Andalusian town," a sentimental comedy, a picaresque farce "with a difference," and a comedy of the Andalusian "exiled to the harsher world of Madrid." Without knowing the originals, one is instantly taken with the charm of the translated language. As in *Anatol*, the language one reads has pungency and character, and the plays become attractive and have at least the air of being important. One should like to see them played—delicately.

If **CASTLES IN SPAIN AND OTHER SCREEDS**, by John Galsworthy (12mo, 262 pages; Scribner's: \$2) cannot take away, it surely cannot add much to the reputation of its author. These agreeable addresses and essays are not without the imaginative sense and urbane seriousness which one is accustomed to associate with Mr Galsworthy. Yet in turning through them the reader is brought soon to an impression that the volume which they compose is a rather random gather-all of incidentals of relative unimportance, about which he might be excused for appropriating the author's point of view with respect to Shelley, who would have been accounted far greater, Mr Galsworthy thinks, had he so selected his work that we should judge him only on the basis of a "picked tenth."

A LETTER TO A FRIEND, Anonymous (16mo, 115 pages; Open Court: \$1). To this personal record of religious experience, the student of life and religion could not be indifferent. It is perhaps irrelevant to admit that the literary method might not in itself be consoling to readers of perversely Ashmolean temper. The desire for spiritual equilibrium is universal, however, and many have doubtless verged upon the feeling expressed by the person to whom this Letter was written: "The gods put winds about our heads and hurdles before our feet, and our bodies and souls crack and break. What becomes of the pain in the heart, no one has offered to suggest."

LIFE AND I, An Autobiography of Humanity, by Gamaliel Bradford (8vo, 307 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50) is in the nature of a speculative offshoot of the author's biographical studies; its aim is neither metaphysical, didactic, nor theological, but simply to present certain phases of "the greatest dramatic struggle in the world, that between the I and the Not-I." Love and power and thought and beauty are the themes, and Mr Bradford's approach to them does not differ greatly from that of most of his readers. His analyses are cast in familiar moulds, and plainly labelled. One has the impression, on laying aside the book, of having made an interesting—though somewhat hurried—trip through a museum devoted to specimens of thought.

CONQUISTADOR, by Philip Guedalla (8vo, 276 pages; Harpers: \$3) brings the tempered edge of a flexible British mind against the spinning emery of American culture with exhilarating pyrotechnical effect. It is impossible to squeeze the fine flavour of this volume into a paragraph; even to lift a sample quotation would be quite as futile as to select a sample tulip in a Holland acre of them. To find that one's country can evoke—as a theme—such deft and incisive writing is, on the whole, rather reassuring to one's national pride. In place of that condescension which disturbed Lowell, Mr Guedalla views the American scene with tolerant good humour, civilized breadth, and now and then a note of genuine poetry. If these sentences imply that *Conquistador* possesses high merit, the impression is correct.

BIANCA CAPPELLO, by Clifford Bax (12mo, 168 pages; Representative Women Series, Viking Press: \$2). A Renaissance lady that the liberal-minded John Addington Symonds thought "infamous" is here set forth gayly, clearly, unblinkingly, approvingly. It is as nice an instance of "different times, different manners" as may be desired. In an age crazy for self-fulfilment it does not surprise to find Mr Bax gravely asserting Bianca Cappello, who merely had the gift for getting along, to be a genius. At that rate all the little chorus ladies of Broadway who marry Chicago millionaires are geniuses. Well, *THE DIAL*, which desires as heartily as any other publication, to be "in the period," will not dispute this matter. It might even confess that this biography reads like a flash and is fascinating enough to be true.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, by Milton Waldman (8vo, 255 pages; Harpers: \$4). Nothing in the sphere of a terse, condensed, popular biography could be more competently planned out than this desirable book. The balancing of difficult and confusing material is superb. The character-drawing, however, both in Raleigh's own case and in that of his overpowering contemporaries, is the crux of the undertaking; and here we feel that Mr Waldman is a good deal too rough-and-ready. Such clue-words as "pagan" and "puritan" are bandied about with less discrimination than the subject deserves. Such a sentence as "One frequently feels that Raleigh's life is a Greek tragedy which slipped a cog somewhere" will serve to indicate this hand-to-mouth psychologizing. Such clumsy generalizations do unfortunately a little weaken the thread of this sturdy, admirable narrative.

JACQUES CŒUR: Merchant Prince of the Middle Ages, by Albert Boardman Kerr (10mo, 327 pages; Scribner's: \$3.50). The fourteenth century and the twentieth are not so far apart in these pages. There is something essentially modern in the life and enterprises of this French merchant, so much so that a thus belated adequate biography in English is quite inexplicable. Happily the task has fallen ultimately into competent hands. Mr Kerr's work reveals care and scholarship and—what is even more important—an assured grasp of historical perspective. One extracts from this biography not merely an acquaintance with its subject but also a lively comprehension of the world in which he lived.

THE OPINIONS OF ANATOLE FRANCE, by Nicolas Ségur, translated with introduction by J. Lewis May (8vo, 219 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$3). It certainly remains an irrefutable proof of Anatole France's vitality, that, like green shoots from a lopped trunk, these posthumous commentaries upon life should carry so much sap. As a lively protest against the brutalities of progress such playful aspersions upon the "Americanization" of the human spirit offer a salutary antidote to the reckless *liaison* between imagination and machinery which is one of the dominant "notes" of our time. The wilful Dadaists who danced on this sly old sage's grave will be infuriated afresh as they skim these unctuous-querulous pages. *Tant mieux!*

THE SEVEN STRINGS OF THE LYRE, The Romantic Life of George Sand, 1804-1876, by Elizabeth W. Schermerhorn (8vo, 327 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$4) is not perhaps, biography of a major sort. Yet it is an admirably careful and well-turned account of the commodiously romantic life of its great heroine. Possibly it will be found rather too contained. The reader, however, ought not to mistake sedateness for impercipient. There are ironies here (as indeed there could not but be upon such rich occasions); yet they are ironies forborne—which are sufficiently rare phenomena in this sunken time, invaded as our biography too much is by the jibes of fashionably and cheaply malicious biographers.

MY JEANNE D'ARC, by Michael Monahan (10mo, 298 pages; Century: \$3) is a re-telling of the old story, done with reverence and rhetoric. Mr Monahan has gone deeply into the history and legends which cluster about the Maid of Orleans and has set forth his impressions with the fervour of a poet. Indeed he finds prose too halting for his purpose at times and relinquishes it in favour of verse. One may not read his book without partaking, in some degree, of his rhapsodic adoration.

THE INFLUENCE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE IN FRANCE, by Célestin Pierre Cambiaire, Ph.D. (8vo, 313 pages; Stechert: \$2.50). Dr Cambiaire certainly furnishes us with convincing evidence that Poe was an important influence in French literature. For students of this particular angle of French letters his book will be found valuable. For more general readers it is perhaps a little too overloaded with regimented scraps of information, scrupulously but unimaginatively collected, to prove a contention the interest of which is, after all, in its essence, academic.

CHARLES M. DOUGHTY, A Critical Study, by Barker Fairley (12mo, 256 pages; Oxford University Press: \$2.25). This tense, compact, vigorous little book is saturated with the crucial sap of the tough and difficult Doughty cult. With the exception of Blake's Prophetic Poems no English writer's harsh forbidding austerities are more significant than Doughty's. Into this primordial rock-cluttered world Mr Fairley passionately leads us. He shirks none of its stark stone-ledges. He discovers fresh water-pools where others would find only intolerable desolation. That his book is more convincing where he deals with Arabia Deserta than with his author's verse is natural enough. But although the reader's feeling for poetry is bound to be startled and perhaps staggered by much of Mr Fairley's enthusiasm, the general result is a suggestive and stimulating contribution to the growing body of Doughty interpretation.

THE AMERICAN AND THE GERMAN UNIVERSITY, by Charles Franklin Thwing (10mo, 238 pages; Macmillan: \$2.25) is academically competent as a survey, though somewhat colourless in its conclusions. So far as the effects of German methods on American scholarship are concerned, Dr Thwing hazards the belief that the "comprehensive result" has been "rich, noble, productive." "Yet," he says in the next breath, "one is inclined to ask whether this result has been quite so rich, quite so noble, quite so formative,—rich, noble, formative as it has proved to be,—as one had, and has, a right to expect?" The author's study lacks the clarity of conviction; it is almost too reticent to be important.

THE SEA AND THE JUNGLE, by H. M. Tomlinson, with introduction by Christopher Morley (16mo, 332 pages; The Modern Library: 95 cents) does not deteriorate; none of its beauty has evaporated and its pungent realism and tonic philosophy are as stimulating to-day as when first revealed. Not even the somewhat meagre margins dictated by pocket convenience can curb the sweep of Mr Tomlinson's sinewy prose—prose with the flash and fine edge and flexibility of tempered steel.

EUROPE, by Count Hermann Keyserling, translated from the German by Maurice Samuel (8vo, 393 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$5) is one of the most provocative books of the year. In spite of a personal assumption, incredibly pompous and ego-centric, there are so many exciting and penetrating generalizations in *Das Spektrum Europas*, that the reader, to whatever race he may belong, cannot but be roused, arrested, stimulated. Here may be found, as the great European cultures, one by one, are analysed, something of that bird's-eye world-view which, through quite different "spectra" we get in Valéry and in Spengler. The *bias*, on the whole, is philosophically aristocratic. The dangers to European civilization come equally, the writer thinks, from democratic America and communistic Russia. Neither the qualities of German nor of French psychology are ranked as the most essential in the creation of the author's European "Culture-Federation." This ideal rôle would, it seems, be best fulfilled by the instinctive aristocratic individualism of the Magyar, the Englishman, and the Turk.

COMMENT

So when Ptolemy, Alexander's Favourite was hurt with a poisoned dart in a fight, and lay in grievous pain sick of it; Alexander sitting by him fell asleep, and saw a Dragon which his Mother Olympias kept, carrying a little root in his mouth, and shewing the place where it grew, saying it was of such vertue that it would cure Ptolemy: Alexander being awake, told his dream, and sent to seek that root (for the place was not far off) which having found, it cured, not only Ptolemy, but many other Souldiers which were hurt with those kind of darts.

Richard Saunders

THOMAS HERIOT was pleased with the "greate hearbe in forme of a Marigolde, about sixe foote in height" which we have in America. "Some take it to bee *Planta Solis*;" he says; "of the seeds herof they make both a kinde of bread and broth" and Nicholas Monardes published in his treatise on the medicinal uses of American plants, a picture of the sassafras tree, and its leaf, "used against all kinds of diseases."

In *The Divine Origin of the Craft of the Herbalist*¹ by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, there is much that is curious and important if one has an interest in magic, medicine, or the healing properties of herbs, "the unsatisfactory term magic" having been used originally to designate learning among Medes and Persians famed for their skill in working enchantments. Science is exonerated of credulity by the assertion that the herbalists' knowledge of medicine would have been greater but for their patients' "invincible love of magic" though the caduceus is retained symbolically, its serpents suggesting immortality in their power of shedding and renewing the skin. Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian herbals are here shown to be the foundation of Greek herbals—disseminated also, by way of Arabic, through Asia, Turkestan, and China; and the antiquity of the craft, the nature of it, and the diversity of texts, are graphically suggested by prescriptions, plant lists, and plates,

¹ *The Divine Origin of the Craft of the Herbalist*. By Sir E. A. Wallis Budge. Illustrated. 8vo. 96 pages. Published at Culpepper House (London), by The Society of Herbalists. 5s.

among which last a typographic leopard from Ethiopia is particularly comely; the following Egyptian herbalist's formula against baldness being included: to mix together fat of the lion, fat of the hippopotamus, fat of the crocodile, fat of the cat, fat of the serpent, and fat of the Nubian ibex. Early magic has many counterparts. In the "facility of his reformation" by the garland of roses, Apuleius' metamorphosis into an ass delightfully illustrates the plausibility of magic:

"I took Fotis by the hand, . . . and said: 'I pray thee, . . . grant me some of this ointment . . . and I will ever hereafter be bound unto you by a mighty gift and obedient to your commandment, if you will but make that I be turned into a bird and stand, like Cupid with his wings, beside you my Venus.' . . . And then I put off all my garments and greedily thrust my hand into the box and took out a good deal of ointment, and after that I had well rubbed every part and member of my body, I hovered with mine arms, and moved myself, looking still when I should be changed into a bird . . . ; and behold neither feathers did burgeon out nor appearance of wings but verily my hair did turn into ruggedness and my tender skin wore tough and hard; my fingers and toes leaving the number five grew together into hooves, and from the end of my back grew a great tail, . . . and so without all help (viewing every part of my poor body) I perceived that I was no bird, but a plain ass."

As one is made aware by Sir Wallis Budge, herb doctor and magician have from the earliest times accompanied each other, and it is not surprising that Apuleius should have given us both the Golden Ass¹ and a Herbarium.

Herbs and magic belong characteristically also to the North American Indian, and in his use of them as in other primitive practice, the sinister cannot be said to have quite strangled the good. Chief Standing Bear has provided, in his autobiography,² a much

¹ The Golden Ass of Apuleius, Being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius. An English Translation by W. Adlington (1566): Revised 1915-1927. With an Essay by Charles Whibley. 8vo. 288 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$3.50.

² My People the Sioux. By Luther Standing Bear. Edited by E. A. Brininstool. With introduction by William S. Hart. Illustrated. 10mo. 288 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.

needed antidote to "white" superstition regarding "medicine," massacres, stealth, and various forms of "savage" diffidence. He admits certain superstitions, vicarious sacrifice by ordeal, and a tendency to retaliation, saying also without embarrassment, "The Spotted Tail Indians thought they would go after the Poncas. . . . They had no reason for bothering this tribe, but they just did not like them;" yet has imparted profound respect for primitive resourcefulness, loyalty, and domestic aestheticism. It is impossible not to be ashamed of our civilized ignorance in moving-picture and other representations of the Indian, for Chief Standing Bear finds that we prefer a pseudo-Indian life to the actual one and are indifferent when reasoned with. The conventionalized all-Greek living statuary of Ringling Brothers' *On the War Path*, and *The First Americans* may be over-ambitious, but it is not really misleading.

In the American wing of The Metropolitan Museum there is a colonial bedspread in which the motive is Columbia on her triumphal car, drawn by leopards and acclaimed by Indians, under the legend, *Where Liberty Dwells There is My Country*. In view of the fact that about twenty-four dollars was paid for Manhattan and that we should like occupancy to be guardianship, one hopes that civilization may yet be a right substitute for primaeval ecstasica.



Photograph by Druet

TÊTE DE FEMME. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL

THE DIAL

SEPTEMBER 1928

A SONG

ABOUT TSAR IVAN VASILYEVITCH
HIS YOUNG BODY-GUARD AND THE
VALIANT MERCHANT KALASHNIKOV

BY M. LERMONTOV

Translated From the Russian by John Cournos

*Hail to thee, Tsar Iván Vasilyevitch!
Of thee we have devised our song,
Of thy beloved body-guard,
And of the merchant, bold Kaláshnikov,
In fashion old devising it,
To sing it to the dulcimer.
We've crooned and have lamented
And all the folk, all true believers, have been comforted,
And the boyard, Matvéy Romódanovsky,
Brought us frothing mead;
While on a silver tray,
His snow-white lady brought
A new white towel all knit with silk.
They feasted us three days—three nights—
Intently listening, craving more.*

I

No great red sun rode in the sky,
No small blue clouds were basking there.
But feasting in the banquet-hall,

Resplendent in his golden crown,
 Sat Tsar Iván Vasílyevitch, the terrible,
 His bondsmen at his back,
 Boyards and princes facing him,
 At either side his body-guard.
 To God's glory feasted he;
 Full pleased and merry, he.

The Tsar smiled and commanded then
 That wine sweet from across the seas,
 Be poured into his gilded shell
 And borne before the body-guard.
 All drank, all praised the Tsar.

Of all the guard but one alone
 A laddie bold that none could curb
 Wet not his lips within the gilded scoop;
 But on the ground let rest his deep dark eyes,
 Upon his breast he hung his head
 And in that breast was heaviness.

The Tsar knit his black brows
 And turned his fiery eyes on the brave lad—
 As from heaven's heights a hawk
 May sight a young and blue-winged dove—
 The brave lad did not lift his eyes.

The Tsar then fiercely struck the ground,
 Driving the ferule of the stick deep into the oak floor
 And still the brave lad did not flinch.
 The Tsar then spake an angry word; and suddenly
 The brave lad roused himself.

“Ho thou, our servant true, Kiribéyevitch,
 Hast thou been hiding an ungodly thought?
 Dost envy thou our regal glory?
 Art weary of thy henchman-fealty?
 At rising of the moon the stars rejoice
 That light should now be shed upon their way,

But mark—that star which loses itself in the clouds
 Must straightway fall.
 And it does not become thee, Kiribéyevitch,
 To scorn our royal merriment;
 For kin art thou to the Skurátovs,
 And fostered in the Maliútin clan!”

Bowing, then answered Kiribéyevitch:
 “O thou our Lord, Iván Vasílyevitch!
 Reproach not thine unworthy slave:
 A heart of fire will not be quenched with wine,
 Dark thoughts yield not to feasting!
 I have angered thee—O lordly will!
 Prescribe thou punishment; cut off my head:
 My stalwart shoulders feel its weight;
 Toward the damp earth it droops.”

Then spake Tsar Iván Vasílyevitch:
 “Why should a brave lad be thus sorrowful?
 Is thy brocaded mantle old?
 Has thy fine cap of sable lost its shape?
 Or has thy treasure slipped away?
 Or is thy tempered sabre notched?
 Or has thy horse, ill-shod, begun to limp?
 Has someone in a fisticuff
 Surprised thy guard and knocked thee down,
 There by the river, the Moskvá—
 Perchance a merchant’s son?”

Then answered Kiribéyevitch—
 Tossing his curling locks:
 “There’s not been born that wizard arm,
 In boyard or merchant race;
 My fleet horse of the steppe is in his stride;
 My sabre gleams like glass;
 And holidays, by thy grace,
 I’ll be decked out not worse than any one.

“I mount, and gallop off on my swift horse

A SONG

Beyond the river, the Moskvá,
 Tightening my silken girdle round and
 Pulling my velvet cap awry
 With its sable edge so dark and fine about,
 At the wooden gates a cluster
 Of maidens young and sweet,
 See all and whisper in delight;
 But there is one who does not glance
 Nor does she show delight.
 She draws a flowery veil across her face. . . .

“In holy Russia—mother dear—
 Is not found one so fair;
 She floats along—a little swan,
 Glancing sweetly like a dove;
 She speaks; one hears the nightingale;
 Her cheeks aflame are like the sunrise in God’s sky;
 Her braids of hair are shining gold
 With ribbons bright twined in the plaits
 That on her shoulders, twining, crossing,
 Kiss her bosom that is white.
 She is of the merchant race,
 Is called Alëna Dmítrevna.

“When I see her I am not I:
 My arms fall slack,
 My keen eyes blur;
 O orthodox Tsar, he is in misery,
 Who must live, pining, in this world alone.
 I have grown weary of swift steeds,
 Of fine brocade attire,
 Am not in want of hoarded gold,
 Who have not one with whom my gold to share,
 Whom I may dazzle with my fearlessness,
 Whom I might dazzle with my fine attire.

“Let me depart to the wide steppes,
 To a free life, a Cossack’s life.
 Where I may bow my restless head—

Upon a heathen spear.
 Let cursèd Tartars share the spoil,
 The keen-edged sword, the gallant horse,
 And warrior's saddle, the Circássian.
 Let ravens pick my tearful eyes,
 Rains scour my orphan bones,
 And let the winds disperse my wretched dust. . . ."

Then laughing, said Iván Vasílyevitch:
 "My servant true,
 Thy woe shall have my aid.
 Take this my sapphire ring,
 And my pearl necklace take.
 First to a match-maker make thou thy bow,
 Then send these precious gifts
 To thy Alëna Dmítrevna:
 If she be pleased then call a wedding-feast,
 If not, be reconciled to fate."

O thou my Lord, O Tsar Iván Vasílyevitch!
 Thou art deceived by this thy wily slave,
 He has not told thee all the truth,
 He has not said that the fair maid
 Has wedded been,
 Is wedded to a merchant's son
 And by the church's Christian law. . . .

Hey, my children, sing—make the dulcimer ring!
Hey, my children, drink—don't take time to think!
Give cheer to our good boyard
And to the boyard's lady,
The snow-white one!

II

Behind the counter the young merchant sat,
 The sturdy lad, Stepán Paramónovitch,
 Surnamed Kaláshnikov;

Silken goods he spread to show,
 With gracious words alluring guests,
 Gold and silver reckoned up.
 But no luck befell that day:
 Heedlessly the lords walked by,
 Never glancing toward the shop.

In holy church the vespers had been rung;
 Behind the Kremlin sunset blazed
 And in the sky the gathered clouds
 Drove with the wind and snow along;
 Deserted now the market place
 As Stepán Paramónovitch
 Draws to the oaken door
 And springs the lock of German steel
 And chains the growling, white-fanged dog
 And hastens home, all lost in thought,
 Across the river, the Moskvá.

But when he walked into his steep-roofed house
 Astonished was Stepán Paramónovitch.
 No wife to greet him there.
 On the oak table no white table-cloth,
 The image-candle dimly flickering.
 He then besought the aged servitor:
 "Tell me, tell me, Eriméyevna,
 Where is she gone or hid?
 The hour is late. My little ones—
 Are they still at their games? Asleep?"

"O master mine, Stepán Paramónovitch!
 I tell a marvel marvellous:
 To vespers went Alëna Dmítrevna;
 The priest came by, the priest's young wife also—
 Returned both from the parish-church;
 They lit a taper and sat down to dine,
 But she not yet, thy sweet young wife.
 Thy little ones are not asleep,
 They're not at play,

They weep and weep,
And they will not be comforted."

Perturbed, absorbed in troubled thought,
The merchant young, Kaláshnikov,
Stood by the window looking down the street.
The night was dark; the white snow fell
In spreading flakes, obscuring every human trace.

A sound—he heard the outer door;
Quick steps.
There in the name of Christ!
His young wife stood,
Head bare of covering,
The two braids of her hair untwined,
And all with snow and frost bedecked,
Glazed her two eyes, bereft of reason,
Her lips muttering speeches out of season.

"Where—tell me—wife, where hast thou been?
Strayed in what yard, what market place?
Thy hair unkempt, thy dress so torn,
Hast thou been revelling,
A guest perchance of the young sons, the boyarian? . . .
Was it for this that thou and I
Before the holy ikons were betrothed,
Exchanging rings of gold?
I'll turn iron locks on thee,
Behind oak doors ironbound,
That God's own light thou shalt not see,
That thou shalt not dishonour me. . . ."

Thereat the damsel sweet, Alëna Dmítrevna,
Shook violently and trembled like an aspen-leaf,
And there most bitterly poured out her grief
And weeping at his feet,
Begged of her husband his reprieve.

"My lord, my lovely one,

Kill me, or let me speak!
 Thy words pierce like a sword
 And cut my very heart.
 I fear not death,
 Nor neighbours' tongues;
 I fear but thy inclemency.

“Returning home from vespers I,
 Down the deserted street,
 Heard suddenly a crunching sound
 And turned to see—a man sped to catch up with me.
 My poor knees shook,
 I drew my silken veil across my face.
 But clutching fiercely both my hands,
 He whispered low these words to me:
 ‘Why art thou frightened, lovely one?
 I am not thief nor highwayman;
 The Tsar I serve, the terrible Tsar;
 My name is Kiribéyevitch,
 Of noble blood, of the Maliútin clan . . .’

“These words but frightened me the more;
 My poor head swam;
 And then he kissed, and tried to comfort me,
 And went on whispering as he kissed:
 ‘What dost thou lack?
 But tell me, lovely one. Gold? Pearls?
 Gems, bright brocades?
 Thou shalt be decked out like a queen
 And all shall envy thee.
 Then let me not die cruelly,
 Grant me thy love, thy dear embrace
 But once, and then farewell!’

“Devouring, like a living flame,
 His kisses covered me;
 My cheeks burn yet,
 His kisses, cursed be they.
 The neighbours' wives at wicket gates
 Laughed, and derided us.

I tore myself from his embrace
And straightway ran for home;
But captive in the robber's hands
Stayed my flowered kerchief, thine own gift,
And my Buchárian veil.
I am dishonoured, shamed! Alas!
The chaste, the faithful one!
What thing will spiteful tongues invent,
How can I show myself?

"Preserve me, save me, thy true wife,
From scandalmongers' evil tongues.
Of whom else shall I ask for help?
In whom else put my trust?
I am an orphan in this world of winter white—
My father dead, in the cold ground,
And at his side my mother dear.
My eldest brother lost, as thou dost know,
In a far land, my youngest brother but a child,
A babe—a child—as yet without a thought. . . ."

So spake with bitter tears Alëna Dmítrevna.

Then summoned Stepán Paramónovitch
 His younger brothers twain.
 The two came straightway, bowed to him,
 And in such wise they spoke:
 "O elder brother, tell us pray,
 What has befallen thee, what woeful thing—
 That on so cold and dark a night thou hast thus sent for us?"

"My brothers dear, declare I now
 What woe has come to me:
 The Tsar's guard, Kiribéyevitch,
 Dishonours us and our fair name;
 My soul brooks not the shame;
 No valiant heart could suffer it.
 To-morrow then we fight, we two,
 Before the Tsar, beside the river, the Moskvá,
 I fight his body-guard—

A SONG

Fight to the death, the bitter end.
 And if he smite me, come ye then
 And stand for holy mother-truth.
 Faint not, O brothers dear to me—
 Of fresher strength and younger years than I,
 Less touched by sin—
 The Lord shall smile on you!”

This answer then his brothers made:
 “The wind blows thither in the sky
 And thither the clouds drift;
 In the vale of blood, the battle-ground,
 The dark blue eagle sets his feast,
 Cries, ‘Gather up the dead,’
 And the young eaglets congregate.
 Thou art a father to us twain;
 Do as thou wilt; make trial of us.
 Be confident; our kinsman we shall not betray.”

*Hey, my children, sing—make the dulcimer ring!
 Hey, my children, drink—don’t take time to think!
 Give cheer to our good boyard
 And to the boyard’s lady,
 The snow-white one.*

III

Upon Moskvá the great, the golden-crowned,
 And Kremlin, white-stone-walled,
 From further than the far woods, the blue hills,
 Playing on wooden roofs,
 Dispersing the small grey clouds,
 Flamed the sunrise, ruby-red;
 Spreading its golden locks,
 Immersed in the sand-like snow;
 As though a fair maid in the mirror glanced,
 It looked into the sky and smiled.
 To what end didst thou wake, O sunrise ruby-red?
 For what joy didst prepare thy spreading rays?

Now come, now flock to the Moskvá,
The lads; the bold Muscovian fighters gather,
To see the fight, to be amused,
And in warlike array,
The Tsar also, with boyards and with body-guard.
He bade them stretch the silver chain
Of welded links, held up by other links, of gold.
A square of sixty yards' extent
They marked off for the best matched pair,
The combat of the challengers.
Commanded then the Tsar, Iván Vasílyevitch:
"Shout in a mighty voice,
'Ho, dauntless ones, come forth;
Diversion for the Tsar, for little father.
Come. Step into the broad ring;
Who wins, the Tsar's reward he shall receive;
Who loses, him God will forgive!"

Then boldly stepped forth Kiribéyevitch,
In silence bowed low to the Tsar,
And there, with velvet coat thrown off,
His right hand resting at his side,
His left disposing his red cap,
He waited for a challenger.
Thrice rang the mighty shout—
No fighter stirred,
The company stood dubious.

Complacently the body-guard
Strolled to and fro,
Inclined to mock the fighting-lads:
"Subdued and pensive ones, fear not,
The feast-day prescribes punishment not death,
Diversion merely for the Tsar, for little father."

Then suddenly dividing into two, the crowd gave way,
And Stepán Paramónovitch strode forth,
A merchant young, a fighter strong,
Surnamed Kaláshnikov.

To the terrible Tsar he first made reverence,
 Then to white Kremlin and the holy fanes,
 Then to the Russian people, bowed.
 His eyes were fire—a falcon's eyes;
 Upon the body-guard they fixed themselves.
 He stopped there, facing him
 And sheathed his hands against the fight
 And squared his back
 And stroked his noble beard.

To him Kiribéyevitch then said:
 "Tell me, my gallant fellow,
 Thy breed and family?
 By what name art thou known?
 'Tis just to know for whom mass shall be said,
 That after victory,
 The victor may in boasting name his luckless foe."

Stepán Paramónovitch replied:
 "I am by name Stepán Kaláshnikov,
 An honest father mine;
 According to God's law I've lived:
 I have dishonoured no man's wife,
 I've robbed none, under cover of the night,
 I have not hid from broad daylight. . . .
 Thou prophesiest God's own truth.
 For one of us mass shall be read
 Not later than to-morrow noon;
 And one shall boast
 And one shall celebrate with friends. . . .
 I jest no jest, I reckon not of diversion for the folk.
 I come to meet thee, son of Turks,
 To mortal combat I have come: to mine or thy last fight."

At these words Kiribéyevitch
 Grew pale in face like autumn snow;
 His bold eyes quailed,
 A chill coursed through his mighty frame,
 And on his lips apart to speak,
 The half-formed words congealed. . . .

Then silently they drew back, each,
And the heroic fight began.

Swinging his arm then Kiribéyevitch
Struck first Kaláshnikov,
Struck in the middle of the breast,
Resoundingly, and Stepán Paramónovitch reeled, staggering,
His cross of brass, his reliquary
From Kiéff bent in and cut the breast;
Like drops of dew the blood broke out.
“As it is fated, so the end shall be,”
Said Stepán Paramónovitch within himself.
“For honour’s sake I shall stand valiantly.”
He then drew back, and braced himself
And gathered all his strength
And struck his hated foe
On the left temple, a full-shouldered blow.

The young man softly groaned,
Reeled, fell,
And dying rolled upon the snow—
Struck down like a young pine—
A sapling of the virgin wood
Cut where the sap flows, at the root.

Then Tsar Iván Vasílyevitch
With anger glowed
And struck his foot upon the earth
And frowning terribly,
Commanded that the merchant bold be caught
And straightway in his presence brought.

“Tell me in truth, upon thy soul,”
Enquired the mighty Tsar,
“Hast thou thus killed my servant true,
Of free will, or unwillingly—
My champion, Kiribéyevitch?”

“O Tsar, I killed with full free will,
For why I will not tell;

A SONG

My reason God alone shall know.
 Command my punishment; send to the block
 My guilty head;
 This only I implore—aid for my little ones
 And for my sweet young wife—
 And for my brothers two;
 Vouchsafe them of thy bounty, Tsar. . . .”

“’Tis well for thee, my child,
 O merchant’s son, O fighter bold,
 That thou hast spoken true.
 Thy children, also thy young wife,
 Shall have of me a subsidy;
 Thy brothers twain shall from this day
 Trade with no tax to pay
 From end to end of mighty Russia.
 But thou, thou must ascend the scaffold high
 And on the block lay down thy restless head.
 But they shall sharpen well the axe,
 The headsman’s dress be gay;
 I shall command that the great bell be rung,
 That all Muscovians may know
 That thou too of my bounty hast not been forgot.”

To the square flocked all the folk;
 Drone-moaned the bell,
 Tolling the evil news.
 While carelessly the headsman, to and fro,
 Traversed the scaffold-place on high,
 In scarlet blouse with sparkling belt-buckle,
 And great axe with new-whetted edge;
 Smoothing his hands until
 The fighter strong, the merchant young,
 Had bade his brothers two farewell.

“Ho ye, my brothers, friends by blood,
 In this our last kiss and embrace,
 I charge you greet for me,
 Alëna Dmítrevna and bid her not to mourn,
 And not to let my little ones be kept in mind of me.

And greet for me my father's house,
Greet our companions dear.
I charge you both, in God's own church,
Pray for my soul, my sinful soul!"

Stepán Kaláshnikov, alas,
Then suffered death, a shameful death;
And his unhappy head
Rolled on the block in blood.

Beyond the river, the Moskvá,
They made his grave then,
In an open field between three roads—
The Tul, the Ryazan, the Vladimir;
And they heaped up a little mound
And placed a maple cross on it.
Winds howl and sweep
Across his nameless grave.
Good men pass by:
An old man pauses in his walk, to cross himself,
A young man walks by, solemn and downcast,
A maiden walks by sorrowful,
The dulcimer-players walk by, singing a little song.

*Hey ye, happy lads,
Dulcimer-players youna.
With voices strong!*

*Ye've well begun—ye must end well;
Render to all truth and honour.
To the generous boyard, glory!
To the boyard's lady, glory!
To all the Russian people, glory!*

THE FISH AND THE WATCH

BY AZORIN

Translated From the Spanish by Katie Lush

I DEDICATE this trifling paradox to that ironist of my affections, Luis Galbadón. . . . I am utterly depressed. I am at a seaside resort. I sit on a deck chair, before a wide sea. Confronted by this immensity, my thoughts stray, perhaps, to that other immensity, Time, and to the unending, enduring succession of men and things. But an irreverent boy comes up to me and demands ten centimes for the chair. I pay the ten centimes. Now released from the momentary intrusion of reality, my fervent spirit flies swift through space. I stand up: a peripatetic philosopher may not remain seated. I thread my way through the knots of young, graceful girls, inhale the fresh breeze, and notice how charmingly the green background of sea defines the swelling curves of the women's figures. Every now and then a tram arrives, and troops of bathers make an irruption into the bathing place. They laugh and chatter and draw chairs together in circles. Down below, on the sand, on that golden carpet, other black figures are moving, walking, and the bathers in their clinging gowns move about among them. A pretty woman comes dripping from the waves, shrinking a little, her wet bathing-suit clinging to her body. Some by-standers pause in their conversation to watch her, eagerly, silently, as she slowly crosses the sand with that air—you know it so well—of one who, preoccupied with something, would yet seem unconscious. Perhaps the bather who comes from the menacing deep is a man, and then the charming girls on the beach look at him, smile and whisper, while he, rather bashful in his short, tight-stretched tunic, breaks into a gentle run and regains his bathing-box.

I watch this dumb show and sit down again. Why am I, a follower of Aristotle, always sitting down? Once again the inevitable boy comes and demands the ten centimes for the chair. I pay the ten centimes. My thoughts again flutter toward eternity, time,

the origin of life, the final cause of things, the problem of knowledge. I remain still for a moment gazing at the glaucous waste and then stand up again. Variety is one of the charms of life; seek variety. That is why I leave the lounge of the bath-house and go down to the beach. There one may see the pretty feet of women who are reclining in their basket-chairs. Tiny, arched feet, shod in new, elegant shoes are one of the most compelling charms of woman. See that the woman you love has tiny feet. I walk along noticing everything my eyes light on, with that discretion with which it behoves a modest observer of life to notice everything. Perhaps it was pre-ordained that this splendid woman by whose side I am this moment passing, should be here beside me so that I might observe her; and—note this!—I drop my stick as I come abreast of her; and bow, of course, when I stoop to pick it up. . . .

When I have walked thus from one side to the other I feel a strong inclination to sit down in a basket-chair. For a philosopher of my dimensions these basket-chairs are a surprising novelty; the reader is familiar with them: they are like little wicker-work furnaces to look at. But I make a solemn declaration that I have never seen them outside a photograph. It is obvious then that I have never sat in one. Some of our futile desires assume an exaggerated importance in life. Shall I confess that throughout my childhood, when I was making the journey to college, I cherished a secret wish to eat a meal in a railway refreshment-room, surrounded by the bustle of passengers, while train bells were ringing and whistles blowing? In after years, a man, I often realized my boyish dream and found, to my profound regret, that station meals are dull affairs enough. . . .

Am I to experience one more disappointment now? I have in front of me one of these mysterious basket-chairs. I sink into it with some emotion. The wicker-work creaks a little; an airy, pleasant, satisfied feeling makes my nerves tingle; I tell myself that this is splendid, and reflect that with my legs stretched out, with the head of my stick in my mouth, with my hat pushed forward over my eyes, I must have all the appearance of a distinguished man of the world. I glance stealthily from side to side to see if these elegant ladies are noticing. But I find they are not looking, and on the other hand, a man in a white suit is hurrying over with a little green

paper in his hand. I feel a certain pained surprise. Who is this man? What does he want? What does this paper he is handing me mean? He is demanding ten centimes, the price of the chair. It costs ten centimes to sit down in a basket-chair. I pay. Perhaps I begin to feel a vague disillusionment: is life one long succession of endless, continuous disillusionments like these waves that press forward, hurrying ever, to die in the sand? This prosaic, frivolous interruption leads me to thoughts of more serious things, to a more profound despair. But why give way to melancholy in a noisy, friendly watering-place, among laughing, smiling girls? It is absurd. To dispel my gloom I go back through the lounge and out on to the terrace. It cannot be denied that a terrace has uses; from a terrace one may gaze over wide, picturesque panoramas. An immense blue plain lies open before my eyes. I stand for a moment gazing at it; there is a chair in front of me; why not sit down? I sit down. And when my thoughts are once more winging philosophic spheres a stranger comes to me. Again I am unaccountably moved by his approach. He demands ten centimes. My mind, saddened now and descending the slope of despair, slips over the brink of an abyss of hopelessness. . . .

It is time for me to leave the beach, walk along the coast, and take the tram. It seems to me a good idea to take the tram. I take a tram, arrive at Santander, and make my way along the quays. Here I see some fishermen. Fishermen are an estimable folk; fishermen preach patience to us others: whenever you grow a little weary of your wives, walk among fishermen. I notice that at intervals—not very short intervals unfortunately—the good fisherman whom I am watching pulls up his line and unhooks a gleaming, silvery fish. First of all one sees a patch of no decided shape away down in the depths; this patch grows quickly larger and more definite in outline, moving all the time in a sinuous curve; then the fish is torn from its element and flies through the air; finally it reaches the cruel hands of the fisherman. Then the awful moment: the man disengages it from the hook and throws it into a dark basket. . . . This action is performed in a very matter-of-fact way by common fishermen; but when the fisherman I am watching holds one of these fat “*panchos*” in his hand, alive and shining, with silver scales and golden iridescences on its fins, when, after a long, patient vigil, he has in his hand one of these fish he has caught, he holds it to his ear,

listens for a moment without a word, then smiles at the onlookers, exclaiming, "He says he wants to go back down there again; but I tell him he must stay up here with us for a bit." The onlookers laugh, the fish flaps about in the basket; and I say to myself, "This fisherman is the greatest humorist in Santander."

The discovery pleases me, and I am moving contentedly away when the most deeply felt, the most striking event of my sentimental summer occurs. Great things should be told simply. I take out my watch, it is a small Waltham, flat like the fish, shiny like the fish, slippery like the fish. Naturally I took it out to see the time. But, at the very moment when I was looking at its white dial, the fisherman, who had just finished baiting his hook, threw his line back over his shoulder so as to cast it out more strongly. I jumped aside suddenly to prevent the hook from catching in my hat. As I did so the little watch jumped out of my hand into the water. Imagine my feelings. I followed its flight, absorbed in the path it was tracing. With light, unstudied grace it sank into the dark waters like a free and happy fish; then it was gone from my sight. I stood still for a moment gazing after it, then turned from the unlucky place, remarking to myself:

"The fish, leaping and flapping about in the basket, should be in the water, untroubled and happy, but it is on dry land; the watch, lost now in the dark waters, should lie safe in my pocket, but it is gone to the company of salmon, sole, turbot, *pancho*, and cod. Why this reversal of the natural order of things? By the action of what mysterious, impenetrable cause should this have come about? Is it not the way in which we fix our hope on an ideal, while dull reality bears us along quite other paths? Is it not an image of the destiny, life, love, of mortal men whose vain ambitions are all shattered by circumstance and misfortune?"

I dedicate this trifling paradox to that ironist of my affections, Luis Galbadón. I am utterly depressed.

ELEGY

BY GEORGE DILLON

I shall lose your face in the flickering of strange faces
That rush toward mine all day.

At night I shall go to the nervous, crowded places.
I shall concentrate on the people and the play,
And follow along to the dancing, and be gay.

I shall lose your voice in the anarchy of voices,
The rustle of wheels and footsteps and the wind.
I shall listen all day, I shall learn innumerable noises
To disentangle from what the city has dinned—
And at the end,

Waiting for sleep, I shall think of music, or say
Old rhymes, or pray.

All this to frighten the ghost of one sound away.

All this to frighten away one ghost who would start
Perilously into my blood by day and by night,
Perilously upon my mouth with the remembered kiss
Like a paralysis,

Till I am wound in your beauty as in a tightened net,
And suddenly it is enough, and I must forget,
Forget your beauty before I am mad with its sting!

I know the way. One loses part by part
Till all is lost but the unknowable thing,
The dream, the image not of sound or sight:

It is a wild perfume upon the world, it is the bright
Perpetual honey in the hive of spring,
It is the broken bell whose legends ring
Fatally and for ever in my heart.

ABOUT MURDERERS

BY MAXIM GORKI

Translated From the Russian by Marie Budberg

DELINQUENCY and criminality increase; murders are becoming more and more frequent; they are being committed with ever more sang-froid, and acquire a peculiar, ostentatious character. In all modern murders it is easy to perceive something affected, artificial; the murderer seems to look upon the deed as a sportsman might, wishing only to establish fantastic records of cold-blooded cruelty. If one murderer has cut his victim's body into six pieces, the next is not content to stop short of a dozen.

There can be no doubt that newspapers greatly contribute to an advance in criminality by publishing vivid, exciting, idealized accounts of crimes, in which the murderer becomes a hero, and his deed an act of heroism. Displaying keen interest in the criminal and indifference to his victim, the papers employ all their eloquence in describing the skill of the murderer, his craftiness, and daring.

Authors of the so-called "detective story" play on the same brass trumpet of sensation. Their stories might with more justice be called defective!

Next, and with astounding success, the cinema assists these two by producing crime films. The zoological emotions of some are roused; the imagination of others is corrupted; and the rest of society is rendered insensible to the facts of crime; its feeling of revulsion is numbed. All this is done merely in order to provide entertainment for people who are bored; whereas more than likely the cinema augments and intensifies the ennui of people who, in the manner of drums, are empty inside and produce a sound only after receiving a shock from without. And there is no doubt that the number of men striving to attract attention is growing daily.

I am inclined to believe that for many people crime becomes a path to glory; for others, a pastime, easy, and even encouraged; for censure may encourage provided one adds to it a shade of wondrous amazement.

And what could be easier—indeed absurdly—than the murder of man by man in our day, after the annihilation—for the sake of what?—of millions of Europeans, the most valuable men of our planet, on the fields of France?

When some idiot cuts up his neighbour and devours him, he is discussed for a whole month, in conversation and in print, and is regarded as an exceptional, an amazing person; while nothing is known of the fact that Professor Oppel, by massage of the heart revived three men who had died on the operating table; nobody writes about it. In this juxtaposition of the versions of social life and the miracles of science a subject of grave importance lies concealed. How is it that of the many upright European minds none has thus far made anything of such a possibility in all its scope?

Light could have been thrown on fatal misunderstanding and have destroyed it and might have shown how oppressively, how hideously the fearful shadow of a natural discontent with civilization spreads over everything that we call "culture."

Murderers have always produced on me an impression of incorporated stupidity. And however clean the outward attire of a murderer, one cannot but distrust his physical cleanliness.

The first murderer I ever met lived in Kazan, in the suburbs, on the Back-Wet Street; his name was Nazar. He was an old man of sixty-seven, tall and stooping, with a large flat face framed in an immense white beard; his nose was broad—without thickness—and his arms reached almost to his knees; in a way he recalled a monkey, but his watery blue eyes shone with childish limpidity and in the manner of his speech, in the very words he used there was something childish, soft, and lispng. He had been a shepherd in youth, had turned out to be a zoo-maniac, and people then made him the butt of endless jibes. His uncle's family particularly outdid themselves in making fun of him, and on Peter and Paul's Day he murdered the entire family with the sharpened edge of a mowing-knife. The uncle, because "He shouldn't allow them to laugh;" his wife and brother "For laughing;" his niece, a nine-year-old child, "That she should keep quiet;" a workman—"He happened to be on the spot . . ."

He told the story himself to me and to a friend of mine, a

student named Greimann—told it with the smile of a man who recalls the biggest and most successful achievement of his life. He got whipped for it and was sentenced to twenty years' hard labour, ran away from the shafts, but after three months returned of his own accord, was whipped again, and received a "supplementary sentence."

"The bosses pitied me for my simplicity," he used to say. His sentence was shortened twice, for "good behaviour," but he was there twenty-three years in all, after which he lived on in Siberia a long time as a colonist. In Kazan he collected rags, bones, and iron to sell, and made from twenty-five to forty copecks a day. His only food was tea and barley-bread; of the latter he ate three or four pounds a day and drank about thirty glasses of insufferably hot tea. On Saturdays he would go to the public baths and sit in the steam till he fainted.

He limped, his right leg was sore. He would lift up the trouser to show Greimann a blue swelling on the knee and say: "Well, blackie, have a look, what's wrong with it?"

Greimann, a law-student, with a fastidious grimace, maintained that he was no doctor, but the old man would insist.

"Never mind, look at it! I've got no faith in them doctors and crooks—but I've got faith in you. No matter that you are a Jew—you've got a fine habit of always speaking the truth; whatever you say, it is the truth."

The man roused Greimann to a state of irritated amazement, almost of terror. The Jew's innate dislike of murder and blood made Nazar repellent to him, but youthful desire to "understand" him attracted us to the old criminal.

"How is it," we asked, "that you, so simple-hearted, could bring yourself to kill?"

He answered, full of self-importance:

"That I couldn't say. It's not my doing—it's the devil's. I was a young fellow at the time, like you. I became simple with age." And he added sententiously:

"Youth, boys, is a dangerous thing. It's what ruined Adam, the righteous, in Paradise—youth and that she-devil, Eve."

I was a boy of sixteen or seventeen at the time and naturally the old fellow was an amazement to me. More than that, as I remember well, I felt somehow flattered to be acquainted with such

an uncommon personality—with a murderer. But I remember quite as well that the self-importance with which the old man spoke of himself and of his crime—the most considerable deed of his life—made me indignant. Complacently stroking his beard with a thick reddish hand, he said:

“In those days our kind used to be treated with great ceremony: we were taken to the market-place and there, on a black scaffold some of us were whipped and some just exhibited, as much as to say: ‘Look at them, people, and see what them villains are like!’ The bosses would read out a charter. . . .”

Of his life in the galleys Nazar spoke with great unconcern: “Yes, life is pretty hard over there for any one who isn’t used to it.”

I never heard him complain and his attitude to men in general was as charitable and benevolent as that of a being of a higher order. I think it is from him that I first heard the characteristic Russian words: “Before the crime I lived as a shadow, then the devil struck me, and I became conspicuous to myself as well as to others.”

At the time I did not of course understand the significance of the words, but they fixed themselves in my memory and later on people that I came across, as well as examples of Russian literature, underscored and corroborated the pitiful and ugly truth: “Without sin, no repentance; without repentance, no salvation.”

It seems to me now that it was precisely our curiosity that roused in the old man this pride in himself. Our inquisitiveness gave him weight in his own eyes. There is no doubt that newspaper gossip, sensational detective stories, and films, representing the agility and daring of murderers, develop in the unstabilized population which thirsts for sensations, an unwholesome curiosity about criminals and contribute to the growth of criminality. Criminologists also agree that this is the case. It is equally beyond doubt that these conditions combine to inspire murderers with a self-satisfied consciousness of their uniqueness.

We know that when a man feels himself the centre of attention he swells out prodigiously and seems to himself more weighty, more important than he really is. Our curiosity about people inflates them; a possible explanation of the fact that our political and other heroes are so short-lived and burst so easily—explaining equally,

why in our desire to create a hero however small, all that we produce is a big fool.

The press, in its pursuit of sensation, undoubtedly deadens the sense of revulsion against murders and murderers even among the healthy elements of society. This anaesthetizing of natural sensitiveness can explain the unnatural cynicism, ghastly in its cold-bloodedness, with which people assist at an execution as though they were watching a play at the Grand Guignol.

The existence, by the way, as well as the success of that theatre clearly indicates that from a desire to divert themselves, people who are bored with life, are not trying any longer to conquer an unhealthy predilection for horrors. There is something revolting in this. No one could invent anything more horrible than actuality to-day; yet people rush to look at coarse artificial horrors that have no connexion with the real art of the stage.

Evil stares us in the face because we ourselves lend it importance by italicizing it. One's attention is called chiefly to facts of a negative rather than of a positive character—this is an old and unalterable conviction of mine—a conviction which has gradually been strengthened by observing that people are growing less and less human with regard to one another. This belief is not altered moreover by the strange fact that the inhabitants of Nome, Alaska, were saved from death not by men, their fellow-creatures, but by a dog. The worst of it is that we call attention to evil not through a sense of revulsion, not out of physiological aestheticism, but from a petty curiosity almost criminal. And, of course, influenced by pharisaism.

In our attitude toward crime and evil, the instinct of self-preservation operates more feebly than any other. I particularly note the circumstance, but cannot understand it as compatible with egoism, the growth of which acquires every day a more hideous, a more monstrous shape and dimension.

It would be wiser and more hygienic to create an atmosphere of silence and unconsciousness around murderers—an atmosphere in which there could be no place for active interest in their acts and personalities. In so far as I am a judge of human nature I know that the punishment I recommend is the cruelest. A man ceases to exist when he is not talked about. The most ghastly prison is

the prison at *la belle étoile*, the prison without walls or window-bars, a Thébaidé without a god, without men. On the other hand, one should remember Edgar Allan Poe's wise remark: tell a scoundrel that he is a good man and he will justify your opinion.

I can't forget one or two ghastly impressions: a man who had suffered cruelly "for his fellow-creatures," a man kind in the free spontaneous Russian way, exceptionally pure of heart in the Russian way—once designated a young fellow to me by a glance, then whispered in an almost pious undertone:

"It was he who killed the governor of N."

"He" was a fellow with the face of a regiment clerk; stub-nosed, with small colourless eyes, fleshy ears, and coarse bristling hair. He was standing at the window, looking patronizingly down at the people in the street, who were paddling along in the wet Petersburg mud under the afflictive rain of a swampy Finnish autumn. He had put his hands in his pockets and was chewing the stub of an extinguished cigarette.

The derogatory and perhaps not intelligent thought flashed across my brain: That sheepish ass feels just as self-satisfied as would a man who had accomplished something incontrovertibly important and good for mankind. . . .

The explanation to all this is: "Political struggle," "Tyrannophobia," and so forth, and so forth. Yes, yes. Nevertheless, I ask when will men stop killing one another and stop making so much of murderers? Political murders are coming to be as numerous almost as ordinary ones.

Of the murderers I have met, two made the most unpleasant impression.

I was party to a consultation between my chief, A. J. Lanin, and one of his clients, a man who, after making his sister intoxicated, killed her by a blow on the head. He was a dealer in wild game. I don't remember his name—Lukin, Lukianoff, or Luchin—but I can see him now, every line of his body. He entered my superior's study with the independent carriage of a spoilt dog to whom all rooms of the house are equally accessible and familiar and who fears nothing and no one. He glanced at the corner and raised his hand to his forehead, but on seeing no ikon, smiled wisely

and tolerantly and thrust his hand into his coat. The gesture at once attracted my attention, it was so wonderfully light, one would almost say—immaterial. Then with very great dignity he inclined his head in the direction of Lanin who lay on the couch with a bad cold.

And in his further behaviour the murderer amazed me by just this benevolent dignity, as of a man who had generously conferred on his fellow-creatures, aside from professional profit, the gift of something uncommon, considerable, and valuable. He was not tall, was youthfully slender, and was wearing a tail coat and new shoes. His face was small and of a strange clay colour. From the temples to the chin and into the neck descended two streaks of straight black hair; on the chin and under it, merging in a thick beard that seemed cut out of black madder-oak. Although his jaw was short and the chin crowded back into the neck, the upper part of the face and high precipitous forehead protruded so oddly as to give an uncanny impression—as of the man's face living miles in front of his body. His dark eyes were deep set, moist, and looked you straight in the face; running from the eyes to the temples were the little wrinkles of a smile that without lighting up the wooden face, remained congealed in the pupils; the mouth was hid, the brown skin seemed tight drawn over the bones of the face.

It was his smile that shone with the condescending benevolence of a man who has had thrilling experiences, is permeated with a sense of uniqueness, and seems to say: "You'd better listen; you may not be able to understand me, but don't fail to listen to me."

He had been five months in prison and was now out on bail from his godfather, the prison inspector. He was comfortably seated in an arm-chair in front of the sofa, his hands with their fat fingers folded on his knee; it was hard to believe that such clean, thoroughly washed hands had crushed a woman's skull. His head was inclined toward one shoulder, he sat in the attitude of a watchful bird and spoke with my chief in an undertone, as he might have spoken to a carpenter whom he had engaged to make some repairs in the house. Of the seven witnesses questioned by the judge, five had described the murderer as a stingy, harsh-natured man, while the leader of the Church choir, his lodger and friend, made a very singular statement: I consider him a shallow man, not capable of committing a murder.

The porter of his house testified that "so far as you could see, there was no nonsense about his master." Three witnesses maintained that once before he had attempted to murder his sister—throwing her into a cellar.

Smoothing his knees, the game-dealer adjured Lanin: "Consider: entrée to one of the very richest houses is extended to me; I enter in the rôle of son-in-law and the deceased girl, don't you see—invariably drunk—disgraces me before the whole town, wailing that I've robbed her—that I pocketed part of her inheritance, the three hundred roubles our father left us."

I think those were his exact words; I listened to the story very carefully and I have a good memory. He said "thousand" instead of "thousand" and often used the word "dusk"—having only just heard it apparently, for it was the one word he pronounced without assurance, in a half-enquiring tone.

"I gave her advice," he said. "'Pelagia, don't come interfering with my life,' I said."

On the whole he did not talk, he "expressed himself" as is the habit of most "shallow" people who, as soon as they see their paltry fate smiling on them, become pompous, unnatural, and giving up simple speech, try to talk in aphorisms. A friend of mine, who sings in the Archbishop's choir, after getting a story published in a review, uttered this remark: "Yesterday the town heard how I sing, to-day the world will know how I think."

The game-dealer came to see his sister the day of the murder.

"With a firm soul, with a kind heart, believe me! 'Pelagia,' I said to her, 'a man should direct his steps to success and well-doing, not to disreputable living. Generously accept these three hundred roubles and forget about me. For God's sake, do!' She actually cried. I assure you, it was distressing. We had some tea with jam, and some Madeira wine—after which she got drunk. It all happened—I don't know just how—you have to take into consideration that nothing but dusk ever came to me from her."

"In that case why did you take the hammer with you?" my chief enquired.

After a pause the man said, half enquiringly, half dubiously: "If one admits the hammer, the premeditated action comes to the surface . . ."

My chief was a self-contained, kind-hearted man, but at these words he lost control of himself in a way quite unfamiliar to me

and shouted at the murderer, concluding severely: "How dare you assume that your advocate could be accomplice of your crime!"

The murderer seemed in no way to resent this I thought and refused to be intimidated by the shouting. He merely looked a little startled and asked, "What did you say?" And when my senior repeated the words more calmly and distinctly the man rose and without trying to dissimulate, murmured, "In that case I must look for someone else. One should approach such matters only with a big heart, allow me to tell you."

He was defended by another lawyer—with a big heart I suppose. At the trial one of the witnesses for the defence said of the murderer, "A tin soul."

Still more revolting was the painter M. who killed the well-known actor, Roshchin-Jusaroff. He fired at the back of the head while the actor was washing. He was tried and acquitted I believe, or received a mild sentence. Anyhow at the beginning of the century he was free, and endeavouring to express his notions of art in the domain of home industry—in the potter's business if I am not mistaken. Somebody brought him to see me. Standing in my son's room I watched him—a dark-haired man obviously satisfied with life; he was undressing in the ante-chamber, slowly, deliberately. Standing in front of the mirror he first brushed back his hair and lent his face a dreamy expression. But this seemed unsatisfactory to him and he ruffled his hair, puckered up his eyebrows, drew down the corners of his mouth, and made his face the picture of grief. As he shook hands with me his face had acquired a third aspect—that of a boy who, remembering that yesterday he had misbehaved, considers his punishment excessive and expects unusual sympathy and attention. He had resolved "to serve the people, to devote all his life to them, all his talent."

"Private life, of course, no longer exists for me—I'm a man with a broken heart. I loved that woman madly . . ."

His broken heart had lodged itself in a well-fed body, and dressed itself in a brand-new suit of modern cut and tiresome colour.

"Yes," he said, "one must do one's best to 'sow what is wise, kind, and eternal,' as Nikolai Nekrassoff has enjoined us to."

After Nikolai Nekrassoff, he recalled Feodor Dostoevsky and asked if I liked Feodor?

"No, I don't care much for Feodor," I said.

Then he genially and emphatically reminded me that Feodor Dostoevsky was admittedly a deep psychologist, but that personally he, M., shared the critical judgement of N. Michailovsky.

“Without a doubt his is a cruel talent.”

It seemed to me to give the man peculiar pleasure to speak of these authors, calling them by their Christian names: Nikolai, Feodor, Leon, as if they were employees in his service. He mentioned Shakespeare, speaking of him too in a friendly intimate way, as William.

A little later he said that *Crime and Punishment* was “in the main an unwholesome book—amounting to this: it is a crime to kill a man, but if you want inside knowledge, you must kill—even if it’s only some old hag.” Those were his exact words, “inside knowledge,” and this was the cleverest remark and the most impudent he made in two hours. It seemed to me somehow out of place, as if he had plagiarized it and in making it realized that he had come on a thought a little out of the ordinary. He blew his cheeks out and fastened his dark eyes on me triumphantly, the whites of which were diversified by tiny pink veins. After this he was overwhelmed with humanitarianism! Catching sight of a siskin and a linnet in their cages on the window, he embarked on a lyrical speech about how painful it was to see caged birds. Then gulping down a glass of vodka and eating pickled mushrooms on top of it, he pompously enlarged on his love of nature, using cheap hackneyed words. And after that—complained of the newspapers.

“What bothered me most was the hue and cry the papers raised. They were simply full of the thing! Would you care to have a look?” He pulled from the side-pocket of his coat a thick little book full of cuttings. “Perhaps you would care to make use of them?” he said. “Murder because of jealousy’s a subject that would make you a fine novel.”

I told him I did not know how to write fine novels. Clapping his book down, on the palm of his hand, he went on with a sigh: “I could tell you a great many interesting things;” and added: “An interesting *milieu*—artists and actors, a fascinating woman . . .”

His arms were short in comparison with his body, he had the stunted fingers of all ungifted people, and his lower lip reminded one of a leech—a crimson one such as nature does not know.



VARIATIONS ON A ROCOCO THEME. BY WILLIAM GROPPER



THE APPEAL TO REASON. BY WILLIAM GROPPER

LOVE ON AIR

BY MICHAÏL PRISHVIN

Translated From the Russian by Marie Budberg

MY friend, when you love a woman, prayers are powerless—you cannot murmur them morning, day, and night and gradually obtain your wish; no effort, no talent will give you your beloved, if Nature—in this independent of us—decides otherwise. Futile are all prayers in love, however fervent, causing pearls of blood to stand out on one's forehead or such as would strip naked a mountain of stone with all the precious treasures concealed in its depths. Not a hair will those prayers cause to stir on the head of your heart's desire, not even in her sleep will they reach her; there is no fervent prayer in matters of love; all is in vain—if, as one says, fate is against you.

I remember Grisha, when he came to our veranda to play on the reed-pipes with horns.

At that time I was so small that not only did I ignore all that concerned love, but even the movement of the fingers of the clock was a mystery to me. I am afraid to say for sure whether I was two years old, certainly not more than three. We lived in a small brick house with an iron balcony. In that quiet street a lace-woman worked in every house and through the open windows the peculiar melodious sounds of maple bobbins came continually streaming in. Only now, many, many years later, do I gather all the meaning of these sounds in our street. Just as real stillness is always deeper if an indefatigable cricket is to be heard in it, so does an unobserved man, filled with a tremulous energy, appear to me in our modest street when I bring back to my memory the sound of maple bobbins under the touch of girlish fingers and I say to myself: A man is a man, wherever he may be.

Every morning Grisha came to our balcony and played on his reed-pipes. It was a joy to listen to him, but I did not know then all the meaning of his music. We received copper pennies that we threw into his hat from the balcony. He bowed and turned round the corner, going further and further away, and went on playing and we listened and listened until no other sound remained in our street but that of the lonesome maple bobbins.

I do not know—maybe I never would have perceived the prayer of love in those sounds, if the melody had not once been broken off by brute force: one day, as Grisha was playing, a policeman came up to him, seized him by the scruff of the neck, and led him away *for ever*. I remember very well the presentiment that Grisha had been driven away *for ever*. For several days we still came out on the balcony, still waited, but the presentiment of the end had not betrayed us: the music disappeared for ever and queerly enough it so happened that I—wandering as I did all over the land—never again came to hear the music of reed-pipes.

When Grisha had been led away for ever and his music ceased, I understood it. No one of the elders ever guessed, however, why I remained awake every night, sobbing: I was sorry for Grisha and it was for him that I shed tears in the dark.

Later on, when I began to understand everything, many times was the story of Grisha's love repeated to me; for years that short little story turned to me now its sorrowful, now its comical side. Only no one ever shared my feelings about it—I concealed them precious; everyone laughed—not a soul felt as I did and even my brother who had listened with me to the music and sorrowed for it with me, had forgotten all about it. The old nurse, who used to come out with us on the balcony to hear Grisha's tunes, did not remember how the policeman led Grisha away under her very eyes and to my question: "What had Grisha done to make the policeman drag him away?"—answered indifferently:

"Probably been up to something."

I remained all my life alone with this event, so unimportant to all and it had so deeply moved my three-year-old heart that it seems to me I can reconstruct a stranger's tale of a comical love as though I had been a witness of it, almost a participant in this romance "on air", so comical to all.

He sang tenor in the right pew of the Cathedral. In the left pew sang the girls from the orphanage and with them the grown-up daughter of the Cathedral Priest, Father Potamij Makhoff. It was ground for continual jesting in the town, a kind of local anecdote, that the Cathedral Priest, Father Hippo-Potamij, had christened his daughter Muse. Grisha, a street musician, fell in love with this perfectly inaccessible priest's daughter and made her—his muse. He was so simple that he spoke to somebody of his love and it reached the ears of our shopkeepers, ever ready to turn everything to ridicule. They laughed at him: not even the last laundry-

girl of the town, Fesha Samskaia, would ever think of marrying such a ragamuffin—much less the daughter of the Cathedral pro-topope Makhoff! Grisha opened wide his eyes, stared, and told the merchants:

“I have no wish for that!”

“Liar,” said the men, “are you fond of sunflower-seeds?”

Grisha answered simple-heartedly: “Yes, sunflower-seeds I like.”

And they: “Well, if you like them—you nibble at them.”

But Grisha protested indignantly and one day said:

“I love, ‘on air.’”

And from then on it went all over the town: Grisha has fallen in love “on air” with the Cathedral Priest’s daughter, Muse. Schoolboys and schoolgirls transformed the usual denomination for love as platonic into love “on air.” Street-boys followed Grisha in crowds and teased him to death.

But the chief amusement began when Grisha made up his mind to write to his Muse and changed his name in the letters from Otrezkov to Otrepieff, most probably by way of self-adornment, thinking of Gregory the Impostor’s love for Marina Mnichek, the beautiful Pole. At first he signed his letters: “Gregory Otrepieff, whom you know.”

Soon after, Muse married the deacon Fortificatoff and went to Lebedian. Grisha wrote to Lebedian, to the Priest’s wife Muse Fortificatoff, but these letters he now signed: “Gregory Otrepieff, who was.”

The letters, after circulating in Lebedian, returned to the Cathedral pope and passed from hand to hand in our town. Everybody rolled with laughter and schoolboys in those times signed their love-letters: “Yours whom you know” or “Yours who was.”

Grisha’s last letter did not reach its destination but was treasured by the porter of the Orlov Hotel and he often produced it for the amusement of the clients who tipped him well. The last letter from the romance on air was addressed not to Muse Fortificatoff, but to the Holy Virgin Mary and was signed, neither “whom you know,” nor “who was”—but quite in a new way:

“Gregory, who will be.”

My friend, the music of the reed-pipes with horns was beautiful; I cannot forget it. It was the great prayer of love, although I know: all prayers are powerless when you love a woman.

ENGLISH APHORISMS

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

BACON in his *Advancement of Learning* draws a distinction between two ways of writing, writing in what he calls 'Method', and writing in Aphorisms. By method he means formal discourse, comprehensive surveys and chains of reasoning, and all the arts of order and arrangement which give their shape to a scientific treatise or literary composition. Writing in aphorisms, or disconnected sentences, is, on the other hand, a 'broken' way of stating truth; and yet it has, Bacon adds, many advantages. Being the presentation of knowledge 'in growth', aphorisms provoke further enquiry; and they are a test, moreover, of the value of the thought of those who write them; for discarding, as such writers must, all comment and illustration and elucidation, they have only the 'pith and heart' of observation to rely on; aphorisms devoid of this are ridiculous:—only those who are 'sound and grounded' can compose them.

The method of writing in aphorisms which Bacon thus describes is a very ancient form of expression: it was familiar to the Greeks; many sentences attributed to various Greek sages and philosophers have come down to us, and classical literature is full of apophthegms and wise sayings. But the history of the aphorism goes much further back, for it was in this form that the wisdom of the Egyptians found expression, and in old papyri are preserved a number of almost dateless saws and maxims. In the *Wisdom Books of the Bible*, in *Ecclesiastes*, in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, in *Ecclesiasticus*, we possess large collections of them; and they are found in most of the modern literature of Europe, in Italian, in Spanish, in German. It is in France, however, that this way of writing has been most carefully cultivated, and has come to be regarded as one of the minor arts of literature, as a delicate form worthy of special interest and attention. This is due in the first place to the fame of a famous little book, the *Maximes of La*

NOTE: This essay will shortly be published by Houghton Mifflin as Introduction to *A Treasury of English Aphorisms* by Logan Pearsall Smith.

Rochefoucauld, in which the aphorism was given its consummate stamp and polish, and the perfection to which it could attain was made brilliantly apparent. Then on this masterpiece followed that astonishing book, Pascal's *Pensées*, which, though it contains much else, is full of profound and brilliant aphorisms; and the tradition thus established by these writers, and carried on by La Bruyère, by Vauvenargues, by Rivarol and Chamfort and Joubert, has enriched the literature of France with whole constellations of glittering thoughts and phrases.

It is generally supposed that we possess but a meagre store of aphorisms in English; that our language is unsuited to this mode of expression, and that few of our writers have handled it with much success. Thus Lord Morley, the only one of our critics who has written at length on the subject, has said, "The obvious truth is that in this department our literature is particularly weak, while French literature is particularly strong in it. With the exception of Bacon, we possess no writer of apophthegms of the first order."¹ This is a sweeping statement; but when we note that in his list of English aphorists Lord Morley ignores almost all our authors who have achieved success in this way of writing; that he says nothing of Halifax or Chesterfield or Blake or Hazlitt or Emerson, and hardly mentions the name of our greatest master of sententious precepts and wise sayings; and when we find that Dean Inge, in a recent essay on the subject, also overlooks these writers, we cannot but question the justice of this generally accepted opinion, and suspect that the sense of our poverty in this department of literature is due, not so much to a real indigence, as to an unawareness of the stores which we really do possess. In these but half-explored depths we may find—I believe we shall find—a great richness of forgotten treasures—treasures, I cannot but think, equal to those of any other country—and in our English waters we shall undoubtedly witness the sporting and blowing of one great leviathan, one whale of unequalled proportions.

Before we start out, however, it will be well to define for ourselves the precise object of our search. What exactly is the aphorism, by what marks shall we know it when we find it, of what substance is it composed, and what is the form of its composition? What are the advantages and what the drawbacks and

¹ John Morley: *Critical Miscellanies*, 1886, vol. II, p. 20.

limitations of this way of expression? The word 'aphorism', meaning literally a definition or distinction, is of medical origin; it was first used of the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, the father of medicine as he is called. Writing in aphorisms, or brief, disconnected sentences, is often made use of in the early stages of a science like medicine, where the acquired knowledge, being the disconnected record of empirical facts, cannot be treated or set forth in any systematic fashion. Hippocrates begins his collection of medical aphorisms with one of the most famous of all famous sayings, with the sentence, "Art is long, life is short;" but already, before his date, Heraclitus had made use of this form of statement to express truths about life of a wide import—"Character is destiny" for instance; "We cannot step twice into the same river"; "The waking have one and the same world, but the sleeping have each a world of their own." The word 'aphorism' has come to denote any brief, sententious statement, 'any principle or precept expressed in a few words,' as the Oxford Dictionary defines it; 'a short pithy sentence containing a truth of general import.' It is distinguished from the axiom, which is the statement of a self-evident truth, and also from the theorem, which is a demonstrable proposition in science and mathematics. The theorem that 'the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles', though the embodiment of a general truth, is not an aphorism, for the aphorism concerns itself with life and human nature, and its truths are incapable of scientific demonstration. The prose epigram, on the other hand, though concerned with life like the aphorism, and possessing its terse and pointed form, is lacking in general import—it is not the statement of a general truth. Other words with much the same signification as aphorism, are 'maxim', 'apophthegm', 'saying'; and although these have sometimes been distinguished from each other—the 'maxim' being defined as containing not only a general truth, but also advice and admonition, and the apophthegm or 'saying' as an aphorism or maxim expressed in speech, yet these distinctions of the rhetoricians are not of much importance, and have seldom been observed in the current usage of the words. 'Sentence' and 'gnome' are older names for the aphorism which have fallen out of use.

Among the aphorisms which are most familiar to us are the legal maxims which are supposed to embody certain fundamental principles of law; 'The public welfare is the highest good,' for in-

stance, 'The King can do no wrong,' 'An Englishman's house is his Castle,' 'Ignorance of the law excuses no one'—maxims like these have been given an authority in common law equal to that of legal documents, and judicial decisions have been often based upon them. Aphorisms about life in general are, like these axioms of jurisprudence, brief, detached, isolated observations; and like the maxim, 'The King can do no wrong,' they are often very partial statements of the truth. They are generally printed without any very definite order or arrangement;—they are collections of scraps and fragments of truth. Books like these, composed of disjointed fragments, make difficult and disjointed reading; 'few books are duller,' Edward Fitzgerald writes, in his preface to a collection of this kind, 'than books of Aphorisms and Apophthegms'. And yet such books are not without their fascination; we throw them down, but take them up again; they are unreadable, and yet we read them; and since so many collections of aphorisms have survived through the ages and have been constantly reprinted, it is plain that this way of presenting truth must have certain merits and advantages of its own. . . .

Aphorisms are no flights of fancy, no fruits culled from the Hesperian gardens of the imagination; they are products of the familiar earth, and smack of the world we live in. They cover the whole field of practical experience, from the lowest maxims of shop-keeping prudence to the highest rules of conduct; and our knowledge of ourselves and others, of the human heart and its springs of action, of love and hate and envy and ambition, of the characters and manners of mankind, of all the weaknesses and follies and absurdities of human nature, is embodied and stored up in this immense accumulation of wise observations. It is from these, rather than from any systematic treatises on human nature, that we can learn with most profit what stuff we are made of, and what are the causes of success or failure in the great experiment of living.

This gnomic wisdom, it has been said, and truly said, is the true salt of literature, and those books, at least in prose, are most nourishing which are most saturated with it. Many historians and essayists have enriched their works with an abundance of aphoristic sayings; we find them in the speeches of Thucydides, in Plutarch's Lives, in the writings of Tacitus and Seneca, in the essays of

Montaigne and Emerson. Though they belong more to the element of prose than that of poetry, the poets have not neglected them; they abound in the Greek drama, in the plays of Shakespeare; and the verse of Pope and his school consists largely of rhymed aphorisms and maxims.

The impulse to embody observation in durable phrases, in the happy rhythm and run of memorable words—this impulse, which has produced so large a store of proverbs in every language, is evidently a strong impulse in human nature; and the aphorism is its flowering after it has been transplanted into the soil of cultivated minds. An aphorism has been defined as a proverb coined in a private mint, and the definition is a happy one; for the aphorism, like the proverb, is the result of observation and however private and superior the mint, the coins it strikes must, to find acceptance, be made of current metal. In other words the aphorist must draw for the most part on common experience; a main part of his task is to say in a more striking form what, in Pope's familiar words,

‘Oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.’

He is a dealer, therefore, in commonplaces, and unless he is very careful his truths will turn into truisms and—what for him is the worst fate of all—into moral truisms on his hands. We are already prejudiced against him as a sententious bore; if in addition he becomes a hortatory and didactic one, with what eagerness shall we not stop our ears to his admonitions! He can only win our tolerance by making us believe that he has no moral axe to grind; that he is a detached and disinterested spectator, who is telling us the truth, and not attempting to improve us. This need to maintain at all costs the appearance of a veracious observer, tends however of itself to compromise the aphorist's veracity, or to limit him at least to certain aspects of the truth. In his dread of slipping into the seas of tepid platitude which surround him on every side, he is apt to cling, almost in desperation, to the sharpest rocks of bleak reality. The more caustic his sayings, the more we like them; they are the hornets and wasps, and not the butterflies of reflection; or if they are butterflies, they are like them, gross feeders, and nourish themselves on less ideal aspects of existence.

Men have embodied in hymns their heavenly hopes and aspira-

tions, and in lyrics their illusions and enchanted joys; but disenchantment, the ever-accumulating stores of wise disillusion and worldly wisdom, are the aspects of life which, it would seem, the aphorism is best fitted to express. Famous aphorists are not therefore often found among the panegyrists of human nature or the eulogists of life; and although some of them have now and then attempted to speak with angels' voices (and to embody in a brief saying some spiritual or poetic truth is perhaps their greatest triumph), yet the attempt is a perilous one, and requires a genius like Blake's or Emerson's to avoid disaster. We have only to compare the attitude of the poets with that of the aphorists towards a subject like Love—what Shelley and what Dr Johnson for instance say about it—to be struck by the difference in their respective points of view. Aphorisms are apt indeed to be somewhat fulsome if they are too sweetly flavoured; such sentences offend our taste as a cynical lyric would offend it, or an atheistic hymn; we turn from them with a kind of literary nausea to welcome as an antidote the most outrageous paradox.

And yet paradox is another pitfall for the aphorist, another dangerous lion in his path. No brief statement can indeed be absolutely true; 'almost every wise saying' it has been said, 'has an opposite one, equally wise to balance it'. An aphorism can present at best but one aspect of the truth, and sometimes by reversing it, attention is called to some more subtle aspect—'Punctuality is the thief of time', for instance, or Oscar Wilde's dictum that 'it is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances', or again the paradox of Mr Chesterton, that lord of paradoxes, 'Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing badly'. But paradoxes, however much they may amuse us at the moment, have seldom weight enough to give them enduring value. Wise sayings to ring true, must be made of sterling metal, must embody a feeling more profound than the mere desire to flout general opinion and reverse its judgements; we soon tire of the sparkle, the glitter, the polished brass of these false coins of thought.

It is not only however the danger of platitude which has given the aphorism a cynical twist and bitter flavour. The necessity of this form of expression, the need to be brief and sharp and pointed tends to limit it, as has been said, to the portrayal of the obliquities and follies of human nature, which are striking and easy to depict,

while its more luminous aspects are diffused and vague, and less capable of brief notation. The greatest aphorists, the most accomplished masters of this form, have been sardonic observers of their fellow human beings; and it was the most famous of them all, La Rochefoucauld, who brought into striking relief the least edifying aspects of man's nature, his all-devouring egotism and the littleness and meanness of his moral character. Pascal added to this picture a truly appalling indictment of the imbecility and impotence of the mind of man, and the general disgrace of his moral condition. The humane and optimistic thinkers of the eighteenth century found this sinister portrait a revolting one; they were horrified to see their own faces reflected in so black a mirror. They attempted therefore to turn against these maligners of humanity their own weapons. Voltaire published an edition of Pascal's *Pensées* with terse and witty comments, and his friend Vauvenargues tried to restore by aphorisms what La Rochefoucauld's aphorisms had so seriously damaged—man's belief in the nobility of his own nature. Vauvenargues' spirit was a lofty one; Lord Morley is no doubt right when he tells us that he and other thinkers of his kind, have chosen the nobler part. His famous saying, 'Great thoughts come from the heart', may be truer, as it is certainly more uplifting, than a maxim of La Rochefoucauld which unmasks our selfishness and vanity; it has however one drawback—it is not nearly so good an aphorism. Vauvenargues is the nobler soul, but the sardonic duke—and the point is not without importance—is more finely aware of what the aphorism is best fitted to express, and of the way it can find its most perfect expression.

Human nature has suffered of late, however, many disgraces, and the noble view of man has fallen somewhat out of fashion. Much more fully aware, as we are, of our humble status in the universe, of our nearer kinship to the apes than to the angels, and of the gruesome history of our species on this planet, we do not find ourselves greatly shocked by this old-fashioned cynicism; nor can students of psychoanalysis share the indignation of those Victorian critics who declared that such thoughts 'tarnish the brightness of the soul; they degrade the heart'. Yet aphorisms like La Rochefoucauld's, although they may not shock us—so far since his date has mankind fallen—are by no means to the taste of all modern

readers. There are many who feel with Lord Morley—though not perhaps for Lord Morley's reasons—that the truths which aphorisms are apt to embody are not truths upon which they very much care to dwell. This wisdom of the world they find unimaginative and earthy; it has for them a musty taste; if they are to feast on essences, they prefer to sip the honey-dew and milk of Paradise of the poets.

But for those who prefer a drier vintage; for whom the spectacle of life as it is, stripped of its illusions, possesses an inexhaustible fascination; who wish to know the truth about themselves and their fellows—for such students of human nature there will always be a great attraction in these profound X-rays of observation, which reveal the bones beneath the flesh; these acute and penetrating phrases which puncture man's pretensions and bring them disinflated to the earth. They find such correctives medicinally as well, like that infusion of myrrh into the festival goblet, which, as one of our old divines tells us, renders the wine of life bitter, but makes it wholesome.

Aphorisms have also a practical value of another kind. We frequently fall into error and folly, Dr Johnson tells us 'not because the true principles of action are not known, but because, for a time they are not remembered'. To compress therefore the great and obvious rules of life into brief sentences which are not easily forgotten, is, as he said, to confer a real benefit upon us.

Although aphorisms are generally an embodiment of common experience, their authors need by no means always confine themselves to the pointed expression of what other people clearly think and feel. The minds of all of us are haunted by thoughts which have not yet found expression, and it is often the happy fortune of the aphorist to drag from its obscurity some such dim intuition, or confused bit of experience; to clothe it in words and bring it into daylight for our delighted recognition. These thoughts are, as Dr Johnson said in his famous definition of Wit, both natural and new; they are not obvious, but when they are put before us, we acknowledge their justice; we have not found them ourselves, but we wonder how we could have missed them. It is an even greater triumph for the aphorist when, in a flash of insight he can perceive, and having perceived, can express some thought or feeling that has

been lying buried within us, some experience of which we have never been aware before. It is not only in the regions of self-love, that, as La Rochefoucauld said, there are many lands which still await their explorers; after an investigation which has lasted for thousands of years, there are many aspects of man's moral nature of which he is still ignorant, many recesses of his heart which have never yet been sounded; and the explorer of these regions, the diver into these depths, will often find much of rare value to reward him.

The human mind, a philosopher has told us, 'always celebrates a little triumph whenever it can formulate a truth;' and the measure of that triumph will depend upon the importance of the truth thus embodied in a formula of words. If we ask therefore what the aphorism is in its quintessence, and what is the quality which gives it importance and enduring value, we have only to read the sayings of some great master of wise sayings, some Pascal or Goethe, whose intuitions seem to penetrate to the very core of human experience, and whose words remain in our minds as sparks, in the poet's phrase, of 'inextinguishable thought.'

To polish commonplaces and give them a new lustre; to express in a few words the obvious principles of conduct, and to give to clear thoughts an even clearer expression; to illuminate dimmer impressions and bring their faint rays to a focus; to delve beneath the surface of consciousness to new veins of precious ore, to name and discover and bring to light latent and unnamed experience; and finally to embody the central truths of life in the breadth, the sadness, the terseness of memorable phrases—all these are the opportunities of the aphorist; and to take advantage of these opportunities, he must be a thinker, an accurate observer, a profound moralist, a psychologist, and an artist as well. Above all an artist! So great are the difficulties of his task, so numerous are the pitfalls which beset him, so repellent the pompous attitude which his tedious, stilted, and somewhat oracular mode of expression forces upon him, that it is only by the greatest care that he can escape these perils; and Lord Morley's admonition to the would-be aphorist—'beware of cultivating this delicate art'—is no doubt a sound one. For the aphorist's pills, if we are to swallow them, must be gilded pills; his coins, if they are to be added to the currency of thought, must be minted of the most precious metal; many grains must be sifted from

the sands of life to compose them, many thoughts and observations melted and fused together to give them weight. Each aphorism should contain, as Hazlitt said, the essence or ground-work of a separate essay; it should be the concentration or residuum of much meditation; and it must glitter with the finest sheen; for 'weight'—as one of our masters of this art has expressed it—'weight without lustre is lead.'

A famous French aphorist, whose life, he said, was spent in chasing these butterflies of thought, and who was cursed, he also tells us, with the ambition to put a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase, and that phrase into a word, has revealed to us some of the secrets of this difficult art, which his compatriots have brought to such perfection. 'A finished and perfect thought', Joubert writes, 'what time it takes, how rare it is, and what an immense delight!' Such a thought embodied in a few memorable words, was enough of itself to make illustrious the name of its maker. Sharpness, clearness, fitness, are required for its expression, and transparency is its beauty. And yet clearness is not of itself enough, the sufficient word does not suffice; an aphorism is something more than the plain statement of a truth; it must possess the quality of style as well. Joubert distinguishes between two kinds of style, two ways of writing; there is the pictorial style, rich in light and shadow and full of images, with which the author paints, as it were, upon the page; and there is the sculptor's style, which cuts deep and gives relief and outlet to the subject. This austere, almost colourless style, full of difficulties, economies, and rejections, is the style appropriate for these engraved medallions, these finely minted coins of thought. And finally—and this is their supreme perfection—aphorisms should bear, like coins, the personal image, delicate and delicately cut, of the lord of thought from whose mint they issue. The thought in other words must be stamped with the hall-mark of the mind that thinks it. The individual quality of his temper, his imagination, the timbre of his voice, must mark his sayings as his own; we must feel that they are his, that he, and only he, could have said them.

Such then at their best are these scintillations of thought, these minute and shining masterpieces of expression. We are startled at first by their novelty; we catch our breath and gaze for a

moment blankly at them. Then, as we ponder their meaning and recall our past, their truth, as well as their lucid perfection, delights us. Like shooting stars they seem to leave a track of gold behind them; like flashes of lightning they reveal the familiar world in a sudden, strange illumination; the accompanying din alarms us, till, from far ranges of experience, echoes return in long reverberations to confirm them.

To be continued

THE HOUSE

BY STERLING NORTH

Surely the walls and rafters make
Slight armour from the gusty night,
And it were best to stay awake
And keep a light.

And it were surely best to close
The door, and heed the creaking stair,
Nor look above your frail house
Where constellations hang on air.

And it were best to keep from doubt
That fills the fast encircling gloom
Lest wind should puff your candle out
And fill the room. . . .

Lest sudden stars about you burn
The walls come crashing on your head
And in your madness you should learn
The slow confusion of the dead.



EXALTATION. BY ANTON HANAK



EXALTATION. BY ANTON HANAK

TRINIDAD

BY ARTHUR A. YOUNG

WE were now in rough water—blue—under a sky of lavender, and as I sighted a shoal of jewel-like fish I wondered if the spot could once have witnessed bloodshed, looting, torture, in Elizabethan days, and thought of Frobisher, Hawkins, and Drake. But my mind reverted quickly to the twenty-four hours previous in which I had suddenly decided to leave Trinidad, and as I thought of childhood days in Arima, my spirits drooped.

Only yesterday my coolie cabman had driven me along the old road on one side of which ran the iron railing of our emerald savannah. In front of the houses and the shadowed porches with their lattice of honeysuckle vines, the gardens were a mass of bloom—hedges of scarlet hibiscus, fences turning pink with coralita, cabbage palms rising like noble columns, the fragrance of geranium suffusing all, the evening glory spent and sleeping.

I had driven many times to our old Nest at the edge of town, in the same cab, pulled by the same horse, past the same scenes, and when the cabman found it was my good-by visit he said, "Mas-sah, I drive you free," cracked his whip, and the old mare responded briskly.

The short twilight had almost merged with night, and glowing patches of crimson fused with blue, were visible behind the green drapery of trees—recalling to me my first sunset in the tropics and the swift change from crimson to yellow, from pale blue to brown and silver.

As we climbed the hill we saw against the twinkling lights of the town, the grey of the municipal grand-stand—a shadow, sleeping now, but on Santa Rosa Day a miniature Deauville. Santa Rosa race day, near the end of August, was the day of days in this West Indian town. Cocconut thatched huts sprang up, cabs and cabmen jostled one another, all trails, all trains ran thither. A hillside town, Arima was transformed in one night to a tumultuous Main Street. Hindu jewellery clicked and glittered, turbans towered above the crowd, rainbow ties flew from every male bosom. Babies were tugging at breasts, there was a stentorian shouting of

programs, street-organs were squealing, and added to the noise was the steady hum of the Monte Carlo wheels. Card-fakirs were vociferous. The hard-up labourer surprised you with his liberality. Wherever you turned it was "Let's have a drink."

Recalling Santa Rosa race day in Arima, I can think of no occasion which so brings together the typical West Indian populace. Trinidad is cosmopolite. When Columbus landed in 1492 he found a race identical with the Indians of the interior of Guiana and neighbouring parts of South America. The Carib, the original native, has disappeared, and in his place have come the English, French, Spanish, the negro, the coolie.

On a Santa Rosa Day you saw them at their best; Hindus—exquisitely chiselled—smoking cheroot pipes, and Hindu women with nose-rings over their lips, gold bracelets from wrist to elbow, their ears weighted with ear-rings. You saw the gaudy turbans and bandannas of creole ladies, and negro women with a short train of three or four feet tied below the hip with a piece of string.

I had little sleep that night of my return home, and kept thinking of times I had enjoyed in Arima.

"You won't know us when you come back, will you?" the smallest of the family ventured. "B—— will miss Latin verbs. And who will read out passages from Homer and Virgil when you are away?"

I assured her I never would forget Arima and that I would drop Homer and Virgil as soon as I arrived in Boston.

Not far from the house was the river, and a factory where ice was made by water power. Below the falls was a blue basin. When a boy, how many times I had splashed in the cascading water, wandering up the stream with the other boys, against the rippling current, in bathing trunks, each with his clothes in a bundle on his head—wading, and fishing for sardines that skittered through the crystal water, or looking under rocks for "crebiches," hearing sometimes the resonant boom of the trumpet-fish, while the hollow bamboo stems crackled against each other and the leaves swished and sang in the wind.

The gorgeousness of tropical life hemmed you in. Tiny blossoms advanced from ledges of evergreen, the plantain and the silvery fronds of the banana bush glittered in the sun. You heard the call of the campanella, the song of the kis-ka-dee, and the distant cooing of the dove—now and then passing a barrier of

brush beyond which loomed a forest luxuriant with spiny palms criss-crossing from branch to branch. Maidenhair ferns and bouquets of orchids swayed from the arm of a giant tree and overhead a sky-blue Emperor winged his way in the shadows.

I used to watch processions of donkeys and mules pass our door on their way to the woods, up the mountain. The small strong asses had each a "sillon" on its back, from which an empty pannier bounced against the sides of the slim-footed animal. Sometimes a boy would be in one basket and provisions in the other. The master—with a double-barrelled gun over his shoulder, a cutlass hanging from his belt, and his dog behind—followed on foot or mule-back. The sight always reminded me of Robinson Crusoe.

Tobago, an island twenty miles north of Trinidad, was the scene of Crusoe's shipwreck. A belief that it was Juan Fernandez off the southwest coast of South America, is due to the fact that Defoe is relating in Robinson Crusoe, the adventures of Alexander Selkirk who lived on Juan Fernandez four years.

A pebble's throw away is Little Tobago, an Eden for birds of paradise. After sunrise, and once again before sunset, you hear cawing—a kind of incoherent chatter—and see the birds strutting from branch to branch, the males on one branch, in their brilliant tufts resembling Scottish guards; the females on another, as spectators apparently. One bird toddles in a snake-like dance, jumping up and down, the others imitating him, heads bowed, tails spread, wings opening and closing in an animated rhythm. Somersaults follow. The birds then depart in pairs, to the woods, returning before sunset to repeat the performance.

Once, as escort and protector, I accompanied my mother to our cocoa plantation. We travelled by rail from Arima as far inland as possible, then by buggy, then by donkey, then on foot. Cocoa-trees with green pods bunched against the trunks, were before, behind, on either side. Then we came to a bend in the Oropuche River, an expanse of water that took my breath away the first time I saw it.

It was here we changed to other clothes, for the tramp into the interior. My mother tucked up her dress, and with her heavy bluchers and old cork hat, looked quite in character with the expedition, while I, in old pants, high-heeled leggings, and a broad-brimmed sombrero, with a cutlass in hand and pannier slung over my shoulder, challenged the woods in true Don Quixote fashion.

Further glimpses of the cocoa plantation: labourers picking the

ripe pods from the trees; coolie women with baskets gathering the fruit as it fell; heaps of cocoa pods along the way. Now and then we would cross a stream. A splotch of forest. We heard the flight of bats, the call of the toucan, the chatter of parrots, we would see a yellow-breasted kis-ka-dee catching insects among the wild flowers, multi-coloured butterflies, humming-birds of ruby and topaz. Then silence—the great trees overhead like a canopy of foliage, festooned with networks of lianas, enveloping us with mysterious stillness.

On we went, picking up the thin sunlit trail again. The few people we encountered were Spanish overseers or creole planters, but when we met there was always a greeting in patois. Birds would strut before us, chirp or sing, then fly into the woods—the voices of the wood becoming hushed as we approached. But the whispering continued, on and on and on.

At the fringe of the estate we would be met by the Spanish overseer and his wife and to the melodious accompaniment of patois would make our way to the plantation house on the crest of a little hill. Here the wind was strong and we could see below us the golden flowers of the *bois immortelle*—planted to shield the cocoa-trees from the sun—a flaming sea under the bright blue sky. Around the house was a vegetable patch of dasheen, tanis, yams, sweet potatoes, cassava, and fruit-trees—literally an orchard; among them a tall kymeet or star-apple-tree, and back of an old well, a pomerac or West Indian pear-tree, its russet blossoms transforming the ground into a carpet of rose and gold, the fruit turning from green to red, to blood red, to purple. Every morning we heard the excited jargon of a flock of green and crimson parrots as it made its excursion to the fields, flying in massed formation, a band of a hundred or more.

When on visits to the plantation I liked to idle in a hammock. Near the house, between a mango and a cocoanut-tree I would sling my hammock, and poised in air between the living trunks that lifted high into the heavens, would listen to the grandest of tropical music, the wind playing as it seemed a harp in the jalousie of cocoanut leaves, while the semps and kis-ka-dees carolled as they feasted on ripe mangoes.

I was bookish in those days and when I went to the estate, would always throw into my knapsack three or four favourite

volumes, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* perhaps, or *Endymion*, or *Confessions of an Opium Eater*. In the afternoons when the heat was at its height I would lie in the hammock book in hand—as it were in another world. It was here I read my first book of Dickens, became acquainted with Stevenson, and memorized parts of *De Quincey*; and studied Virgil, Tacitus, Homer, and Shakespeare, when I was a student at St Mary's in the city and was spending my vacations on the estate.

Sometimes after reading an enchanting passage I would drop the book and look over the hill. The crimson of the immortelle trees lent stimulus to my imagination and I would see *Rosalind* and *Orlando* plighting their troth. Continuously overhead the coconut leaves made music—changing from the gurgle of a brook to the drip, drip, drip of tropical rain; and I would see *Puck* and *Ariel* in shadowy flight among the branches.

I recalled—on this night of my return to Arima—my first attempt to spend the night in a hammock. It was moonlight. All afternoon I had been flying a kite, and as darkness came on decided to view its manoeuvres from the curtains of my hammock. The moon threw fantastic shadows upon me from the coconut fronds and the dark globular mango-trees overshadowing me seemed like guardians of the night. I had told my mother I was going to sleep in the hammock.

A thousand-fold aware of the mysteries of forest life—the moan and whine of unseen things, the hum of mosquitoes, the music of crickets, the cry of crickets—I saw shadows like human forms moving behind the trees and little balls of green flame flitting now here, now there. I looked at the house, drowned in stillness and sleep.

The moon was behind clouds and did not emerge for a long time. A wind blew and I heard the tock, tock, tock, of mangoes falling and rolling down the hill. Ghostly—like the stories of West Indian jumbies. I wondered if the little balls of green flame were *soucouyans*, that is to say women blood-suckers, in search of victims, and I detected the voice of the *lughoo* (the werewolf). The shadows of the swaying banana leaves resembled a human being—“*Papa bois*,” I let myself fancy, whose duty in West Indian folklore is to appear to hunters and demand the reason for their presence.

THE MERMEN

I heard my mother's voice: "Aren't you coming in to sleep?"
and I responded that I was. Midsummer night in Arima.

A breeze was blowing and there was a trail of smoke from the funnel of the ship as we left the yellow waters of The Orinoco and glided into the sapphire of the ocean. I had climbed the bridge to catch a last glimpse of houses and shore. All was becoming indistinguishable—a mere blank. In the background lofty mountains climbed into the sky and I could distinguish the three which Columbus saw from the deck of the Santa Maria on his third voyage in 1498 and named in fulfilment of his vow, Trinidad—that is to say, Trinity.

THE MERMEN

BY HART CRANE

Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions

King Lear

Buddhas and engines serve us undersea.
Though why they bide here only hell, that's sacked
Of every blight and ingenuity—
Can solve.

The Cross alone has flown the wave.
But since the Cross sank, much that's warped and cracked
Has followed in its name, has heaped its grave.

Oh—

Gallows and guillotines to hail the sun
And smoking racks for penance when day's done!

No—

Leave us, you idols of Futurity—alone,
Here where we finger molders of spent grace
And ponder the bright stains that starred this Throne,
—This Cross, a gleam still with a human Face!



WOODCUT. BY HANS MÜLLER

TOLSTOY

1828-1928

BY ALEXANDER KAUN

TOLSTOY was not a Tolstoyan.

Herein, delightful and multiple contradictions. Otherwise, how stiffly Olympian, how doctrinaire a Puritan the later Tolstoy would seem!

A disciple once proposed as an ideal, a lonely island peopled by Simon Pure Tolstoyans. The "teacher" replied that he would find such perfection intolerable.

In his "official" declarations Tolstoy adhered rigidly to the faith which he embraced at the age of fifty. Rigidly, uncompromisingly. Dostoevsky, in speaking of the author of *Anna Karénin*, compared him to a stolid bull who cannot turn his neck without shifting his whole body. Self-perfection. Simplification. Non-resistance. The tenets, and all their consequences. No deviation. *Jusqu'au bout*.

"Officially" all was well. Consistent.

Incessant self-perfection, self-analysis. Weighing and measuring every emotion, every action. Recording in the diary. In the big diary, for the public. In the little note-books, kept under the pillow, for himself and the two or three intimates.

Simplification to the point of peasant blouses; boot-making; carpentry; work in the field; vegetarianism; renunciation of personal property. Rejection of all art, his own works included, save that which can be understood by the common people.

Non-resistance—a passive anarchism. Non-recognition of coercion, of the state, of social institutions and observances. Denial of violence—of war, capital punishment, revolutionary activities. Even in self-defence? Even in self-defence. If a Zulu should break into your home, kill before your eyes your wife and children—would you resist? Momentary silence. Swift pallor. No, I should not resist!

The "unofficial" Tolstoy.

The incurable aristocrat proud of his pure blood, of his descent from St Michael, Prince of Chernigov. The fastidious gentleman contemptuous of plebeianism which he may find even in Turgenev's "democratic thighs." The "inconsistent count," as he is branded by the drab multitude of "followers" who come to test his haughty humility. Most of them use the backstairs; the Countess sees to that.

The incurable pagan, passionately responsive to flesh, to form, to animal strength, to earthly voices and the calls of nature. The sensual Tolstoy, whose straight talk brings a blush to the cheeks of a man with a hide as tough as Maxim Gorki's. The keen appraiser of "immoral," unmoral art. At the partly open door of his study he surreptitiously listens to Goldenweiser playing Chopin for the Family—is enraptured.

The lonely one. To the end, not one soul congenial. Surely not the parchment-arid Chertkov, arch-priest of pure Tolstoyanism. Nor his daughter Alexandra, the only "loyal" member of the Family. Both Chertkov and Alexandra reproached the master for his inconsistencies, for his elasticity toward the Countess, his spiritual enemy. The Countess was probably the only one who understood him, her great contradictory baby. But a chasm lay between husband and wife. A spiritual chasm, made ever broader and deeper by those intimate disciples, *plus Tolstoïstes que Tolstoï même*. That agony of solitude in the dying, febrile eyes—at the absurd little station of Astapovo! Poor fugitive from the "roof of lies," vainly trying at the age of eighty-two, to be consistent.

The doubter. A faith arduously wooed and won saved him from the "tempting rope." Yet the caverns of his scepticism were never filled. Those little note-books under the pillow—outlet for the never quiescent, never complacent spirit of self-analysis. Terribly honest with himself, he could not claim the peace of certitude.

Assuredly Tolstoy the artist was not a Tolstoyan.

In the light of his numerous spokesmen, those thinly veiled self-portraits, was there ever a more egocentric writer? The Irtenyevs, Olenins, Bezukhovs, Bolkonskys, Levins, Nekhludovs . . . in his own image he created them. With his own traits and qualities and frailties and doubts and relentless quests. Has he given us

one single positive Tolstoyan? One character after his own heart—as that doubter Dostoevsky did in *The Idiot*? He has not.

His seekers are pitiable. Clumsy, verbose, inconsequential. That young *alter ego* of Tolstoy, Olenin—what a pale, flaccid, futile dullard, by the side of the robust Cossacks! How pitiful the would-be-Christian, Olenin, face to face with the magnificent Pagan, Eroshka! Pierre Bezukhov is lovable as an awkward, near-sighted, stooping bear, but how tedious when he has been infected with the Tolstoyan virus and waxes introspective. Compared with the splendid animal, Count Vronsky, the Tolstoyan Levin is a depressing bore. The chapters on his tortuous quest and conversion form the most anaemic part of *Anna Karénin*. As to Nekhludov, in *Resurrection*, he is a *débâcle*. One must be naïve not to realize the irony and the bitterness in the title of this novel, the last to appear in its author's lifetime. Nekhludov's effort to be Tolstoyan makes him ridiculous and repellent not only to the convicted prostitute, Katyusha Maslova. In his unfinished play, *Light Shineth in Darkness*, Tolstoy exhibits without pity for himself the baneful effect of his conversion on all who come near him. Bernard Shaw sees in the plot "the transfiguration of the great prophet into a clumsy mischievous cruel fool."

Potent contradictions. How much nearer and more precious he is to us because of his failure to attain perfection. Because of the indecisive battle between Dionysus and Christ, perpetually waged in the arena of his fearless mind. Because of the frequent triumph of his sense of proportion over his sense of righteousness. Because of the immeasurable superiority of Tolstoy the artist over Tolstoy the preacher.

FINALE

BY HOWARD HAYES

ALL day he had failed, just as he had failed all the day before, and the day before that, and weeks back. In the morning he looked through the want ads, perhaps checked two or three, even looked them up.

But this morning as he sat at his ten-cent breakfast and looked at those want ads he knew positively that none were for him, and he knew, or felt with a deep aching sureness that to-day, this very day, was his last. He couldn't hold out any longer.

Except for neglect of the want ads his routine for the morning was as usual. He made two or three calls in which he seemed above his average of cheerfulness, snappiness, and that self-assurance which employers want. With his ten-cent breakfast under his belt he made the rounds of the office buildings. All morning. Up and down in fast elevators. Weeks ago he felt one emotion when going up in an elevator to an office where he would ask for work, and a different emotion coming down. But for several mornings now he had felt exactly the same on both trips no matter what had occurred.

In spite of himself he rather enjoyed the novelty—the way in which failure, a cold shoulder, a glassy eye, insidious questions as to how long he had been out of work and why, left him utterly unaffected. He concluded that he must have attained a sort of Nirvana—since things which had caused him so much pain a few weeks (or was it months) ago, had lost their sting so completely. He believed that he could, like a Yogi, lie on a board of upturned spikes without discomfort. It would be interesting to try.

During the noon hour he made the rounds of several employment agencies at which he was still registered. A long time ago he had told them that he would take anything they could get for him. But he wasn't strong enough for heavy manual labour. It had been a mistake to say he would take anything; they had no respect

for him now. They wished he wouldn't come in any more, although they didn't say so. These hardened employment experts were working against odds themselves and for a fellow to come in day after day had a cumulatively depressant effect upon them. They treated him with augmented wolfishness. They couldn't get him anything and he and they both knew it. If things didn't soon take a turn for the better they wouldn't be much better off than he was.

At about one, he had a bowl of soup and a hamburger sandwich on rye in a near-beer saloon; then sat in the park until one-fifteen, reading an afternoon paper. He always bought a paper because he hated to read the wadded up ones that others had left on the park benches. His must be fresh and neatly folded. Anyhow, what difference could two cents make?

There was always escape in reading a paper, especially the foreign news. The little items on the inside pages, the date-lines with names beside them—London, Berlin, Paris, Glasgow, Constantinople, Moscow, Shanghai, Calcutta, Rangoon—had a queer fascination for him.

As he read, the warm autumn sunshine slowly penetrated the thick shoulders of his coat. It was like wine in his blood, this added warmth, and made up a little for the cold numbness in his stomach.

After reading most of the little items in the paper he looked at the clock in the church-tower across the park. It said one-fifteen, the time when he roused himself usually to start on his afternoon rounds. But to-day he took his eyes from the clock without a single accompanying bodily movement. Fluttering pigeons drew his eyes and he watched them, transfixed. Dumb, noisy, silly things, these pigeons! What bright senseless eyes!

Again he looked at the clock-tower; if he was going to look for work he should start now; it was twenty minutes after one. If he didn't get up he ought to look through the want ads—the reason he always bought a paper he told himself. His eyes left the pigeons and travelled nearer—to his chest and abdomen. They were rising and falling automatically. How regular and unconscious was the working of these blind mechanisms; after so much neglect too. Would that rhythmic rise and fall go on for ever?

When he next looked at the church-clock it was three minutes after two. Involuntarily a movement went through him; he almost roused himself from his slumped down posture. But as incentive came, it was as suddenly gone. The clock said two-fourteen. With a rush he got to his feet, but dizziness gripped him and he felt with one hand for the back of the bench. When he started across the park the clock said two-seventeen. His pace was almost brisk as he followed the curving walks toward the business district. . . .

Not many persons can understand how a man long hungry can spend his last dollar for liquor instead of food. It's queer. A down-and-outer would rather be drunk and hungry than not so hungry and still have his wits about him. Drunkenness is the pearl of great price—had at the sacrifice of something else, usually food. Rich men can have full stomachs and be drunk too, but a bum must choose between liquor and food.

In the blind pig was a jar of salted peanuts. He ate two or three handfuls. After he had bought several drinks the bartender trusted him for a few. Bartenders don't usually do that.

Later, on the street he stepped along easily, turning corners briskly left and right, seemingly with a purpose. Block after block he went, until he was striding down the widest busiest street. Evening had come on and the brilliant red and blue of the gas signs danced before his eyes. Beautiful. His stomach was warm now and there was a pleasant mistiness in his head. Every muscle was limber yet surprisingly strong. As he walked along the wide street past the bright shop-windows, he felt like a ship at sea ploughing through rollers. He did not have to dodge the people streaming toward him; he could hold a straight course and the oncoming waves of humanity would break to right and left of him. A few bumps didn't matter. Dense masses melted before him as he ploughed on.

Ahead was the park, the rows of benches edging the walks were inviting, and heedless of the crowd he set his course toward them. There was a wide street to cross and at the corner, in the middle of the rushing traffic, a little tower flashed red and green and amber lights. You usually crossed the street with the green lights; he could remember such things somewhere a long time ago, but they

seemed unimportant now. He could see all of a red light and about a third of a green one. Good enough. Stepping down off the curb he started across. An auto fender brushed his leg and someone yelled.

No one could be yelling at him, he didn't know any one in this damned city who would yell at him. He ploughed on without looking to right or left. A big ship ploughing through a rough sea, everything before it only waves to be gone through. Automobile brakes screeched and someone shouted. What did it matter? It wasn't for him, when they'd been talking to him so carelessly for weeks.

The pigeons that had been walking in the sun were gone. Where had they gone? Home? Probably. Yesterday his landlady had made him give up the key to the house and had set his travelling-bag and cardboard suitcase on the porch. Had thrown them there.

He sat with his head lowered so that all he could see was a procession of feet and ankles on the pavement. Simpering little feet connected with silken ankles hurrying to keep up with light brown shoes lost under floppy pants. Some fellow and his girl going to the movies.

Strong stuff, that whiskey. It wasn't whiskey, it was hootch. For an instant his head seemed to snap and turn over. But it wasn't a bad feeling. He slapped his leg, pinched it—couldn't hurt it.

Minutes passed, perhaps twenty-five or thirty. Now he was walking again, and thinking. Walking is all right, but thinking grows on you. Numbness too. A sensation of protectedness seeped up to his brain. It kept the world from him. Such a safe, warm feeling.

He navigated several street-crossings, usually with the traffic, feeling that he was following his own whim. A broad avenue with two streams of darting, fluid, two-eyed animals lay ahead of him. Some were silent, some honked angrily. Between the two swift streams was a safety-zone made by stubby steel posts set in the pavement. In the enclosure people were gathered. They huddled together and paid no attention to him as he stood there gripping the cap of one of the posts. Street-cars stopped and took the crowds away so more could accumulate. Amusedly he watched the

crowds scramble and push to get on the cars. What a hurry to go somewhere. Now and again his head did queer things and turned over as when you are swimming under water. He turned away from the cars and the crowd, to the endless flow of gleaming eyes. The big shiny cars made little noise. Sometimes the fluctuating stream was nearly solid; again it would thin suddenly.

The head-lamps—pairs of bright eyes—flowed by in a rhythmic flood. He tried to look away, but his fascinated eyes returned constantly to watch a pair of lights rush at him, grow monstrous, swish by two feet away. A simple solution. Even now he felt nothing, neither his feet nor the hand which clung to the top of the post. He kicked the post; there was a dead foot in his shoe. He wouldn't feel the fall—or the impact of the body back of those bright eyes. Lean forward and let go; that would be all.

Already he could imagine himself on the pavement, comfortable and numb. Dead without feeling it; dead because he wanted to lie down. . . . He let his fingers loosen a little, swayed pleasantly— Which pair of eyes? Not this one; not the next one. Easy, so easy. He let his eyes shut. End it all, end it all. No monkey business.

Slowly, easily, his fingers loosened their grip. The cars were ceaseless, the bright eyes whirring past within two feet. This one. The two bright lamps come swiftly—straight at him. He is slipping. Through the air—the hand that gripped the post stretched out behind. On come the big lamps; they swerve, but not enough. One eye veers; the other is upon him, bigger, bigger. Light, light. Crash. He has fallen into the face of the sun, he has broken the face of the sun. It is glass.



A PASTEL. BY EDWARD NAGLE

FROM THE CULTURAL FRONT IN RUSSIA

THE departure of what is possibly the most distinguished company of American specialists that has yet visited Soviet Russia—educators, presidents of educational institutions, psychologists, and philosophers, with John Dewey as chief representative—draws our attention again to Moscow and the new régime which in the name of the world's proletariat now rules a tenth of the world's population. Upon arriving in the Red capital, the delegates were officially received by Anatol Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Popular Enlightenment as his title reads. They are now devoting their time to a study of Soviet schools and educational methods in both city and country. They are visiting evening classes for adults and the special "workers' faculties"—in Communist nomenclature, "Rabfaks"—which have been established in connexion with many high schools and technical institutes, and some of the ten thousand or more "cultural outposts" and cottage reading-rooms from which Soviet literature and propaganda are distributed, in which, more or less regularly, classes are conducted for "the liquidation of illiteracy," and peasant men and women are taught to read and write, to spell, to figure, and to believe in the unsleeping beneficence of the Party and its energetic Directorate.

Education in Soviet Russia seeks not so much to provide free development for the individual—to "release the imprisoned splendour from within," of which Browning speaks—as to convert him emotionally and intellectually to the Marxian gospel of salvation, to permeate the child from infancy with "the consciousness of the Revolution" and of the working-class, with a feeling for Proletarianism and a conviction of the authoritarian economic, social, and political idea. This idea is sovereign in Bolshevist Russia—more important than the idea of self-fulfilment, of race, of patriotism, of prosperity, or of God.

Not long ago the present writer chanced to meet and interview The Idea in Moscow, in the persons of several eminent Bolshevists, among them, Comrade Lunacharsky.

I was standing in a large hall where a special collection of paintings and sculpture had been assembled from widely scattered parts of the empire. Upon one wall hung a number of clear,

cold water-colours, the work of a hunter living on the coast of Novaya Zembya within the Arctic Circle; they were landscapes, and sea-scapes fringed with ice-bergs. Considering that the painter was a trapper, not an art student, they were very well done. There were portraits in oil of Circassian women and warriors, or mountaineers, in dagger-decorated *burkas*; they looked like Italian primitives—more primitive even—and were the work of a Transcaucasian. Several charming woodcuts of peasant faces and scenes by an unknown Ukrainian artist aroused my admiration. But on the whole the statuary exhibited more striking talent and skill than the paintings. In the lobby, carved in wood, towered the figure of a peasant-woman, arms akimbo, kerchief over her head, straddling the furrows, vivid as life. The centre of the main hall was occupied by an heroic group of male figures in white plaster, nude, and bowed, bearing on their shoulders a pallet or bier on which, under sweeping drapery, lay Lenin, in the sleep of death. Of classic conception and noble solemnity the group was entitled simply, Burial of Lenin; it was the work of Merкуроf, a sculptor who had achieved fame before the Revolution. The Government Art Commission, which is virtually the sole patron of all the fine arts in Russia, had ordered it especially for this decennial jubilee exposition.

As I lingered, admiring it, I realized that a guard was clearing the hall of its few visitors and on enquiring the reason was told that the Government Art Commission had arrived in official automobiles for the purpose of censoring the exhibition before its opening. (I had been admitted by special dispensation it appeared—prior to the public opening, already two and a half months late.) As I moved slowly toward the door, the seven members of the Commission, led by Lunacharsky, entered the hall and standing in front of the sculpture, began to discuss it. I watched them with interest, inwardly abusing myself for my paralysing ignorance of the language. When at length they moved toward the column by which I lingered, I nerved myself and advancing toward Lunacharsky, presented my card to him with a word or two in English, at the same time observing him closely. He is a thickset man of great nervous energy, about sixty years of age, of dark aristocratic Russian type, with a slightly greying goatee and moustache, and piercing black eyes behind narrow nose-glasses. He wore a black coat and peaked black hat of astrakhan; like the others, he had not removed it in the hall. He replied to me at once in French, cour-

teously assuming that I spoke it; and in response to my request for an opportunity to talk with him about Russian schools and educational policies, named a time when I might come to his office, and consented to answer certain questions which I would put to him in writing.

Two or three days later, I learned that the opening of the art-exhibit had again been postponed because the Art Commission had been displeased with several pieces, among them, the Burial of Lenin which it had ordered removed before the opening. Why? . . . There was nothing irreverent about it; it was the most nobly impressive group in the collection. The concept was self-evident. Was it not beautiful? It seemed so to me. . . . It had been disapproved because it betrayed *no proletarian feeling*. It was too chaste, too classic, and therefore too bourgeois—too dead. There was nothing about the limbs of the youthful pall-bearers to suggest that they were proletarian limbs. There were no overalls, no pick, shovel, sledge, or sickle; no miner's lamp, or carpenter's square; no boots; the faces even were not clearly those of toilers. In fine, it was too ideal in conception and, in the absence of anything to indicate that the working-class was bearing Lenin on its shoulders to the tomb, the piece was officially rejected and the gallery closed until it could be removed.

What a world of significance, I thought, lay in that deed! Of course, if one believes in the desirability and possibility of "conditioning," and so controlling the human mind, the sense of beauty necessarily is included. Indeed, any effective re-orientation must begin with a re-coloration of the aesthetic sense. Save in war-time censorship and propaganda, nobody in the modern world, since Loyola's Society of Jesus, has ever believed that it could be done or has seriously tried to do it. But in Soviet Russia for the fine arts as for the author and editor, one law, or fiat, holds: *Thou shalt contribute by thy creative expression to the desired revolutionary state of mind in the observer, or thou shalt not breathe in marble, in drama, or on canvas.* Is any other inference possible?

Had I known about the rejection of the sculpture before meeting Comrade Lunacharsky I should not have been able to refrain from asking him about it; and doubtless he would have replied as frankly as he did to the questions which I submitted to him in writing. My first question was: What do you consider the most important cultural achievements of the Russian Revolution? To this Commissar Lunacharsky replied: "They may be seen in: 1. A.

great rise of the cultural level and in activities of the workmen and of peasant youth, of women, and of even the most backward national minorities which during the Czar's régime were completely neglected. 2. The number of children attending school, which has increased from forty-eight per cent to seventy per cent of the population. (The middle and higher schools are now open to the children of workmen and peasants; they now constitute from sixty to seventy per cent of all students, and in 1933 we shall introduce a compulsory school law.) 3. The press, which is now two and a half times as large as the pre-revolutionary press. It is disseminated chiefly among the masses of workers and peasants. The number of our books, notably scientific works, exceeds the number of those published in 1913. They are designed for the most part for the common man whose interest in reading is incomparably greater than before the Revolution."

Corroborating this statement about the press and the publication of books in Russia, I obtained from the Government Printing Office the following figures: "In 1913—3,500,000 newspapers were printed in Russia; by 1924 the figure was five and a half million; in 1925, seven million; in 1927, eight million. These newspapers do not circulate as did the pre-war press, in Poland, Finland, and the Baltic provinces lost to Russia by the World War. Especially noteworthy is the growth of certain types of newspapers: in the last two years the leading central and provincial papers have increased their circulation by forty-one and four-tenths per cent; professional papers by twelve and two-tenths per cent; papers designed for the labouring masses by thirty-two and two-tenths per cent; military magazines and newspapers by ninety-five and three-tenths per cent, and minority-nationality papers by thirty-nine and four-tenths per cent. The growth of farm papers is of especial interest; their issue amounted in 1923 to 150,000 copies; in 1924, to 530,000; in 1926, to 1,200,000; and in 1927, to 1,600,000 copies. The number of journals as compared with that before the war has decreased thirty per cent; but their circulation has increased, as above; the chief point being that they circulate among classes of the population which never read before. We have at least a hundred thousand bulletin-board newspapers; not a village and not a factory is without one." As further evidence of cultural activity, I saw the first three volumes of a new fifteen-volume encyclopaedia issued by the Soviet Government Press and compiled by a staff of Russian scholars and scientists.

My second question was: Which Russian authors are most widely read? Of to-day? Of the past? Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorki? To this he replied: "Our workmen read the classics in large numbers. The cheap editions which we issue are so quickly bought that we find difficulty in issuing them fast enough. This applies to all the writers you mentioned." And he added, "Of foreign writers, the most popular is the American, Upton Sinclair."

Concerning what Russia reads, a report of The Cultural-work Cabinet of the Moscow Central Labour Council—published in the *Isvestia* while I was in Moscow—says that the workers read "Russian writers, mostly—(65%); and lesserly, foreign authors—(35%). Contrarily, clerks and others read foreign authors more—(56%), and the works of Russian writers less—(44%). Of the workers' reading, the classics constitute 21.8%; pre-revolutionary non-classical literature, 12.2%; and 'new literature'—post-revolutionary—66%. On the demand stand, first at the present time, the following books: Gladkof's novel of the civil war in Russia entitled 'Cement'; Leonof, 'Barsuki' (Hedgehogs); Neverof, 'City of Bread'—'Tashkent'; Serafimovitch, 'The Iron Torrent'; Seifoulina, 'Virineya'; Romanof, 'Tales'. Of the classics, Gorki leads all the others with his 'Mother', 'The Artamanof Affair', 'Among Strangers', 'Childhood', and his shorter tales. Next come Turgenef's 'Virgin Soil', 'Fathers and Sons', 'The Squire's Nest', and 'A Hunter's Notebook'; Tolstoy, 'War and Peace', 'Anna Karenina', and 'Resurrection'; Dostoiefsky, 'Crime and Punishment'; Chekhov, 'Goucharof'; and Gogol, 'Taras Bulba'.

"Of foreign books read in Moscow public libraries Jack London is first, with 'Martin Eden', 'The Iron Heel', and 'The Little Woman of the Large House'; Upton Sinclair is second with 'King Coal', 'The Jungle', 'Jimmie Higgins'; then Curwood, with 'Kazan', followed by Kellermann—"The Tunnel"; Victor Hugo—"Les Misérables" and 'L'Homme Qui Rit'. Among clerks and employees O. Henry is more popular than Kellermann; then come Claude Farrère, Victor Hugo, and Anatole France."

"All of which," concludes the report in the *Isvestia*, "demonstrates the wholesome taste of our readers. We have no bad literature in our sixty-three libraries." The foregoing investigation was made in December, 1927, among three thousand readers in the trade-union reading-rooms of Moscow.

The Government Printing Office has published in twelve vol-

umes all of Upton Sinclair save only his *Book of Health*; also Sinclair Lewis, and Theodore Dreiser's *Color of a Great City and Twelve Men*; Albert Edwards' *Comrade Yetta*, Edna Ferber's *Show Boat* and *So Big*, Fanny Hurst's *Song of Life*, Ben Hecht's *Humpty Dumpty* and *Count Bruga*, Lawrence Conrad's *Temper*, and four volumes of O. Henry, within the last year or two. Incidentally, no royalties have been paid the authors, although last November Sinclair Lewis was offered when he was in Moscow, back payment of royalties, but he declined until a similar offer should be made to other American authors. This present season likewise, several American publishers are pirating in English translation, half a dozen Soviet publications.

While on the subject of books I asked Lunacharsky about his own book on religion, published several years ago, which, according to a rumour current in Europe has been suppressed in Russia. "As concerns that book, which I wrote twenty-five years ago," said he, "I have changed many of my opinions and have re-published only those parts which coincide with my present views. This clearly is every author's right. All my books are issued without difficulty by our publishing companies and in most instances enjoy a large circulation, particularly my books on educational subjects."

I then asked him about religion, especially about moral instruction in the Soviet schools. Upon this subject Comrade Lunacharsky was most emphatic. "In the secondary schools—for children above twelve—" he said, "a purely scientific view is taught, of the origin and development of religion in society, with emphasis upon the injurious rôle played by religions that have outlived their time, in the conflicts between labour and capital, between oppressed and oppressors. Concerning morality, we practise and inculcate the highest morality created by Humanity—the world conceived as a brotherhood of peoples, to a realization of which the worldwide triumph of the self-conscious proletariat is absolutely necessary. For this great end everyone must live and, if need be, die. To serve this cause we must educate ourselves in the spirit of profound Collectivism. It is to be regretted that not all has been done as yet to aid this morality to exterminate the retarding power of organized religion and all manner of *petit-bourgeois* notions."

All manner of *petit-bourgeois* notions! What a way of dismissing theology and a hundred sectarian aberrations!

Communism and Collectivism, Leninism and Proletarianism, as ideals and ideas, tasks and attitudes and slogans, demanding from their adherents an absolute loyalty, have not yet become platitudes in Russia, and will not, I think, while Soviet Russia feels herself in process of regeneration as the embattled and unique embodiment of them. And is not a certain gorgeousness created in the atmosphere beyond our Valley of Disillusion by the spectacle of vigorous, apparently intelligent, desperately sincere men devoting their utmost energy to the attainment and establishment of any ideal, old or new? . . . The notion occurred to me many times in my journey that perhaps for Russia a mission has been ordained: that to atone for Russian imperialism's having been the chief cause of the collapse of European civilization into the gulf of war in 1914, Russia will become the chief force making for its integration. If nothing more—yet I suspect that it is destined to be more—to be a tonic-purgative for an over-sophisticated, cynical, senescent, cunningly complicated world of individualistic enterprise, a world which has long since solved the problem of adequately producing wealth, but falters at the task of finding satisfactory methods for controlling and justly equalizing its distribution.

BRENT DOW ALLINSON

BOOK REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL RHETORIC AND POETIC

MEDIEVAL RHETORIC AND POETIC (to 1400) Interpreted from Representative Works. By Charles Sears Baldwin. 12mo. 321 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

CERTAIN reflections, highly pertinent in the good sense and one hopes not too impertinent in the bad, present themselves when, being not entirely ignorant of its matter, one reads Professor Baldwin's careful and valuable survey of one of the least attractive, in general popular ways, of all the divisions of literary history. He has subjoined (perhaps not entirely without an intention of jam *after* powder) some interesting remarks on the "vernacular poetic" of his later time, especially dealing with Dante and Chaucer: but he very frankly confesses that the style of dealing is quite different from that employed in the earlier and main part of the book. One may indeed doubt, welcome as this matter in itself may be, whether it really has much business here. Dante of course and (probably to a somewhat less degree but sufficiently) Chaucer were educated in the hereditary rhetoric and poetic which the Middle Ages drew from the ancients. Dante in his grimmer fashion uses it: Chaucer in his lighter, also uses it a little but laughs at it more than a little. Dante is the first great critic—and "Rhetoric" has ever more and more since been merged in "Criticism"—of modern literature. Yet any effect of it on their great vernacular work is, at least for some of us, very difficult to find. And it would be rather odd if it were otherwise. The enormous *business* importance of Rhetoric in Greece and at Rome had ceased entirely, unless you call preaching "business"; and though of course "persuasion" continued to be the main object there, and was in constant request, its methods were considerably different and its objects almost entirely so. A certain body of doctrine as to style remained and was adapted but not much more.

In Poetic on the other hand the change was greater still. People quoted Horace and continued to make remarks borrowed from other ancients—that is to say pedagogic people and some versifiers: but in so far as they began (and they *did* begin) the great modern literatures they steered a quite different course and went by quite different charts. In the most if not the only important part of formal “poetic”—the management of metre and rhythm—almost their whole world was new, and all the things in it unfamiliar. Even the resemblances are delusive. Few things are less alike than the cadence and resonance of a Greek or Latin trimeter and a French Alexandrine: while all the efforts that have been tried have never succeeded in getting any ancient verse at all close to that ten- or eleven-syllabled line which became almost the staple of modern poetry. The Latin hexameter in its more definitely scholastic forms may attempt to follow Virgil: but when it gets its legs free and has a jockey on it who knows how to ride, how far other are *Hora novissima* and the rest from *Dic mihi Musa* and *its* rest! You may get, to change the metaphor, a sort of watershed in Prudentius whence the beginnings of the various streams may be traced but hardly more, and perhaps hardly that. If you take (varying images once more) to Commodian and embark on the quantitative-accentual Syrtis, you must be a special joint favourite of Apollo and Pallas, with Poseidon willing to help, if your vessel does not join the fleet of others in its quicksands.

It is, however, only as a *bonus* that Professor Baldwin throws this definitely modern matter in: and it is for his presentation of latest classical and middle-age rhetoric that his book should be valued. He has of course to go back to Hermogenes for a start: and between ourselves his readers may be thankful that *they* have not to go back to the full text of the prodigy who startled Emperors with his eloquence, when a boy; and whose heart at his death was found covered with hair. If it had been found with no blood in it: it would have been less surprising. Even in the best ancient time, long before Hermogenes, Rhetoric was a rather bloodless thing: from about 400 to 1400 it was scarcely more than bones or dried sinew and skin.

It may slightly surprise those who wickedly content themselves with looking at the table of contents to find nearly if not quite the largest single allowance of pages given to St Augustine—not of

course to the less or more than doubtful technical tract which sometimes goes by his name, but to the discussion on Preaching in the Confessions. There is however good reason for it as there is for the also large if not quite so large space given to John of Salisbury, though that great man of letters and of the world puts "rhetoric", as a named and specific thing, quite in the background. Perhaps our author is a little stingy to Martianus Capella, though he does give and briefly treats the almost famous *bravura*-personification of Rhetoric herself. For not only as he admits was The Marriage of Philology and Mercury widely current for centuries (indeed some have held that between classical times and the Renaissance it was the main authority of its kind directly and indirectly in Europe) but it is a not disagreeable book to read. Still, it is here all right and so are what may be loosely called the chief companions of its author, Ausonius and Sidonius, Cassiodorus (rather "scanted") and Isidore. Nor will any one look in vain for the companions, in the same obligingly loose fashion of date, of John of Salisbury in the flowering time of the Middle Ages—Hugh of St Victor and Vincent of Beauvais; Brunetto whom Dante (having put him there) met in Hell, and Geoffrey whom Chaucer, though he did not meet him, put in the minor Inferno of being laughed at through the mouth of that wicked Nun's Priest. This latter fact Professor Baldwin does mention, though he is as a rule and quite pardonably abstinent from biographical detail. Indeed in such a book as this such detail would be not so much superfluous as impossible unless it were expanded, again impossibly.

But he is not at all parsimonious in mentioning and explaining technicalities, for which he deserves both praise and thanks. Some technical terms of this time—such as for instance *cursus*—occasionally make their way into non-scholastic literature and cause puzzlement. The book is therefore likely to have more than narrow usefulness.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

BETTER THAN ECSTASY

LETTERS FROM JOSEPH CONRAD, 1895-1924. *Edited with Introduction and Notes by Edward Garnett.* 12mo. 313 pages. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$3.

IT would be interesting to give these letters of Conrad to a reader totally unaware of the course of Conrad's literary career, of the critical approval he won at the beginning and the popular success which, to his surprise, arrived at the end. I think that such a reader would decide on internal evidence that the writer was a minor artist, a holdover from the Nineties, and in all probability a man of comparatively little talent, tortured by the desire to write and utterly lacking the capacity.

Actually we know that Conrad was in the major line of romancers. Quarrel as people may about his exact ranking in that line, they can hardly deny him his essential quality—the possession of a powerful creative faculty; he had nothing to do with the rancours of the Nineties; the list of his novels is proof of his tremendous capacity. In a sense the one thing he lacked was the desire to write. Edward Garnett, to whom all these letters were written, was like a physician injecting powerful stimulants whenever it was necessary for Conrad to write, for the retired seaman was a spinner of yarns and writing seemed to him an absurd difficulty.

Garnett says that Conrad exaggerated his reluctance, his dismay, his torture. No doubt. But he did not invent them. He intensified something which was real, the burden of his art. The pressure for three years came from a single source—the book which was later known as *The Rescue*. It is mentioned first in March 1896 (as *The Rescuer*); the book appeared serially in 1919. Over forty references to this book occur in these letters—more than for *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, three times as many as for *Lord Jim*. *The Rescue* was an incubus; at the end of his writing life, Conrad took up again a novel he had, by the workings of an obscure instinct, dropped for twenty years. "I am settling my affairs in this world and I should not have liked to leave behind me this evidence of having bitten off more than I could chew. A very vulgar vanity."

It was, perhaps, also desirable for him to return again to the narrow seas from which his early work came, to find rejuvenation. The truth is that *The Rescue*, the novel he could not write, haunted him, proved him feeble, set flies on his sensitive skin.

Once he wrote, in despite of Crocean aesthetics:

“To be able to think and not able to express is a fine torture. I am undergoing it—without patience. . . . The progressive episodes of the story *will* not emerge from the chaos of my sensations. I feel nothing clearly. . . . I am exceedingly miserable. My task appears to me as sensible as lifting the world without that fulcrum which even that conceited ass, Archimedes, admitted to be necessary.”

It was, I suppose, this torture which led him to say a few years later, when he already enjoyed the friendship of Wells and James and Garnett, when his work was appearing in magazines of the highest standing:

“The Outcast is a heap of sand, the Nigger a splash of water, Jim a lump of clay. . . . I am only very bruised, very sore, very humiliated. . . . This is the effect of the book upon me; the intimate and personal effect. Humiliation.”

It is, of course, only a matter of time before a critic with nothing else to do will psychoanalyse Conrad for us. There is the famous grandfather who would not eat the flesh of a dog during the Napoleonic campaign; there is Poland; there is the sea; there is the deliberate choice of a foreign tongue. Surely the combination of all these things indicates compulsions and neuroses; add them to the cries of fury and disgust which Conrad uttered while he worked and the effect is appalling.

I do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of such an analysis. But it ought to be clear that the analysis will tell us almost nothing about the value of the work. The imaginary reader I suggested above would make the common error of amateur analysts when they attack not a lesion, but a creation. They go to the man and not to the object created. Their results are not criticism.

I think that the present series of letters will interest writers as

much as the more diffuse life and letters, edited by G. Jean-Aubry,¹ will interest readers. The lights on Conrad's social personality are few and most of them are charming, but not particularly significant. A few literary references are entertaining: Conrad wanted to bite Shaw, hoped Ford (then Hueffer) would succeed (but took a malicious dig at him), was enraptured by a note from Henry James, recommended Norman Douglas, and so on. Things of this sort are better found in the larger collection which also covers enough of the painful ground of Conrad's troubles about money. The two things which one can find nowhere else are Conrad's attitude toward his work and his attitude toward the public. Distaste, lack of confidence, despair, and an occasional flash of assurance seem to sum up Conrad's emotions about his work. But read in connexion with his reminiscences, these letters become more illuminating. The soaring ecstasy of the poet, the fine frenzy, is never recorded; but there is another thing as enviable. That is the tremendous absorption which Conrad described and which, within limits, one feels sure he experienced. He lived for weeks, he has said, without consciousness of the outer world, dealing with the men and women, the bitter agonies and triumphs of the people he created. His body was at Pent Farm, his soul in Costaguana; looking back he cannot remember eating and drinking and sleeping—only living with Decoud and Nostromo. At the end he writes: "Congratulate me as upon a recovery from a dangerous illness."

It was that. It was also the highest point of his life, whenever it occurred. In those moments he separated himself from wife and children and publishers and agents; he always managed to live apart from a million small things. He had few abstract interests; he is a pure writer in the sense that his work has no social tendencies. His characters may have ideas, his books none. He concentrated all his forces in the single effort to create. The torture, the humiliation, the sadness of failure are hard to bear; but they helped to keep alive the energy by which Conrad lived. At the end he could have said, What I have gone through is life.

It did not give him happiness, particularly. There is no reason why he should have been happy, except in deference to a vulgar

¹ *Life and Letters of Joseph Conrad*. Edited by G. Jean-Aubry. Two volumes. 8vo. 329 and 348 pages. Doubleday Doran and Company. \$10.

prejudice. He was living; he was not wasting or rotting away. Happiness, in that connexion, would have been impertinent.

His relation to the public (including critics) is clear. He wanted to be popular for a single reason—because popularity meant royalties. He did not for a moment confuse this purpose with the purpose of his writing which seemed to be purely the exercise of his creative gift. If the Nigger had to be unpopular, so be it; he would make no change. Toward the end of his life a second-rate novel (in his canon) began a new career for him—the career of a novelist with a large following. After *Chance* he wrote some excellent books, but his great work all came before it. Almost at the end of his life *The Rover*, skilfully handled by his American publishers, gave Conrad the sensations of a best-seller.

In reviewing this book in *THE DIAL*¹ I noted the circumstance that a novel full of weaknesses had brought Conrad his greatest popularity, and guessing at a reason, suggested that he was essentially a story-teller, bound to captivate people somewhat wearied of criticism and lectures in their novels. Conrad was deeply moved. I did not know it at the time, but years later, in the Jean-Aubry collection I found a letter referring to this review in accents of profound emotion. To be named as the writer of “a popular novel” startled him; I think he was pleased to have his integrity unquestioned by one who did not like his novel.

To me the surprising thing was that he should have cared at all. In the letters to Garnett it is clear that for twenty years he respected one critic—Garnett, tolerated a few, and despised the rest even when they praised him. Garnett, effacing himself from the pages of this book, understood what Conrad was after; his own letters are not published here. One of them, which Conrad answered on July 7, 1919, must have contained the secret of *The Rescue*—at least what Conrad believed to be the secret—and it ought to be published. Garnett did not inspire Conrad, but he gave him an intellectual discipline, as critics ought always to do for artists. The artists are often unwilling. It is a pleasure to find one who could write:

“My dear, in your feelings, in your judgments, your enthusiasms and criticisms, in all your fine reactions to that ‘best’ which not

¹ June, 1924, page 541.

every eye can see, you have been beautifully consistent, both in your subtle and your peremptory moods. It is thirty years now since I came ashore for good. . . . Straight from the sea into your arms, as it were. How much you have done to pull me together intellectually only the Gods that brought us together know. For I myself don't. All I had in my hand was some little creative gift—but not even one single piece of 'cultural' luggage. I am proud after all these years to have understood you from the first."

With his gift, could Conrad have helped writing those stories? Let the readers of *Trader Horn* answer and those who care in the faintest degree for literature silently praise Heaven for Edward Garnett. They need not commit themselves thereby to an estimate of Conrad's greatness—merely to a prejudice in favour of a much abused art. Or possibly two arts.

GILBERT SELDES.

THE GOLDEN ASS OF APULEIUS

THE GOLDEN ASS OF APULEIUS, Being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius. *The Adlington Translation amplified from the more complete text of Thomas Taylor. With an Essay by Charles Whibley.* 8vo. 288 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$3.50.

THE publishers have made a handsome volume, with impressive end papers, well worth the price. As the Tudor Translation text is out of print, and therefore extremely expensive, we are very glad to have this text which is well printed. All the more because the publishers have had the good sense to reprint the admirable introduction which Mr Charles Whibley wrote for the Tudor Translation edition which he himself edited. For the text itself, only one objection may be raised. It is "amplified from the more complete text of Thomas Taylor" on the wrapper; and it is "revised 1915-1927" on the title-page. I have not had the opportunity of comparing the present text with that of the Tudor Translations or any other; but in this volume I have looked in vain for any explanation of the "amplifications" mentioned, or for any explanation of the revisions 1915-1927, or for any indication of the authority which made these revisions. One would like to know the nature and extent of these revisions. For, as Mr Whibley has amply proved in his introduction, Adlington—an imperfect Latinist but a master of Tudor prose—has taken such liberties with his text that any "revision" in the direction of the Loeb Classics could only denature the Tudor prose. Did the revisor have an eye upon the Watch and Ward Society? The book cannot pretend to be a "scholarly" edition; but it is a handsome edition, and will do well if it brings Apuleius and Adlington to the notice of persons who never heard of them before.

No one is at all so well qualified to write of certain late Latin and Greek writers—Apuleius, Petronius, Lucian, and Herondas for example—as Mr Whibley; and no one has written of them so well. Mr Whibley is a scholar, a critic, and a man of the world; and one must be all of these to write well of these authors. Per-

haps one should be a bit of a mystic also; but that is asking too much; for the slightest taint of mysticism would have removed the bloom of Mr Whibley's most delightful qualities. It is difficult, with Mr Whibley's essay before us, to find anything new or important to say about either Adlington or Apuleius. His appreciation of both is final. His recognition of that peculiar union of realism and fantasy, in Apuleius, is as near the bull's-eye as any one has hit. He makes one statement, however, which I think needs qualification: he says, of Adlington and Apuleius, that "Primitive and Decadent approach art in the same temper."

Now there is a sense in which these words are true: but to appreciate their truth, and the limitations of the truth, one needs to know both Primitive and Decadent as well as Mr Whibley knows them. There is certainly a point at which they touch, but many points at which they do not touch. In the realism, the "gusto," and in the almost ecstatic debauch of words, the late Latin (much more than the late Greek) and the Tudor mind meet. In both is an odd combination of coarseness and materialism with unchecked spirituality—or, often, on a lower plane, superstition. But before and behind them the history is very different. It is true that the Tudor and Jacobean Translations are the best translations in English. What is not so évident is that their merits differ not only in degree but in kind, according to the work translated as well as according to the accomplishment of the translator. You cannot say the same things about Adlington as about North, about Florio as about Sandys, any more than you can say the same things about Plutarch, Ovid, Montaigne, and Apuleius. And in the case of Adlington, we must take account, not only that Adlington was an Elizabethan, not only that he was a poor Latin scholar, dependent, like some other Tudor Translators, upon French translations; but we must take account also of the points at which late Latin and Elizabethan did not meet, as well as of those where they did.

Hence there is an important aspect of Apuleius which, I think, is not reproduced in Adlington. The world of Adlington, if more cosmopolitan and more inclusive than our own, was a world in which Nationalism and Protestantism were developing. Neither of these things is conceivable in the world of Apuleius. Apuleius came from the same land as St Augustine. The world which had

much in common with the world of Middleton's comedies and the novels of Nashe and Deloney was also the world in which Christianity and the Church were being incubated. Not every aspect of it recurs in Adlington. Let us compare the text and the translation of one famous passage: the appearance of the Goddess to Lucius before his reformation from an ass to human shape.

“Behold, Lucius, I am come; thy weeping and prayer have moved me to succor thee. I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of all that are in hell, the principal of them that dwell in heaven, manifested alone and under one form of all the gods and goddesses. At my will the planets of the sky, the wholesome winds of the sea, and the lamentable silences of hell be disposed; my name, my divinity is adored throughout all the world, in divers manners, in variable customs, and by many names.”

This reads like a rather good Collect of the English Church; and indeed the education of Adlington was not far removed from the education of Cranmer. “The lamentable silences of hell” is excellent.

“En adsum tuis commota, Luci, precibus, rerum naturae parens, elementorum omnium domina, saeculorum progenies initialis, summa nominum, regina Manium, prima caelitum, deorum dearumque facies uniformis, quae caeli luminosa culmina, maris salubria flamina, inferum deplorata silentia nutibus meis dispenso: cuius numen unicum multi formi specie, ritu varie, nomine multiugo, totus veneratur orbis.”

It reminds one of Ave Maris Stella and of many another Latin hymn. The translation is admirable: I have purposely chosen a passage in which the translation is admirable. And yet how utterly various the connotations!

There are two kinds of good translation. There is the “literal” translation which is useful for any one who is struggling with the original text; and there is the free translation which is best for those who cannot attempt the original text at all. Adlington’s—

and most Tudor translations—is of the latter type. It revives, but it metamorphoses. One kind of good translation widens the sensibility of our own language; the other kind is a simple aid to exploring the sensibility of another. We are apt to ignore this simple truth, in that we dream of an ideal translation. We need the two kinds; but we need to know which is which. It would still be quite possible for the language to produce translations as good as Adlington's, in its own kind, if we would unclot ourselves from a stupid prejudice in favour of what is called "originality"; appreciate, and use for its proper uses, the "scholarly" translation; but allow the writer of English prose or verse the right to make use of the Latin and Greek classics as Adlington did.

T. S. ELIOT.

A HOUSE-PARTY

ARMED WITH MADNESS. *By Mary Butts. 12mo.*
238 pages. *Albert and Charles Boni. \$2.50.*

“THE sea lay three parts round the house, invisible because of the wood. . . . The people who had the house were interested in the wood and its silence.” “Poverty and pride, cant and candor, raw flesh and velvet” seem collectively to ask, “Are we never to have any peace, only adventure and pain?” to say “there is no good will left anywhere in the world.”

They were Drusilla Taverner—“Scylla;” Carston, an American; Picus “unnaturally supple;” Carston “had seen him pick up something behind him with his hands as if it had been in front;” Clarence “with a feeling for decoration best served in cities.” “One rougher and shorter, fairer, better bred, called Ross. Then a boy, Scylla’s brother Felix Taverner.”

“Ross arranged their chairs in the veranda while the storm banged about.” “For an hour it rained, through sheet lightning, and thunder like a departing train, the hills calling one to another.”

The Sanc-Grail is supposed to have been fished from the well, but “Picus had taken his father’s cup . . . had run to small mystifications . . . had whistled up mystery with what was now undoubtedly a victorian finger-bowl.”

“‘We don’t seem to have cleared up anything,’ said Clarence.

‘Cleared up,’ said Picus chattering at them. . . . In this there was something that was not comic, in the dis-ease he imparted.”

When consulted about disposing of the cup the vicar suggests replacing it where they got it. “‘It seems to like wells,’” he said. “‘And truth, if she prefers not to talk, can return to one.’”

“‘Good,’ said Picus, ‘learn it to be a toad.’”

One sees the artist in Miss Butts, in her liking to watch “how violently, strangely, and in character people will behave,” though an attitude of being surprising in matters of personal freedom seems needless. The iron hand of unconvencion can be heavier

than the iron hand of convention; and heresy in respect to this or that orthodoxy is perhaps a greater compliment to it than one sets out to pay, amounting really in the vehemence of protest, to subjection; to marriage and various other kinds of conformity Miss Butts pays compliments of this grudging, paining variety.

There are gruesome things here, as there were continually in the minds of the maddened conversers—"while high over them the gulls squalled like sorrow driven up." But there are many graces. And it is a triumph for the author that it is a mistake to recount anything she writes without recounting it in her own words. Sensitiveness sponsors defiance; it also sponsors homage to beauty. Strictness of touch and accurate drawing give "the endless turf-miles which ran up a great down into the sky;" "above the thunder a gull repeating itself . . . a little noise laid delicately upon the universal roar of air;" Carston "beautifying himself scrupulously and elaborately as a cat;" Picus' father, a collector with "a theory of the rights of owners to their property"—"prup-property: prupproperty: prupproperty:" Lydia (in London) "in a too short frock and a too tight hair-wave and a too pink make-up, reading the *Romaunt de la Rose*;" and Lydia's husband. "His method was to cut conversation, to interrupt whatever was said, and when he spoke, interrupt himself, so there should never be any continuity. Perfectly sound. . . . Could show them that not being a gentleman was worth something."

Little thicknesses are chipped away. Emphasis of writing and of attitude are equal, and as a change from the periodic sentence a syn-copated rhetoric is pleasant; though emphasis without interruption amounts to no emphasis and one has the feeling that a mixture of code and declarative sentence may be best. There is much to notice, as one proceeds—rejecting, accepting, renovated and attentive. Would a Bostonian say, "I reckon" in the way in which Carston says it? Is flavour contributed or sacrificed by the elegiac curfew chime of current literacy—that is to say, by the interpolated aphorism: "When we were very young;" "meaning of meaning;" "portraits of the artist;" things from the Bible? But to doubt is merely a part of liking, and of feeling. One need not read Mary Butts if one has not a feeling for feeling. Her presentation of what one feels is here as accurate as of what one sees. Scylla "wished the

earth would not suddenly look fragile, as if it was going to start shifting about. . . . There was something wrong with all of them, or with their world. A moment missed, a moment to come. Or not coming. Or either or both. Shove it off on the War; but that did not help." The "trick on Carston was ill-mannered, a little cruel. Also irrelevant." "What he could not have done, [to others] others could do [to him]." It is a compassionate view Miss Butts takes of this informed, formless party; of its "insolent insincerity" and seeming insufficiency—of Clarence smiling back at Picus "as if he had to smile under pain, his own, any one's," listening "till the time came when he could listen no longer, and hid his face, the awful pain rising in him drowning Picus' presence." "There was something in their lives spoiled and inconclusive like the Grail," she says. Some would say nothing in them was like the Grail. But Miss Butts is not palming anything off on us. We may make what we may of it. It is sympathy she offers us in Carston's reply when the vicar wonders "Whether a true picture of the real is shown by our senses alone." "All I can say is that I've never never been so bothered, never behaved so like a skunk, never so nearly fell dead in my tracks till I got down here and began to think about such things. It's unfashionable now, you know—"

MARIANNE MOORE.

CHEKHOV AND GORKI

NESOBRAUNNIYE PISMA (Uncollected Letters). By A. P. Chekhov. Edited by N. K. Piskunov. Comments by L. M. Fridkes. 147 pages. State Press, Moscow and Leningrad. 1 r.

LETTERS OF MAXIM GORKI TO K. S. P. DOROVATOVSKY. Published in Pechat i Revoliutsia (Press and Revolution). Book II. State Press, Moscow and Leningrad.

RARELY have we had the good fortune to have so much of a writer's correspondence preserved, as of Anton Chekhov's; his letters, in the Russian, make six sturdy volumes. And now a small supplementary volume has made its appearance, issued by the State Press. This new collection adds little to our knowledge of Chekhov, but it does emphasize the Chekhov we already knew. We see him, as always, preoccupied with matters relating to writing, good writing. Problems of structure and technique obsess him as they must any writer aspiring to perfect expression. And again we are made aware that this master of the short story had failed in his chief ambition to write a full-fledged novel in the manner of his famous predecessors. Unceasing contemplation of the much-desired, never-to-be-attained goal, caused him not a little heart-burning; and to the end he was to regard his shorter efforts as mere tunings-up preparatory to the creation of a narrative in the longer form.

The present collection of letters makes it quite clear how intensely Chekhov had struggled to pass from miniature painting to full-length canvases. His longer short stories were deliberate attempts in this direction. But he was too honest and exacting a critic not to see that the short story and the novel were distinct arts, employing each a different structure, and that his exertions were doomed to failure, since to achieve length it is not sufficient to string together a number of episodes, however perfectly ex-

pressed. There had to be an inner integrity holding the whole together, and not mere bonds external to the structure.

His long-nursed desire and his failure to achieve it have their own pathos. In a letter written toward the end of 1888 he says: "I should like to write a novel. I have a wonderful subject, and at times I am seized with a terrible desire to sit down and tackle it. But I seem not to have strength enough. I have indeed begun it, and I am afraid to continue." As if to explain his timidity, he goes on: "I haven't yet any political, religious, or philosophical outlook on life; I change my outlook monthly, so shall have to limit myself to descriptions of how my heroes love, marry, beget and bear children, die and speak." Of course, the absence of such an outlook makes his strength as a short-story writer; it gives him that extraordinary detachment which enables him to state facts without a basic idea. At the same time, he is too conscious of Russian literary history not to know that a social or philosophical idea has always served as a basis for the novels of his countrymen; not even Turgenev, celebrated for his detachment as an artist, is quite free from it in his longer work. In the very year he wrote the letter from which I have quoted he had written one of his longest stories, *The Steppe*, and his own opinion of it expressed to the same correspondent is of some pertinence here.

"I have taken on a big thing," he says. "I have already written more than two printer's sheets, and, very likely, shall write another three. . . . For my theme I have taken the steppe. . . . Each separate chapter has its own story, and all the chapters are bound together in close affinity, like five figures in a quadrille. I am trying to give them a common odour and a common tone, which is not so difficult because one person passes through all the chapters. I feel that I have overcome a great deal . . . but, generally speaking, the result is rather strange and in no small measure original. Not being in the habit of writing at length, and from habitual fear of writing anything superfluous, I fall into an extreme. All the pages appear compact . . . the impressions crowd, jostle one another; the pictures, or if you like, flashes, tightly press against one another, and follow in an endless chain, and are therefore tiring. In general, the result is not a picture, but a dry, detailed compendium,

in the nature of a synopsis; instead of an artistic representation of the steppe, which is all of a piece, I offer the reader 'an encyclopaedia of the steppe.'

Words like these carry their own commentary. The rest of the letters are in the usual Chekhovian manner. It is hard to resist quoting from them the following pregnant sentence referring to stage-craft: "One must not have a loaded gun in the scene, if there is no intention of firing it."

Maxim Gorki is not so felicitous a letter-writer as Chekhov, if one is to judge from a group of his letters just published in *Pechat i Revoliutsia*, in connexion with his sixtieth birthday which has recently been celebrated in Soviet Russia. Most of these letters were written about thirty years ago, when Gorki was trying to get his first books published, and they are addressed to his first publishers. They are, for the most part, concerned with business: contracts, translation rights, correction of proofs, and, above all, demands for money, which he confessed slipped out of his hands rather easily. To be sure, they are occasionally punctuated with literary, intimate, or piquant items; for example, when he writes that he wants the return of *One Autumn Night*, "as it is of an autobiographic character," and he desires its inclusion elsewhere; or when he tells of a German woman who had applied to him for authorization to translate his stories into French: "My son has drowned the letter in an unmentionable vessel"; he wonders how he shall get at her address. Again, in several letters he implores his publisher to procure for him a translation of Gibbon: "to possess Gibbon's works as my very own has been long a dream of mine." In reply to a letter from his publisher about terms of contract, Gorki writes: "It may not please you that I refuse to discuss matters of money with you, but God knows, dear Sergey Pavlovitch, it's all the same to me how much money I get: I can spend it without any sense or pleasure, even a 100,000. Believe me: I don't think of you as a publisher, a commercial man, but as a comrade in spirit and in business." Does an Anglo-Saxon publisher on either side of the water ever get a letter like that from one

of his Anglo-Saxon authors? Or like this: "Better not praise me for all sorts of trifles. Man is weak and being liked pleases him. Forgive the moral, but God knows, it is shameful to listen to praise when one is not worth it."

There are a number of references to Foma Gordeev, on which he is hard at work at the time (1889). "This story is furnishing me with not a few happy moments and very many fears and doubts. It should be a broad, comprehensive picture of contemporary life, and at the same time should show the fierce struggle of a healthy energetic man seeking tasks suited to his strength, outlets for his energy. He feels cooped up. Life is crushing him, he sees that there is no place in it for heroes, they are knocked off their feet by petty trifles, like some Hercules who having conquered the serpents is felled by a cloud of midges. Will this come out sufficiently clear and understandable? Tell me how you like the beginning. . . ."

In short, he is possessed by a philosophy and an idea, the germ of all great Russian novels, and he wonders if he can express it in terms of creative realism. Is not this fragment a commentary on Chekhov and his doubts? It was the Russian critic Mikhailovsky who once observed that great men travel in pairs, one complementing the other. And he cited Rousseau and Voltaire, Dickens and Thackeray, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, et cetera. He concluded with the names of Chekhov and Gorki. They are opposites, they complement one another, truth lies somewhere between the two, and the two make Russia.

It is, of course, Gorki, not Chekhov, who is the hero of the existing régime, which, in honour of its favourite's birthday, is preparing a twenty-volume edition of his work as free supplement to any periodical issued by the State Press.

JOHN CURNOS

BRIEFER MENTION

THE DEADLOCK, by V. V. Vieressaev, translated from the Russian by Nina Wissotzky and Camilla Coventry (12mo, 384 pages; Century: \$2) is an outpouring of the mingled pity and pessimism and philosophy inherent in the Russian soul and so tragically made manifest in the Revolution. The story unfolds a swift and vivid sequence of events leading to an inconclusiveness which is itself significant. "Nothing is finished," in the words of one of the workers. "We are not that sort of people." The same deathless striving and the same stoic acceptance are echoed in the pages of **THE LAND OF THE CHILDREN**, by Sergey Gussiev Orenburgsky, translated from the Russian by Nina Nikolawvna Selivanova (8vo, 421 pages; Longmans, Green: \$2.50), a novel of kindred theme but written with a more intimate understanding of the peasant heart. Here is a picture of Russia as "a sea of tears shed by the people" and a vision of the ultimate triumph of a finer international spirit. Both these novels have been sympathetically translated, and their appearance is added proof of the creative ferment which continues to animate the Russian spirit.

THE CLOSED GARDEN, by Julian Green, translated from the French by Henry Longan Stuart (12mo, 398 pages; Harpers: \$2.50) is, according to both French and American critics, a French novel. (The author, American born, wrote it in French.) It has a sort of purity of intention; everything in it leads to the madness of a young girl dominated by the provincialism of French village life and the severity of her father's discipline. Mr Green's inventiveness is not high, the episodes which carry on his theme are a little stale. But the concentration of emotion is effective until, toward the end of the book, it becomes monotonous, a little overdone. Ennui is a deadly enemy of intense emotions.

GREAT FRENCH SHORT STORIES, edited by Lewis Melville and Reginald Hargreaves (8vo, 1066 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3). Without doubt there will be found readers to resent the absence of certain well-known masterpieces in this somewhat arbitrary collection, but these people must remember that there never has been a pie baked that contained all the condiments. The volume manifests once again the surpassing skill displayed by the French in this particular form of literary craft.

THE SON, by Hildur Dixelius, translated from the Swedish by Anna C. Settergren (12mo, 252 pages; Dutton: \$2) disregards all the artifices of the novelist's craft, and discloses its story with an undeviating simplicity and a plodding directness which is not without certain elements of beauty. There is a harmony between the theme and the telling which is inescapable. The narrative is concerned with the humble lives of Swedish villagers a century ago, being in some degree a sequel to *The Minister's Daughter*. One is somewhat puzzled by the translation, not being certain whether its occasional awkwardness is unintentional or deliberately designed to reflect the original.

THE TORCHES FLARE, by Stark Young (12mo, 381 pages; Scribner's: \$2.50) is a distinguished novel, primarily because it has intelligence and beauty. The materials are sometimes commonplace, but the author's appraisal of their values is fresh, and because of the delicacy of verbal style, the fastidiousness of language, scenes as common as a New York gin-party are rendered with vividness not often achieved by the gin and ginger-ale followers of Mr Hemingway. The story of a southern girl who almost without caring becomes a famous actress and, caring deeply, returns south for the solution of a love affair, has a constructional defect. The second part is too long, creates atmosphere without always relating it to theme and character. The novel is not violent, exploits no popular topic of discussion, and is altogether in the tradition of intelligent thinking and writing.

TRIVIAL BREATH, by Elinor Wylie (8vo, 80 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). This collection contains perhaps Miss Wylie's best poems. Her undefeated spirit finds its way with proud and tender elegance in and out of the accomplished metres. If much dissolves from one's mind in the end there is still left for one to ponder over, a durable residue, gallant, ironic, and original.

THE TEMPTATION OF ANTHONY and Other Poems, by Isidor Schneider (12mo, 141 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). One is held by the richness of the confession, "We search like rivers for a level and we find the greater torment of the sea." It is odd that where real strength and beauty are to be found, there should be images in excess of effectiveness, ambiguity, misplaced emphasis, and subversion rather than flight. One seems surrounded by unnecessarily intimate whelplike things: pre-imagist circumlocution, post-Joyce agglutination, the "hath done" style, "allwheres" selfconscious frolic—"a wink and a tear." From persons who have encountered injustice we expect tolerance not reproaches, and magnanimity not defiance. But as Mr Schneider says, "the melancholy of the sun is its question, intent eye, inflaming the sky with its search."

THE SONGS OF PAUL DRESSER, with an introduction by his brother, Theodore Dreiser (large 8vo, 263 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3.50) consists of the words and music of some fifty-eight songs by the composer of *On the Banks of the Wabash*. Most of them are not worth preserving; some are not even as funny as the magic-lantern slide illustrations which accompany them. The Wabash song contains a perfect line of the old ballad school: "Through the sycamores the candle lights are gleaming," and some of the Spanish-American War songs are entertaining. Mr Dreiser's introduction is the same material as that used in one of the sketches in *Twelve Men*; it is not so deeply affecting as it was there.

THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM, by Bernard Shaw (8vo, 463 pages; Brentano's: \$3). In this useful Fabian hand-book no important social problem has been overlooked. Mr Shaw's main cure for the evils that exist is the same that he advocated twenty years ago, namely, equality of income for all alike. He retains throughout, his wit, his adroit aplomb, and his sanguine, nineteenth-century reasonableness.

THE OTHER SIDE, by Struthers Burt (12mo, 329 pages; Scribner's: \$2) will be noted chiefly for its emphasis on two themes. One is the inadequacy of the Menckonian criticism of America; the other is the inapplicability of most European criticism of America. Mr Burt is suave, ironical, witty, and intelligent. He gives ample ground to the assailants of Babbitt and to the critics of America; he uses the *tu quoque* only to indicate the frailty of the method; and he indicates the possession of a standard and a point of view. As an indication that all wit and intelligence are not on the side of the boob-haters, the book is an omen.

AMERICAN INQUISITORS, by Walter Lippmann (12mo, 120 pages; Macmillan: \$1.25) and **LET FREEDOM RING**, by Arthur Garfield Hays (10mo, 341 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50) are complementary volumes in the study of the decline of liberty in America. Mr Hays' book, dealing with six cases in which a fundamental liberty was involved—including the Scopes trial and that of Sacco and Vanzetti—is marred by a jeering tone and by the failure to examine fundamentals. Mr Lippmann lets his irony play in Socratic dialogues which compose part of his book; he seems to care deeply for liberty and to be willing to re-examine all fundamental principles. Mr Hays may stir people to protest against injustice; Mr Lippmann will lead them to enquire what justice is.

DESTINATIONS: A CANVASS of American Literature Since 1900, by Gorham B. Munson (12mo, 218 pages; J. H. Sears: \$2). "The critic," Mr Munson suggests, "must be ambitious." And if by ambitious one may understand ambitious for mankind, then this quality is perhaps Mr Munson's own best claim upon attention. It may be the naïveté of his ambition which makes his essays read occasionally like polemics for the youngest generation of American letters, but it is probably the energy of it that furnishes the motive force of his active and persistent thinking—and thinking, as was pointed out by W. C. Brownell, whom he not too wisely decries, "is after all the chief business of the critic." One may not agree with certain of Mr Munson's judgements. Indeed the question of his correctness can hardly be answered now—except that he lacks the maturity he celebrates in Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt. But there would be difficulty in showing that he does not say distinctly, and with degrees of acuteness, why he likes what he likes. It is regrettable that he has not cleared his text of such offences as the "rationalism of neoclassicism" (p. 13), "magnitudinous" (p. 95), "the reader who must walk in patient labor over the ground the poet has flown by his genius" (p. 170-171).

AMERICAN CRITICISM, by Norman Foerster (8vo, 261 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50). Mr Foerster outlines the contribution to American literary criticism in the writings of Poe, Emerson, Lowell, and Whitman. This he does in order to convince us that modern criticism ignores that integration between past and present which is necessary for any creative estimate of literary composition. One wishes that in his attack on present-day critics he might have been a little more specific and in his illustrations of the past somewhat more terse, that this enlightening study need not be, as it sometimes is, dull.

TRAGEDY IN RELATION TO ARISTOTLE'S POETICS, by F. L. Lucas (12mo, 160 pages; Hogarth Lectures, No. 2, Harcourt, Brace: \$1.25) presents the point of view that "we go to tragedies not in the least to get rid of emotions, but to have them more abundantly; to banquet, not to purge . . . to have the experience, not to use it." And in general the effect of the book is to apply various sorts of diminishment to various other time-inflated dogmas with which the subject of tragedy has been invested, offering in several instances more practicable if less exalted alternatives, based upon candid re-examinations of ancient and modern examples of tragedy. The points of the study are aptly taken, though with perhaps more assurance than is always warrantable, and with occasional defects in urbanity.

PHILOSOPHY TODAY, Essays on Recent Developments in the Field of Philosophy, collected and edited by Edward LeRoy Schaub (12mo, 609 pages; Open Court: \$3.75) is a symposium dealing with the present conclusions and tendencies of thought among philosophers, psychologists, and others in England and the United States, France and Belgium, Switzerland and Germany, and in Russia, Scandinavia, and South America. Thus international in scope it is valuable in that it places the reader in reach, if not in touch, with what has lately been written in certain of the more significant intellectual quarters, on the subjects covered. As a book for the prompt information of the general reader, however, it must seem of somewhat low utility, partly because the complex considerations involved are too cursorily surveyed in space admittedly inadequate, and partly because the writing is too unreservedly by and for specialists. An unexplained omission is that of psychology in English-speaking countries. Even in the United States psychology is not wholly given up to the behaviorists.

PRESENT-DAY RUSSIA, by Ivy Lee (8vo, 204 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). A hurried account of a ten day visit to Russia is not necessarily a magazine of aesthetic ammunition, but is in this instance effective, systematic, and most acceptable to non-excursive herbivora. It is easier to read of the mountain which is Russia than to be the Mohammed that Mr Lee has bravely been. In what is here told of marriage laws, espionage, art, trade relations, the press, and much else, he conveys a lively sense of conditions in the Soviet Utopia.

DEMOCRATIC DISTINCTION IN AMERICA, by W. C. Brownell (12mo, 270 pages; Scribner's: \$2.50). To borrow from his own precise vocabulary, Mr Brownell "creates, differentiates, organizes, develops and enthrones" his critical ideas and his social concepts with a chilling austerity which requires—and intermittently rewards—one's closest application. His findings are those of a mind that vibrates to the rhythms of Matthew Arnold with overtones of Henry James. Briefly, he reports that though "sound at heart and of solid growth—and still growing—the *flowering* of our national spirit has been unduly delayed." But he is, on the whole, not inclined to be pessimistic. "We are ourselves," he says, "far from being a traditionless community. Our heritage in all fields—even the aesthetic—is richer than we realize. And we ought to recover our sense of it, and our respect for it as a binding cementing force of our civilization."

COMMENT

THOUGH tragedy in literature is not literature unless true to life, slayings and sluggings seem counterfeit—as tragedy even felonious—in newspaper reports however based upon fact, if advertised to provoke the same sensations that provoked the crime. Such futile particulars of murder as last January displaced notice of Mr Hardy's death are fallacious compared with the verity of his own sombre fictive presentations, with the spectral scourgings of conscience in Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness*, or the impulsive sagacities of Maxim Gorki's pleasing little inferno, *The Lower Depths*. Aristotle, Gorki, Hardy—all who know the truth underlying appearances—are agreed that "a probable impossibility is to be preferred to a thing improbable and yet possible." Among Maxim Gorki's triumphs of permanent fugacity none perhaps is more vivid than his group of lodgers in the cave-like room with its bunks, anvil and vise, smashed hat-box for making cap-visors, a trouser for cap material, a damaged samovar, a hunk of black bread, and so on: a baron, a market-woman, a cap-maker, a locksmith, an actor, a lodging-house keeper, a pilgrim, a shoemaker, a policeman's uncle, two porters, tramps, supernumeraries, and others. The baron gives Nastiah a blow on the head with the book she is reading—*Disastrous Love*.

"Say! You! 'Disastrous Love!' Wake up!"

Nastiah. "And this is a nobleman!"

Baron. "Do a little bit of sweeping for me—will you?"

The piece has been included in a selection of world tragedies¹ that Dr R. M. Smith has chosen for college students—*Othello*, for instance, *Medea*, *The Cenci*, and *Ghosts*. In conjunction with certain philosophic dramas² in this series—*Job*, *Everyman*, *Prometheus Bound*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, it brings before us as

¹ *Types of World Tragedy*. Edited by Robert Metcalf Smith. 12mo. 667 pages. World Drama Series, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York. \$1.65.

² *Types of Philosophic Drama*. Edited by Robert Metcalf Smith. 12mo. 524 pages. World Drama Series, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York. \$1.65.

was intended, "problems of life, death, and destiny" and strongly supports the conviction that life and death are conceivably more than living and dying. It metamorphoses experience into something beyond epicurean necessities and measures of satisfaction.

News is the reporter's prerogative and in many newspaper pronouncements we recognize the sense of polarity and a becoming aplomb. But the yield of murders and revived murders makes evident to us that for the press, temptation lies in violence. America's capacity for suspicion, and certain illadvised smotherings and burgeonings have many counterparts. In a recent book,¹ the author speaks of having been arrested in Russia from one to three times a day successively for ten days. Nevertheless to condone frailty by comparison with yet greater frailty is not profitable. As Maxim Gorki's pilgrim reiterates, "Man is born to give strength," the immaterial strength to which he refers, being a power very different from that of the rhinoceros or the gorilla such as newspapers when roused to violence consent to employ.

¹ Seeing Russia. By E. M. Newman. Illustrated. 8vo. 396 pages. Funk and Wagnalls Company. \$5.



HORSE. BY ELIE NADELMAN

THE DIAL

OCTOBER 1928

IGOR STRAVINSKY

BY BORIS DE SCHLOEZER

Translated From the French by Ezra Pound

THE FOREWORD

IN 1924 *La Revue Musicale* issued a special Stravinsky number containing among other things an essay by the author of these presents. A reader acquainted with that article might, calling upon the force of memory, observe that the portrait of the composer which I now attempt to assemble differs in certain ways from that presented in 1924. I am not trying to worm out of the discrepancy; I wd. rather insist upon the dissemblance and underline it the more. If there is one thing I regret above another it is that I cannot more completely *renew* the conception of the Stravinskian art, which was at the root of the former essay.

Among the more or less dubious principles of criticism, one appears to me undeniable, to wit: A work of art is inexhaustible for our intelligence, in the same way that a living person is inexhaustible, it constitutes in a sense a sort of "*complexio oppositorum*."

Starting from this principle, sometimes enunciated, more often tacitly admitted, one usually ends with a negation of any dogmatism whatsoever in criticism, and a negation of all "spirit of system" or classification—demanding on the contrary whether it be possible for a man who wants to understand, and to transmit his comprehension, to renounce dogmatizing, and systematizing; to renounce the introduction of an artificial unity, a sort of *Ersatz*, into the work, to replace the living unity, infinitely rich and com-

plex, and full of contradictions which the (analytic?) intelligence¹ cannot get at. We have to *appear* dogmatic, (the savant, and even the experimenter himself cannot escape this); the only corrective one can rake up in such a method is clearly to take count of one's own limits and insufficiencies, and be at any moment ready to abandon any single point of view, the minute one has pushed it to the extreme development possible to it. . . . There is in this a question of tact and also of humility.

At any rate, this is what I am now attempting, surrendering the chronological treatment of Stravinsky's work (that I had observed in 1924) and considering—not as in time—the different characteristic aspects of that work as it now presents itself in ensemble.

RUSSIAN AND EUROPEAN

Interviewed by a Russian journalist, Stravinsky once condemned Scriabine as "a being devoid of all national character. He hasn't a passport. One must have a passport."

Emitted in this categoric tone, which one finds in Stravinsky's music as clearly as in his conversation, this declaration—fairly debatable at first approach—appears in any case very characteristic of Stravinsky himself, especially if one considers that the declaration was very recently made. Since *Pulcinella*, that is from 1918 to the present, Stravinsky has given us a series of works which (with the exception of *Mavra*, where he turns back to Glinka) seem to have nothing especially Russian about them, but which connect rather with XVIIIth-century Italian and German traditions. It is now ten years since the composer abandoned the so vast domain of Russian popular song, from which he had for so long drawn inspiration, and which had been the base of nearly all his work up to *Noces and Renard* (1917).

Nevertheless the author of the *Octuor* and of so many other compositions into which there enters not one ounce of Russian material (Russian, that is, in the sense that Rimsky's *Sadko* is Russian) evidently considers himself, even to-day, an essentially national artist. Before deciding whether this pretension is justified, we must try to solve a question of more general order: How can we determine the *national* character of any musical composition?

¹ The original reads "intelligence," but obviously indicates that of the critic, not intelligence at large.—Translator's note.

In other words: what criterion can we employ to discover whether a given composer is national, and whether another given composer is not?

The first idea springing into one's head is that the national character of a work depends on the nature of the themes employed by the composer; all works wd. be national if nourished by melodies, rhythms, harmonic formulae taken from a given folk-lore, or finding in it their inspiration. But this hypothesis won't work, for on this basis the Quatuor, op. 59 of Beethoven wd. be a russian work, and the *Enfantines* of Moussorgsky wouldn't. Debussy would not have a passport (or what Mr Stravinsky calls one) but one could get such a passport very easily, and composers cd. swap passports when the whim took them; to gain greek nationality, for example, one cd. simply reach into the Bourgauld-Ducoudray grab-bag; and Rimsky's collection wd. permit any one of us to write Russian music . . . We must, evidently, seek for some other formula.

Are we to call a work "national" when it conforms to the musical traditions of the country, or not merely to the musical traditions, but to the country's modes of thinking and feeling, and to its conception of art? This seems nearer the mark. And yet all these things are very vague and inconstant. The moment we try to elucidate this idea, it shows itself to be filled with traps. Admitting that each nation has what you might call its genius, something peculiar to it, and manifest particularly in its musical feeling, and even in its very conception of the sonorous art, and of musical beauty, how are we to compute the specific characteristics of this "genius"? We can't get at them directly; the thing is offered us only in the series of productions which constitute the art of a people, or of a country. France, certainly, possesses its musical traditions; we know them from the compositions of the masters, which seem to display among themselves a certain consanguinity, but this is very indefinite and undefinable. And who moreover guarantees us against the insurgence of some great composer who will turn the lot of these traditions bottom side up? One may be sure that in such a contingency, people will not fail to object to this "new movement," and against this "revolutionary" stuff they will set the "true french tradition"; but . . . since the musician of genius will, in spite of all this, impose himself . . . they will end by annexing him, and by discovering that although he in-

novates, it is "nevertheless undeniable that he" connects with the above mentioned "tradition" and that he is only developing it, and enriching it. Such, in short, was the story of Debussy, at first rejected as "against clear ideas," "contrary to the latin genius," and so forth, and to-day (quite rightly) considered the *french* musician *par excellence*.

I drag in this example not for the vain pleasure of deriding yet again and once more the inconstancy of human opinion, but because I think it brings us to the heart of our problem. The desire to annex a man of genius is the expression not only of a very natural national pride, but also of the idea, or rather presentiment that a man of genius can't help being representative of a country, a nation, and that, in consequence, he *ought* to be connectable in one way or another with his precursors, who have reflected each in his way the spirit of their nation. In this sense one may say that genius has always a passport, that it can't help having one, even if it don't want to; thus reducing Stravinsky's remark to a demand that the artist ought to have genius; or that denying an artist national character one denies his talent; and that to say a given artist has talent and no national character is to emit an antinomy.

If we admit this essentially representative character of the artist, starting with the postulate that this exceptional animal, this phenomenon unique in its kind, is eminently "typical," and that he (the monstrosity) and not the man in the street really incarnates the genius of the race, then our question: By what criterion shall we judge that a composer is national? leaves us but one answer: He is national in proportion to the actual worth of his work. And in the particular case before us, we have to admit *a priori* that Stravinsky's art is profoundly rooted in the soil of Russia, as profoundly as that of Glinka or Moussorgsky.

We shd. try to discover Stravinsky's passport. It will not be easy; for if it is undeniable that the man of genius is necessarily, in one sense, "traditionalist," his very function consists in realizing and bringing to light certain facets of the national spirit which have, up to his day, remained hidden, which have existed perhaps only as latent potential, and which have seemed perhaps wholly alien to that spirit. In Stravinsky's case the element of innovation is particularly noticeable; to such a degree that many, even among his admirers, deny that there is any national character to

his work subsequent to Pulcinella. This seems to me a prize example of that disastrous method which works not from historic facts—here the series of extant musical compositions of the russians—but with general ideas, such as “the slavie soul” or “the latin genius,” and so forth; ideas which aren’t even the product of an *abstraction* but merely a sort of residuum, the lees of divers impressions and images. If we want to find Stravinsky’s passport we shd. keep free of these vague conglomerations, and keep hold of the relations which exist—ought to exist—between his art and the actual works of his predecessors, remaining where possible in the domain of fact.

II

The beginning of Russian music is usually dated from Glinka, and rightly. You may, up to a point, consider him the Peter the Great of Russian musical art. Before the Life for the Czar Russia had a popular music, extremely rich and varied in the different regions but as yet very imperfectly known; the compositions almost exclusively vocal, were the work of amateurs, “dilettantes” as they were then called, and foreign artists, mostly Italians, who came to the Petersburg court.

These dilettantes and even certain Italians, such as Cavos in his opera Ivan Soussanine, had already tried to introduce russian popular songs in the music of court and salon. Glinka’s music differs from that of his predecessors and contemporaries in the very nature of melodies chosen, and also in the method of treatment.

The russian musical folk-lore was a true *terra incognita* at the beginning of the last century. The dilettantes, and naturally even more the foreigners knew nothing of russian songs but the semi-popular stuff that had already felt the influence of occidental musical training. This meant that they knew nothing of the songs essentially modal in nature, and that have a peculiar twist that Europe now knows by way of Rimsky’s transpositions and from those of Borodine and Moussorgsky, but which wd. certainly have shocked and appalled the predecessors of Glinka (had they met them) by their “rough and barbarous” aspect.

But what is more important, these popular episodes had been merely a sort of *hors d’oeuvre*, curiosities more or less exotic, pleasing on that ground, and treated without research or synthesis.

Glinka's glory consists precisely in having made this paradoxical synthesis, which none of his forerunners seems to have dreamed of. His musical gifts, his taste, his technical mastery infinitely superior to that of the "dilettanti" permitted him to take these national songs as basis, and build upon them an art occidental in form, thus conferring a european nationalization on the russian musical genius.

But here one shd. observe an interesting fact, gravid with consequence: Glinka's operas (and naturally his romances in higher degree) out of which all russian music has emerged, the *Life for the Czar*, *Rousslann* and *Ludmila*, generally seem to the foreigner insufficiently russian. The italian elements that one easily notices in them annoy the european, who imagines that the art of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodine, and Moussorgsky constitutes a progress from that of Glinka in that it is purer and more national. Yet the Russian opinion differs entirely from this, and it might seem to have some sort of value. Russians recognized themselves in this music full of italian, french, and german influence. One must not forget that the Five never denied Glinka, they considered themselves as his heirs, and saw *Rousslann* as the masterwork of Russian music.

The error of the westerners is quite explicable, they seek in Russian art precisely its differences from their own; that is to say a certain "barbarous" quality, rough, incult, as you might say, asiatic. This asiatic visage seems to them the true face of Russia. A de-orientalized Russian is no longer, as they see him, a real one. One cannot deny that oriental thought and sensibility have had an effect on russian art, but this art has also its own particular physiognomy, and this also is undeniable. The exotic character which for Europeans clothes certain oriental pages of Rimsky, of Borodine, of Balakireff is also apparent to Russians, and exercises upon them a charm analogous to that felt by the French and Germans.

It is Glinka, moreover, who first *showed* the musical East to the Russians, and who gave it nationalization papers in our policed and learned music; but *Rousslann* and *Ludmila* is based on the *contrast* between the russian world and the asiatic. This contrast is no less apparent, intentional, and systematic in Borodine's *Prince Igor*. The *Steppes of Central Asia*, by the same composer, displays this contrast in still more striking manner with the direct opposition of the soldier's song, clearly diatonic and frankly

rhythmic, to the oriental song with its tickling chromatism and its boneless undulation. Ultimately one finds this contrast even in the *Oiseau de Feu*, the only work in which Stravinsky has offered sacrifice to musical orientalism. Everywhere and always, in russian music since Glinka, the orient is treated as a picturesque element, its characteristics serve to underline still more heavily the specific characteristics of russian song. The complete opposite is true of the occidental elements audible in the works of Glinka and his successors, especially of Tschaikovsky. Obviously in fitting the russian popular melodies to the european musical idiom, with its two modes, its tonal conceptions, its complex forms, its summary and rigid rhythemics, one had to commit violence in certain ways to the original melodic character, and to make certain sacrifices, the importance of which was certainly *not* apparent to Glinka; nevertheless his works, and the whole subsequent development of russian music amply justify the sacrifice made. "Conquerors are not judged" . . . this victory itself being the proof that the way taken by Glinka was the right way. Such a success as the *Life for the Czar*, in which Mozart, italian opera, the french *opéra comique*, and russian song are composed into a living unity, bears witness to the profound affinity existing between russian musical sensibility and european musical culture. In receiving this culture, so peculiar, so conventional, but in its way so complete and finished, the russian musicians did not betray their origins; had it been otherwise they could at most have written nothing more than pastiches, and would have remained merely imitators, more or less clever. What strikes people immediately about Glinka even if they don't much like his art, is the mastery of it which makes him the peer of the western european composers of his time. The Five are his inferiors in this mastery, there is clumsiness in certain of their works, one finds them behaving as pupils at once timid and daring, or as autodidacts.

Stravinsky's case seemed incomprehensible, and the author of the *Symphony for Wind Instruments* seemed devoid of national character to those (still the immense majority) who repeat the old gag about Scratch the Russian you find the Tartar. They think russian art ought, and of necessity, to be violent, bedizened, nostalgic. . . . But any one knowing the good period of russian history, its golden age, from the reign of Alexander 1st through the first years of Nicholas 1st will grasp the true filiation of Stravinsky. This period gives us Glinka, the first of the russian composers, and

also Pushkin, the greatest poet of Russia, whom even Dostoevsky proclaimed the "very incarnation of Russian genius." Pushkin, like Glinka; owes much to occidental masters, he was fed on foreign writing, especially french and english, both Chénier and Byron exercising immense influence on him.

I cite only these two cases, but one might cite many others, works impregnated with this taste, this measure, this equilibrium, or even marked with the classic spirit, qualities, that is, which the west is wont to claim as its own particular property.

These qualities appear likewise in the architecture of Alexander the First, "Empire" triumphing in Petersburg, differing wholly from ancient Moscow, where italian barocco mingles with forms taken from Asia. If we go back still further, beyond the mongol invasions that modified the visage of antique Russia, we will find the same care for a harmony, the same formalist research, the same so called "classic" spirit, in both the russian painting and building, that had drunk in Byzantine traditions, which being Byzantine were, in consequence, hellenistic; these were absorbed, and created admirable works, greatly superior to the debased orientalist product of the Muscovite era.

One must hammer yet again on the fact that: If occidental traditions had been really alien to russian mentality and sensibility, the churches of Pskov and Novgorod, their frescoes, their ikons; and later in Petersburg under Alexander 1st, the apparition of artists like Glinka and Pushkin, or to-day a work like Stravinsky's Oedipe, that is to say all this art of equilibrium, and luminosity, truly Apollonian, would be absolutely inexplicable. It is, on the other hand, perfectly explainable if one admits that the russians are not aliens to the family of occidental races, bred on graeco-roman tradition; and that these artists, going for their schooling to european culture find themselves in their normal habitat, and but take up something rightly their own.

Certainly Moussorgsky's *Enfantines*, and Boris Godounov are essentially russian in the sense that one finds in them certain modes of thought and of sensibility that are common to a number of russian products—musical, poetic, and plastic. Stravinsky's *Renard* is also russian, but so is the *Octuor* and also the *Oedipe*. One observes a relationship between the two latter works (as a group) and the *Renard*, a relationship analogous to that of a muscovite

church, say the cathedral of St Basil the Blest, and the Place du Théâtre in Petersburg the crowning work of their "empire" style, for which a foreigner will care very little, searching as he will be, for the exclusively asiatic. And the relationship wd. be found again between Pushkin's popular tales, Tzar Saltan, for example, and the Dramatic Scenes, such as the Miser Knight, or Mozart and Salieri. When Stravinsky turns toward Bach or Haendel, he follows *one* of the russian traditions, and presents one of the numerous facets of Russia, the same one that Glinka presents in turning to Mozart, or Pushkin when he follows Molière or Tirso de Molina's Guest of Stone; or Tschaikovsky with his flagrant italianisms, Rimsky and Balakireff studying Berlioz and Liszt, or Scriabine following Wagnerian fashions. If Stravinsky declares that the last of these has no passport, it merely means that he denies the musical value of his work; having for it an almost physical repulsion he fails to perceive its russian filiation, its affinity with Tschaikovsky, who emerges directly from Glinka, the common ancestor of them all.

III

This historic excursion should help us to understand the situation of the various musical groups and parties at the moment of Stravinsky's *début*. Stravinsky studied in Petersburg, under Rimsky's direction. Nevertheless his first compositions, Symphonie in E-flat 1905-7, Faun and Shepherdess, a suite for voice and orchestra 1907, Scherzo Fantastique 1908, and various melodies for voice and piano 1908, '10, '11, show scarcely any trace of the Five, whose influence is only later apparent. His first works conform rather to the aesthetic of the Petersburg conservatoire.

Founded by Anton Rubinstein, this conservatory was from its inception the stronghold of academism. The Five, especially Balakireff and Rimsky, conducted a fervid war against it, which wd. seem to have ended in their victory, in so far as the latter became its director, without however changing the curriculum very greatly. When political events ousted him in 1905, he was succeeded by Glazounov, his pupil, the foremost local exponent of eclecticism and academic procedure. In his symphonies (nine of them) in his symphonic poems, the Kremlin, Stenka Razine, et cetera, he,

Glazounov, does not fail to utilize popular melodies and rhythms, in close conjunction with themes and harmonic formulae of the Mendelssohnian, Brahmsian, or Wagnerian order, all with impeccable craftsmanship and a real virtuosity. This neuter style that reduces the works of the masters into formula—this being the very essence of academism—still exercises a great influence on the younger russian composers, who regard it both as “classicism” and as “romanticism” (the latter term being void of meaning). In opposition to the picturesque and descriptive tendencies found in Rimsky and his friends; in opposition also to the exacerbated lyricism of Tschaikovsky and the Moscow school, Glazounov’s academism in Russia was opening, it wd. seem, the way to “pure music” and to an essentially constructive art.

The young Stravinsky passed through this also. And the fact wd. seem highly significant, if one consider the path later taken by our composer. It seems as if, after a long *détour*, Stravinsky in his latest works has come back to, or rediscovered certain conceptions which were perhaps already ripening in his mind at the start, but which he was incapable of realizing at that time, even if he were then conscious of them. The symphony in E-flat is certainly a work of constructive tendencies, the musical thought in it is given up wholly to itself, and has no aim save its own development. But one has only to compare these pages written under the aegis of the Petersburg conservatory, with the Concerto or Piano sonata, to see clearly the abyss between academism and classicism. For the moment I wish merely to indicate that if one will notice the earliest works of Stravinsky and the eclecticism of his start, one will better understand what he is now getting at with his classicism. It might perhaps deserve the ancient phrase: Dream of youth accomplished by the ripe man.

One might say that academism has no party, it is a language *par excellence* cosmopolite, and attains, in art, the ideal held up by Esperanto. Nothing is more like one conservatory than . . . another conservatory: Leipzig or Petersburg, ever the same. Admittedly, every country is eclectic and academic in its own way, but the academicians of all nations are the people of all others best constructed to come to a mutual understanding among themselves; possibly because they have very little to say to each other.

Thus the first works of Stravinsky belong to no national tradition—unless one consider academism itself a tradition, although

it has rather the nature of an ubiquitous malady. Our composer takes contact with his native land, first in the *Fire Bird*, breaking there with eclecticism never thereto to return.

What marks this ballet as national is not, as I see it, the popular turn of melodies treated by the composer, but the filiation, that is to say the *Fire Bird*, connects directly with the picturesque, descriptive, decorative style of Rimsky-Korsakov, particularly with the *Coq d'Or* and *Kastchei the Immortal*. In conformity to the canon of nearly all russo-oriental works it is based on the opposition (ballet subject here as well as the music) between the Russian world and the oriental world, the first is luminous, frank, more or less naïve, trusting in its force, the force of good that will triumph; the other is confused, mysterious, full of snares and temptations, voluptuous, cruel (ancestral memories doubtless of the endless strife with the nomad mongols). After this honorific wreath offered to his teacher, Stravinsky gives up Rimsky and his friends once and for all. The only one of the Five with whom he will still from time to time take contact, is Moussorgsky. The relations between the author of *Boris*, and the author of *Noces* are fairly complex and have never yet, so far as I know, been analysed.

It might nevertheless seem at first sight as if the works of Stravinsky's second period, based on popular themes or inspired by folklore, i. e., from *Petrushka* to *Renard*, merely continue the development of the art of the Five. But this is not in the least so. Immediately after the *Fire Bird* the composer takes quite a new path, he commits the revolutionary act in the sense that he introduces into Russian music, conceptions and a style which had been up till that moment absolutely foreign to it. Stravinsky's evolution surprises us usually by its brusque turns, the sudden leaps, which seem to the spectator like so many breaks with the past; but never has the dissolution of continuity been so complete as between the *Fire Bird* and *Petrushka*. One may easily go wrong at this point, for the melodic matter treated by the composer seems to establish a sort of connecting link between the "russian" works of Stravinsky and those of his immediate predecessors. But one cannot too often repeat that: in art it is the way a thing is made to function that counts. From *Petrushka* onward this way differs fundamentally from the procedures of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodine, and Balakireff.

In trying to trace the national origins of Stravinsky's art the

principal difficulty is not offered by Oedipe, but by Petrushka. To judge how greatly this ballet of Stravinsky's, and the works of his that follow it, differ from those of the Five, one need but compare the Fair scene in Rimsky's *The Word of the City of Kitège* with the first scene of Petrushka. We will analyse that difference later. For the moment suffice it to note clearly that Russian life, speaking in a general way: rites, games, beliefs, customs, costumes, special modes of thought and sensation, is and are musically realized by Stravinsky in an absolutely new and original fashion, as far removed from the picturesque and descriptive tendencies of Rimsky-Korsakov as from what one might call the "humanism" of Moussorgsky.

IV

I have tried to prove that Stravinsky's "europeanism" doesn't prevent his being profoundly national; a russian in being "occidental" merely obeys one of the basic traditions of his race, and of his country. But looking closely, we find that the rôle of the composer of the *Sacre* in occidental musical life is very different from that which his russian predecessors had to be content with. The forms used by Glinka, Balakireff, and their colleagues were, more or less, copies of foreign models; face to face with european masters, the russian composers, with the exception of Moussorgsky, appeared usually as pupils, even when, as in Rimsky's case, they in their turn, gave lessons in instrumentation. Stravinsky's position is quite different; he is a creator of european forms, taking "form" in its largest sense. Borodine's innovations in european music come, as one might say, from the outside, and are not found strictly in the line of development of western music; but Stravinsky, especially during these latter years, definitely enters that line.

Stravinsky has assimilated european musical culture, he is penetrated with its laws, with its traditions. If he modifies them, if he imposes a new orientation, he innovates not as a foreigner introducing new ideas and new procedures, but as an autochthonous entity, modifying the spirit of his *milieu* from within. This revolutionary is the child of the land where he works, where he creates, transforming musical conceptions which belong both to it and to him. The new style which he introduces in Europe is by no means

a product or "function" of the matter that he has treated for a decade—i. e., Russian song. Neither the polyphony of Stravinsky's art, nor its tonal structure, nor its harmonic complexity, nor its syncopated rhythms have come from Russia: all these characteristics mark the conclusion and the renewal of certain purely occidental traditions.

The Russian Stravinsky, author of the *Sacre* and of *Oedipe* is the most european, the most essentially occidental of all extant musicians, if these terms "european" and "occidental" signify a certain type of artistic culture.

Yet music is not an "international language," and to-day, in any case, it is not evolving as a sort of "sonorous fraternity." Any one who doubts this statement, might have convinced himself, especially after the war when generous efforts were made to create a sort of musical "Internationale." Such at any rate was the aim of the S. I. M. C.—*Société internationale de musique contemporaine*. In the festivals organized by this society musicians of different countries learned, it is true, to know and respect each other, but they learned also their oppositions, and took clearer cognizance of their grounds for aesthetic difference, and they returned to their homes with a much keener sense of belonging to clearly determined national groups.

One of the characteristics of our epoch is the almost exaggerated development of national schools in music, each trying to affirm its own complete independence. It wd. be a delusion to swallow the idea that this exacerbated particularism can be surmounted by the creation of a cosmopolitan idiom in which all the differences wd. be mutually compensated and neutralized. It wd. scarcely be desirable, and it wd. be in any case beyond possibility. If Stravinsky has a place above these differences, if he seems to us to-day the most notable representative of the european spirit in music, it is, not because he is international, but, contrarily, because he is essentially national. His universality comes from his genius, or paraphrasing his own formula: the passport takes him over the frontiers.

TWO POEMS

BY JAMES DALY

MARINE

intricate slow shuddering lights conquer
the fog lo they are stars and there far out
see that phantasmal glimmer called a ship emerge
with the moon
bravely

O on such a night
pilgrimage ends
in quiet brief as the sea's
brief as the blood's quiet by this quiet sea

THE UNVANQUISHED

What matter now if the dawn bring
Only true moaning of the tide
That all life's flood is but a small
Sleep whose ebbing dream is brief?
I turn to that sleep with joy,
Having learned in its scant dreaming
The image of your pride—
A pride that will know no fall,
Blood having made its wing;
A pride that none shall destroy,
For its wing is grief.

FOUR CHAPTERS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY KWEI CHEN

MY BIRTH

I WAS born and brought up in a small village in the interior of China. My parents were Confucian by birth. Confucius' teachings had been the principle of life of the Chinese people for more than two thousand years before my father and mother were born, before my father's and my mother's fathers were born, and before their fathers were born.

On the third day after my birth, as I was told years after, my fond paternal grandfather came early in the morning to my father, and said: "Here I have it . . . I have it . . . the name of the boy." Carefully he took from his pocket a sheet of red paper on which he had written in his exquisite calligraphy: "Newly born male child given at Third Morning its name, Ching-yü." Instantly my father took the paper and pasted it on the family shrine. The two characters (慶餘) of my name mean Abundance of Joy. They are from a famous saying in *The Book of History*: "The family that has accumulated good deeds will reap abundance of joy from its descendants." When I entered high school, I adopted by myself the character Kwei (逵) for it was the custom in China that a student should be called by another name in school than that used at home. Kwei means literally highway; it connotes straightforwardness, a quality for which I have chosen, with varying success, to strive.

Since in China as elsewhere there are successful men, there are also men who are jealous of these. I happened to be born when my parents were in many ways prosperous. In celebrating my birth they used more firecrackers than usual, and the sound of joy stirred the jealous nature of a man in the neigh-

NOTE: In the following sketches I do not attempt to give a complete account of my life. Inasmuch as these episodes are of my actual experience, however, they illustrate a Chinese view of life which may be regarded as authentic, if not authoritative. If my readers are not misinformed about China through my words, I shall be content.

bourhood. A young cousin of my mother ran to her and told her that he heard the man say: "Some day the boy will disgrace the family." My mother was very indignant at first, but laughed afterwards. She replied to her cousin: "Go and tell the man that I said my boy will be respected by all the good members of the Chen family." Here, as a rule, my mother, as she told me this story, would pause for a moment, staring at me gravely though encouragingly, and then conclude in the usual way: "Now you are growing and will be a man before long. It is for you yourself to make up your mind whether or not you will be the kind of son your mother has always hoped you would be. I shall not be able to watch you throughout your life!"

MY COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

In former days before a boy began his schooling, there was a ceremony upon the occasion of his Formal Commencement of Learning. His parents took it very seriously, being careful to see that their boy should have a good start. Usually the most virtuous and most learned man among the relatives or friends of the family was asked to be the teacher on this occasion. Afterward the man became the First Teacher of the boy, standing as a pattern for the boy's life. Should the boy later distinguish himself in the province either of literature or state affairs, the townspeople would like to say: "Indeed 'Without clouds in the sky there can be no rain!' He had for his First Teacher So-and-so, the most virtuous and most learned man that ever lived in our county."

Now I was to leave my mother-teacher and to be sent to a regular school. Following the ancient custom my parents planned a Commencement ceremony for me. They requested my mother's own uncle to be my First Teacher. He was a retired magistrate. When in office he had ruled his people so wisely that crimes were not committed for months at a time. It was said that within his county people did not need to bar their outer doors at night; nor would any of them take possession of what they found on the streets. They loved their magistrate for his great kindness and respected him for his strictness in enforcing the laws. On the day when he left his office the old ones leaning on the young, fathers leading their children, formed a long procession to wish him peace and safety on his way home. At the head of the procession was

the huge Ten-Thousand-Names-Umbrella of bright red satin embroidered with four large characters: Magistrate's Heart Like Parent's. It was a gift to their magistrate from all the people of the county. Their names were written in tiny script on the thirty or more white satin strips hanging from the umbrella. The golden tassels gleamed while the people shouted: "Long live the Parent-Magistrate!" Thus my mother's uncle was one of the very few who enjoyed the highest reverence in our county. Fortunate is the boy whose parents can invite such a celebrated man for his First Teacher!

My parents also took care that the day selected for the ceremony was when the Star of Literature was on duty in Heaven. Unlike the Greek Muses, the Chinese Patron of Letters is conceived as a sour-looking old man, though his appearance is not at all in conformity with his character for he is good and righteous. It is he that sees who deserve to pass the Examinations each year, and one with an ambition toward letters would indeed be unwise should he not beseech the acquaintance and protection of this venerable Star.

On the evening preceding the ceremony my mother's uncle arrived. He walked the ten miles from his home. My parents wanted to have him come in a sedan-chair, but he insisted that "an easy walk is a chariot."

At the dinner-table he and my father conversed a great deal while they leisurely sipped old wine from small white porcelain cups. They conversed mainly of the reading of books and on being a man. My grand-uncle's voice rang like the bell in a Confucian temple which gives a tone both of peace and virility; surely his virtue was like the wine of which the quality increases with its age.

Finally rice was brought in bowls for all, and bean-cake soup was served.

"Ah!" exclaimed our retired magistrate, smiling, "bean-cake soup! It has the pastoral simplicity! The late Imperial Examiner's father used to hang on the wall of his modest library this little poem of his own composition:

" 'Guests come,
They are asked to dine
On salted eggs and bean-cakes.

Please forget the simple fare,
The friendship of good men is
As pure water.' ”

Before we left the table,

“Indeed the ancients do not deceive us,” said my grand-uncle, closing the conversation. “They say: ‘To read extensively and to be able to write well are second in importance for a scholar and a gentleman.’ What is the real value of a man, if it is not measured by the integrity of his character and the nobleness of his mind?”

The next morning everyone in the house wore a reserved smile. Soon after breakfast two scarlet lacquer trays painted with gold were brought to the tiger-legged table in the middle of the men’s parlour. In one tray were four brushes, ten ink-bricks, twenty silver dollars, and an old book. These were for my grand-uncle. The brushes were the best of their kind, ivory-tipped and each carved with four characters: White Crane Crossing Sky, symbolic of the beauty and freedom of a creative mind. The ink-bricks were from far-away Hwei-chow, and were very old, for the Chinese believe that the longer the ink-bricks are preserved, the purer will be their fragrance, even as men become wiser when they are older. The twenty silver dollars were sewed on to a red silk-covered pasteboard in four rows. The old book was of the rarest edition of the Sung dynasty (960-1276 A.D.) in the famous Butterfly-style binding—when the book is open, its leaves resemble the two wings of a butterfly. On the other tray were two brushes, an ink-grindstone, two ink-bricks, a small pitcher of light blue porcelain half filled with clean water, and a roll of thin writing-paper; all of them were wrapped in cheerful red. These were the gifts from my parents for me, and were to be used in this ceremony.

In the upper part of this parlour was the sanctuary of Confucius for whom we had erected a tablet inscribed in gold on a red ground. The inscription read: “The most perfect, the most sage Ancient Master Confucius—Sacred Place.” Before the tablet were a pair of large candles in their bronze holders and a triple-legged brazen censer shining with a carved unicorn. The unicorn is the symbol of a Sage, who is the true friend of mankind, though men, unable to understand him, think him inauspicious because he is different from them.

Second Elder-Brother lighted the candles and the incense, and came to my father's study to announce that everything was ready. Presently my grand-uncle, my father, and two of his cousins walked toward the parlour, and I timidly followed. We were all in blue gowns and black jackets—such was the costume of the Chinese scholar. In the parlour my grand-uncle stood on the west side, and the rest of us on the east, facing him. Then at a sign from my father I stepped upon the mat before the tablet of Confucius. In the court-yard my brother kindled a long chain of firecrackers, while I bowed, swung up and down my folded hands, kotowed, and put more incense into the censer. I did these things nervously, lest I make a mistake or forget what I had been told to do. When I came back to my place, my father, my uncles, and I bowed and swung up and down our folded hands before my grand-uncle who meantime returned us the courtesy in the same way. Now my father led me nearer to my grand-uncle, and once more I bowed, swung up and down my folded hands, and kotowed, this time to my First Teacher. Thereafter my teacher and I sat down at the table and my father and his cousins withdrew.

My teacher took a sheet of paper and wrote on it the twenty-four characters which constituted the first lesson for all schoolboys of that time. In Chinese they were in rhymed verse, of which the English adaptation is as follows:

“The great man,
Kon-fu-tze,
Educated three thousand—
Seventy became sages.
They all loved high-mindedness,
And knew the laws of propriety.
You, little student,
Never cease to learn!”

He taught me first how to read these characters one by one, then how to write them. Finally he told me to copy the lesson twice with my own hand, and went to my father's study.

“Congratulations!” I heard him say. “The literary atmosphere in your Chen clan is yet abundant. The younger generation shows conspicuously the gift which has been the happy bequest of your family for many scores of years. In the course of time we shall

see that the young ones are not at all unworthy of their fathers and grandfathers."

Genial conversation, with plentiful tea, followed the ceremony. I felt I was once more newly born in a world, the glorious world of learning with Confucius as my father.

I GO TO SCHOOL

Within a fortnight after my commencement ceremony, I was in a private school about a mile from home. Carrying my books I went to school every morning and returned home before dusk. Thus I could be near my mother, and in the meantime have schooling regularly. It was early autumn, the rice was ripe, and who can withhold his joy on seeing the bright yellow grains—the pure, bright gold—glittering in the morning rays? Yes, they are gold, but more than gold to the farmers. They are their work, their hope, their laughter, their tears. They are their life! My heart melted with the joy of the reapers who were already singing high their

“. . . humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day”

as I passed them early in the morning. I was grateful to them too, for I knew the work was hard although they seemed to enjoy it. I remembered well the couplet my mother had taught me:

“Know that each grain in your bowl
Means toil and pain.”

My grandmother's nurse had also told me to regard rice as a sacred object. She said that once upon a time a young man saw a grain of cooked rice on the floor, and picked it up and ate it. Later he won the First Place in the Palace Examination, and married the Emperor's beautiful daughter!

Throughout the season I walked on that road. I watched the first harvest begin, and saw the last one finished. Throughout the season I noticed none but cheerful faces; even when they went home in the evening after a long day's toil, they did not appear weary. “The poor, ignorant Chinese farmers!” The good Euro-

pean and American missionaries find themselves eloquent on the subject when talking to their pious countrymen. Yes, poor the Chinese farmers are, and ignorant. But as for the soul, theirs, it seems to me, is the most highly blessed by Heaven.

For myself, I was not without occupation. In the morning I played with the dewdrops on the leaves of the wild plants along the country road; in the evening I listened to the sunset melodies of the birds and insects, and tried to harmonize them with my own untutored songs when no one was near me. In three months I became very familiar with the large stones in the middle of the road. I had counted them many times, and remembered the particular hues of some for a long time. Ah! the rising sun, the evening-red clouds, the happy reapers. . . . Was it not yesterday that I saw them all?

The next year I was again in the country school when the villagers were singing:

“Having passed the Half of the First Moon,
Last year’s dead weeds now we burn.
Men and boys start their ploughing and schooling,
Women and girls their spinning and weaving.”

I had now come to live there, hoping that I could save the time which I had spent with nature and my mother, for more books. It was my mother’s idea. Although I did not like it, I took pride in obeying her and in being always willing to learn more. But the first month away from home and from my mother was very trying. For the rigidity in the old method of Chinese schools was mortal enemy to a child’s nature. Many a time I had determined to flee back to my mother—to have but a moment’s glimpse of her, which would immediately cure the hunger of my soul. . . . But I never could gather sufficient courage to execute my determination, for to flee from school was too degrading for me, and I knew that my mother would scold me for doing that, however much she might like to see me. To permit her boy to neglect his school work or to encourage him to think of anything but books would be as bad as to allow him to gamble. I had heard my mother say so.

Gradually I learned to submit to Fate, finding no other way advisable.

The daily program recurs now vividly to my mind. Every morning (there was no Sunday then) as the day was breaking, our teacher would come into the class-room and give us each a new lesson. We were to study it and read it aloud, then recite it, one by one, standing beside our teacher but facing in the opposite direction. Each was to finish his lesson before he could have breakfast.

One morning my mind happened to have gone home to my longed-for mother; I besought her to ignore the severe tradition and take me home just for a little while—a day or so. . . . Here, of course, in my mind I had said much more than I would have dared to say in her presence. While I was half dreaming,

“Study!” our teacher called out, slapping the table; “don’t you want breakfast?” It was for me.

I went back and forth several times from my seat to our teacher’s to recite my lesson, but could not succeed in a satisfactory manner. At length all but me had left the room for breakfast and I was alone with the teacher. He became more impatient; I, more fearful.

“Concentrate your mind on the lesson,” he said as he left the room, “and be ready to recite it when I come back.”

Oh, what humiliation! The empty room pricked the boy’s heart. The whole world was dark and cruel to him. Yet, he could not hate his teacher because he had been taught that he should always revere him; he could not hate his parents because he knew that they were doing all for his good; he could not hate himself because he saw no wrong on his part except his desire to see his mother. He then upbraided the Great Maker who had brought him into this weary world without his previous consent.

How could I study! My heart was burning as a wild fire; my head aching; tears bursting forth. I did not know what the teacher might do to me, but I was determined to receive whatever punishment he might inflict. My Second Elder-Brother was the first to return. He said nothing, but joined me in weeping. Then our teacher came back. I paid no attention to him and with my hands on the desk cushioning my head, wept anew.

“What is the matter with you to-day?” my teacher asked in a half angry tone. “Has a blue-eyed, red-bearded man carried off your mind?”

"Don't think you are here studying for me!" he continued, puffing at his long bamboo-root pipe, ivory-mouthed, with a shining brass bowl. "I don't care whether or not you study if you prefer to be ignorant. Nor would your parents care much, if you were not their son."

The teacher's words sounded reasonable. "Yes," thought I, "a good student must model after a good farmer. He goes barefooted working in the flooded fields, while the water is yet very cold. On an extremely hot summer day, he works, out in his field in the burning heat, while the rest of us stay inside the house. Yes, the farmer works hard and steadily toward a definite end. When autumn comes; when the green tassels are turning into pure, bright gold, he watches them as a lover would gaze at his beloved—the more he gazes at her the more beautiful she becomes. He is delighted. He is rewarded. Yes, I must devote myself to studying, as a farmer to working, so I too shall reap. Were I like a lazy man, a do-nothing—Lo! haven't I seen beggars wander hither and thither, homeless and forlorn, like withered leaves blown by the west wind, tasting dust? Should I, then, disgrace myself, disgrace my mother, disgrace the whole family?" I felt my ears and cheeks burn, and my heart beat violently. The contrast was as distinct as that between day and night. Gradually my heart was softened.

As I was wondering how I should change my attitude without injuring my pride, our teacher's wife entered the room. She begged her husband to excuse me from the whole morning's duty. When he gave his consent, she caught me by my shoulder, saying: "You are to play chess with me after breakfast. Let us go."

According to our daily program the first thing after breakfast was a review of the lessons of the preceding five days, and then the lessons of the five days preceding those. At eleven we would have tea and home-made cookies. The rest of the morning was to be devoted to cultivating calligraphy. In the afternoon our work began with one more new lesson for the day. Then we were to punctuate by ourselves the comments on the Classics, while reading them in silence. As the sun was sinking toward the horizon we opened our books of poetry and chanted our favourite verses, our bodies swaying and our hearts expanding.

About half an hour before dusk, the class was dismissed. My brother and I would stand by the door and watch the road leading toward home: perhaps a messenger was coming from our mother!

The evening was wholly for essay reading. The essays were of historical criticism and philosophical interpretation. Occasionally our teacher would begin a discourse, and *How to Live a Manly Life* took the place of a mother's lullaby. Finally everyone departed to sweet slumber.

THE FIVE CYPRESSES

Because only few people, a selected few, ever went to my Eleventh Uncle, and because of the quietness of the place and the orderly life the family lived, his house was called by the villagers *The Secular Temple*. From a distance one could see in the front yard five large cypress-trees forming a screen for the house. The cypress is well liked by the Chinese for its shape which is that of a Chinese brush, the symbol of creativeness, as well as for its being ever green. My uncle had named his house *The Five Cypresses*, alluding to his five children, two sons and three daughters, after the example of the poet Tao Chien of the Chin dynasty (265-419 A. D.), who had before his house five willows and called himself *Mr Five Willows*.

When one approached the *Great Door*, one read on the right: *Literature to Serve the Kingdom*; on the left: *Honesty to Bequeath to Descendants*. The characters were inscribed in black on two crimson boards symmetrically hung on the two sides of the door. They were written by a distant relative of ours who, according to the rumour, passed his *Examinations of the Province* by his calligraphy, because the *Examiner* liked his penmanship better than his composition. I heard people say that my grand-uncle, my *First Teacher* since my *Commencement ceremony*, actually saw this comment of the *Chief Examiner* made at the end of our distant relative's composition: "His composition is commonplace, but in calligraphy he is exalted above all." In a way it is maddening to have such a reputation, but our relative was compensated by a handsome income of two or three thousand dollars a year which he earned by writing inscriptions for the stores in the city.

The Five Cypresses was built in the year when I was born. Before that my *Eleventh Uncle* had lived under the same roof with his three brothers and nine cousins in the house built by my great grandfather. As the members of the family increased, there was an increasing call for tact and patience from each in order to main-

tain harmony among them. My Eleventh Aunt, his wife, was of a very sensitive temperament. Though she always appeared to be pleasant in the presence of her relatives, she often shed tears to my mother in whom alone she confided. She had not learned how to please people she said, and she did not wish to please those who had ill-used her merely because she was one of the younger sisters-in-law. My mother would console her, saying: "The best protection from the Lengthy-tongued is to be deaf. Your mind will not be disturbed when you hear nothing, our wise men say. If I happen to hear people talk about me, I walk away as soon as I can. I pursue the right path, I sit on the correct seat, I say to myself: what is there in me that may not be talked about? The public is a mirror; it reflects clearly everything. They who accuse us falsely will be laughed at by the good." But my aunt did not suffer any the less from certain woman members in the family. It was her nature, she told my mother pathetically.

After I was born, my Eleventh Uncle came to my father one day and said: "Fourth Elder-Brother, I have decided to build a new house some half mile from here. Now you have three sons. You will need more rooms sooner or later. Do you not wish to have my portion of this house? . . . You know I can no longer remain and be happy. . . ." He was depressed. My father knew, of course, the cause. He agreed to buy from him in case he really wanted to leave the house.

My Eleventh Uncle and his family moved to their new house, The Five Cypresses, on the New Year's Eve of that year. There they had lived happily for almost ten years when suddenly my aunt died. In order to divert his attention from his deep grief, my father asked him if he would not take my Second Elder-Brother and me as his pupils. He consented. My brother and I went to live in his house as soon as the Half of the First Moon had passed.

The last time I had been there was for my aunt's funeral. The signs of mourning were still there. On the two crimson boards at the Great Door were pasted several strips of white paper. My uncle's daughters braided their hair with white thread; his sons wore white shoes. For according to the Confucian code the Chinese sons and daughters were required to wear the signs of mourning for their parents for two years. The first seven weeks after their parent's death, the sons were not allowed either to shave or to cut

their hair, and they were not to go out of their own house. During their two years' mourning, they could not marry, nor could they take the Examinations. In case they were officials, they had to resign; they could return to their post only with some special excuse. Although the Republic has abandoned by law these ancient customs, they are still in practice among the conservatives though in a modified manner.

My uncle's study and library occupied the rear part of his house, and the room for my brother and me was adjacent. All the windows faced the flower-garden. Above the entrance of the study were four characters inscribed in bright green on a horizontal yellow board: "Only the Learned Enter." Opposite it, above the door opening to the library there was a similar inscription in different characters: "Books Are Here Revered." On the two doors of a specially made bookcase a couplet was carved in relief with raised gold on a red ground:

"Enveloping the Entire Universe;
Preserving Past and Present."

Of all the paintings my uncle valued a piece by Cheng Benchou most highly. It was one of Rock and Bamboos, the favourite theme of the painter. There was on it also a quatrain of the artist's own composition written in his peculiar calligraphy. The English of the poem reads:

"Grey, grey there stands the Solitary Rock;
Straight, aspiring, the several Bamboos.
Their beauty no one is to know;
They dwell in a remote vale, concealed."

There was a clear-water pond in my uncle's garden. The garden had also a name. It was The Reflection of Red Clouds. My uncle called himself the Master of the Reflection of Red Clouds Garden, his pseudonym for his poetical works.

The name of the garden was inscribed on the garden wall, each of the three characters as large as one yard square. Under the inscription was a sketch by my uncle himself, expressing his view of nature and life in relation to the place of the garden in a home. He ended it with a couplet:

“In the empty rooms—leisure and deep stillness;
In the wood and garden—no worldly passions.”

There were other couplets in large characters on the garden walls. I have always remembered the one written by my mother's brother in the bird-like script:

“For the beauty of the flowers, in spring early to rise;
In love with the moon, in autumn late to bed.”

EVENING BELLS

BY FANG LING-YU

Translated From the Chinese by Kwei Chen

The evening bells are ringing . . .
Words of divine talk . . .
For whom?

The moon is round and bright . . .
But the Garden of Renown
Stands silent.

Wind blows . . .
Leaves fall at my feet . . .

In my light coat
I walk in the cold . . .

Alone . . .
Above my head—
Tears shining . . .

POETRY AND CULTURE

BY WITTER BYNNER

THE Navajo Indians are supposed to be able, with concerted incantation, to make corn or cactus grow by the minute instead of by the month. Around the seedling they hold a screen of blankets, while they sing their spell. When they move away, the seedling is a few inches high. And so it goes, spell by spell, until the plant or flower is complete. I have seen their ritual and am a disbeliever. This kind of magic is for children, young or old, so credulous of miracle in the outside world that they will always lend themselves to the sorcerer. Poetry is another kind of magic. A true poet is supposed to make a flower of life grow in the heart. It may be a flower of good, it may be a flower of evil. It may be the morning-glory, it may be the deadly nightshade. The true poets are the priests of the inner miracle, and I have seen their ritual, and I believe. There is all the difference in the world between these flowers in the heart and the flowers of paper or wax, or even metal, which are fabricated by the craftsman. Dust gathers fast on the flowers of the craftsman, but the inner flowers are fadeless, and breathe their own clarity.

Like most of us who have been schooled in this western world, I was afforded in my youth a study of culture flowing mainly from two sources, the Greek and the Hebrew. I had come to feel that poetic literature must contain streams from one or the other of these two sources: on the one hand the clean objective symmetrical athletic beauty of the Greek, on the other hand the turgid subjective distorted elaborated beauty of the Hebrew. Like my fellow students, I had been offered nothing of the literatures of the Far East. I am still doubtful that I could ever feel any real adherence to the ornate and entranced literature of India; but I have come by accident into as close touch with Chinese poetry as a westerner is able to come without a knowledge of the Chinese tongue. And I feel with conviction, that in the matter of poetry I have begun to receive a new, finer, and deeper education than ever came to me from the Hebrew or the Greek.

Centuries ago, cultivated Chinese had reached the intellectual saturation which has tired the mind of the modern European. The Chinese gentleman knew the ancient folk-songs, compiled by Confucius. He knew also, all about him, a profoundly rich civilization, a more poised and particularized sophistication than we westerners have yet attained. Through the Asian centuries, everyone has written verse. In fact, from early imperial days down to these even worse disordered days of the republic, the sense of poetry has lasted among the Chinese people as a natural and solacing part of life. Whether or not the individual may form or enjoy his poetry in metrical shape, he is constantly aware of the kinship between the beauty of the world and the beauty of imaginative phrase. On any Chinese mountain-climb toward a temple, rock after rock with its terse and suggestive inscription will bear witness to this temper. So will the street-cries of the peddlers, or the names of the tea-houses, and, on many hilltops and lakesides, the casual but reverent jottings of this or that anonymous appreciator of natural beauty. When Whitman said, "To have great poets there must be great audiences too," he must have had in the back of his mind enriched generations like the Elizabethan in England—or like almost any generation in China. In those great audiences, each man, to the limit of his capacity and with natural ease, was a poet.

There is a simple secret in these generations. It is told in a pamphlet written by a venerable Chinese scholar still living in Peking, and still with infinite passion adhering to the precepts of his ancestors, and with infinite patience, acceptably expressed by the way among foreigners, adhering to his conviction that foreigners impair the health of China. His name is Ku Hung-ming. His pamphlet, written in English, one of the five languages of which he is master, is called *The Spirit of the Chinese People*. He sees the reason for the eternal youth of the Chinese people in the fact that the average Chinese has managed to maintain within himself the head of a man and the heart of a child. On this brief he is absorbingly interesting, explaining the continuance of Chinese culture, the only ancient culture still racially existent. My immediate concern with his brief is more special. I detect in it something that he does not specify: a reason for the continuance of poetry alive among his people, and, more than that, the best reason I

know for the existence of poetry anywhere among cultured races.

Music may be the most intimate of the arts, I am not sure. Except for simple melodies, music is beyond the reach of any individual who is not a technician. Painting and sculpture are obviously arts expressing themselves in single given objects, which, although they may be copied and so circulated, are for the most part accessible only to the privileged, or to those who make pilgrimages. Poetry, more than any other of the arts, may be carried about by a man either in his own remembering heart, or else in compact and easily available printed form. It belongs to any one. It is of all the arts the closest to a man; and it will so continue to be, in spite of the apparent shocks given it by the noises of modern commerce and science and jazz.

It has been an age-old custom in China that poets, even the best of them, should devote their earlier years to some form of public service. Century after century, Chinese poems reflect this deep devotion of their authors to the good of the state—their unwavering allegiance to righteousness, even when it meant demotion or exile or death. In these modern western times, there have been periods when poetry has seemed to be a candle-lit and closeted occupation. I venture to surmise that poetry written in that sort of atmosphere grows with time less and less valid, less and less noticed. As a matter of fact, the outstanding English poets have been acutely concerned with the happiness of their fellow-men, and have given themselves warmly to public causes in which they believed. Similarly, present-day poets in America, with amazingly few exceptions, have clustered to the defence of noble souls at bay like Eugene Debs, or have been quick to protest against doubtful justice as in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. This sort of zeal may not result in poetry of a high order immediately connected with the specific cause; but there is no question that, but for this bravery, this heat on behalf of man's better nature, there would not be in the hearts of the poets so fine a crucible for their more personal alchemies.

Let me say a general word as to the characteristic method of the best Chinese poetry. I am not referring to the technical tricks by which a Chinese poet makes his words balanced and melodious. The discovery which has largely undone my previous convictions as to the way of writing poetry has rather to do with

use of substance than with turns of expression. Mencius said long ago, in reference to the Odes collected by Confucius, "Those who explain the Odes, must not insist on one term so as to do violence to a sentence, nor on a sentence so as to do violence to the general scope. They must try with their thoughts to meet that scope, and then they will apprehend it." In the poetry of the west we are accustomed to let our appreciative minds accept with joy this or that passage in a poem—to prefer the occasional glitter of a jewel to the straight light of the sun. The Chinese poet seldom lets any portion of what he is saying unbalance the entirety. Moreover, with the exception of a particular class of writing—adulatory verse written for the court—Chinese poetry rarely trespasses beyond the bounds of actuality. Whereas western poets will take actualities as points of departure for exaggeration or fantasy, or else as shadows of contrast against dreams of unreality, the great Chinese poets accept the world exactly as they find it in all its terms, and with profound simplicity find therein sufficient solace. Even in phraseology they seldom talk about one thing in terms of another, but are able enough and sure enough as artists to make the ultimately exact terms become the beautiful terms. If a metaphor is used, it is a metaphor directly relating to the theme, not something borrowed from the ends of the earth. The metaphor must be concurrent with the action or flow of the poem; not merely superinduced, but an integral part both of the scene and the emotion.

Wordsworth of our poets comes closest to the Chinese; but their poetry cleaves even nearer to nature. They perform the miracle of identifying the wonder of beauty with common sense. Or rather, they prove that the simplest common sense, the most salutary, and the most nearly universal, is the sense of the beauty of nature, quickened and yet sobered by the wistful warmth of human friendship.

For our taste, used as we are to the operatic in poetry, the substance of Chinese poems seems often mild or even trivial; but if we will be honest with ourselves and with our appreciation of what is lastingly important, we will find these very same poems to be momentous details in the immense patience of beauty. They are the heart of an intimate letter. They bring the true, the beautiful, the everlasting, into simple easy touch with the human, the homely, and the immediate. And I predict that future western poets will

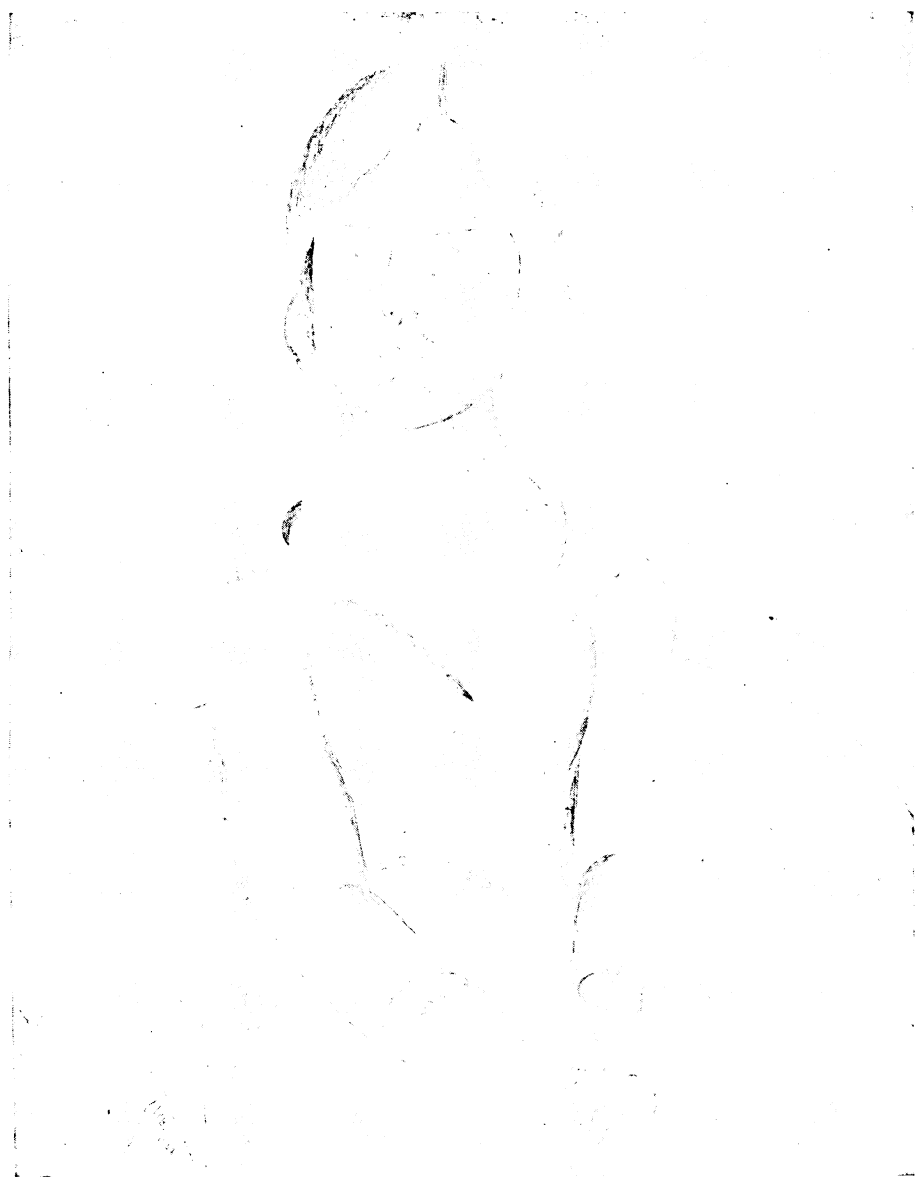
go to school with the masters of the T'ang Dynasty, as well as with the masters of the Golden Age of Greece, or with the Hebrew prophets, or with the English dramatists or romanticists—to learn how best may be expressed, for themselves and others, that passionate patience which is the core of life.

It is not necessary that culture bring about the death of poetry, as it did in the Rome of Virgil. The cynics are wrong who see in our future no place for an art which belongs, they say, to the childhood of the race. The head of a man and the heart of a child working together as in the Chinese have made possible with one race, and may make possible with any race, even in the thick of the most intricate culture, the continuance of the purest poetry.

I WROTE UPON YOUR HEART

BY HELEN BAKER PARKER

I wrote upon your heart; but now I write no more.
 My folded hands are ivory upon my breast.
 In yellowed satin, with the little waist I wore
 So long ago, is this my quiet body dressed.
 I wrote my name upon your heart. Now I am done.
 My word shall know effacement in a little while.
 Red moons will not remind you, or the rising sun,
 And you will cease to wonder at my graven smile.
 I smile—Years after I am scattered to the light
 Your heart, washed by the acid of some bitter day,
 Will shed the feeble lines another one will write
 And I, forgotten, shall appear. I shall not stay;
 Others will write. But sometimes, underneath, my name
 Will stir, though I am ashes, wrapping you in flame.



PORTRAIT OF A GIRL. BY FRANK DOBSON

LIZZIE BALIZE

BY LYLE SAXON

EVERY negro for five miles around Yucca plantation knew her, and when folks saw her striding along the road in her starched grey calico dress and black sunbonnet they would say: "Yond' go Lizzie Balize." But if she carried a basket covered with a white cloth, they would add: "Aie yie! Somebody sick 'roun yeah."

She nursed white and black alike; it was her business, and she could cure hysterical women just by a brew of herbs—her own concoction; but the women couldn't forgive her for curing them; it's awesome to be screaming and falling in fits—people coming from miles to see—but nobody pays attention if you are only vomiting, and that's what happened if Lizzie gave you her brew. Women didn't send for Lizzie Balize unless they were mighty sick.

She had little to do with the other negroes and hardly ever went to church. When she did go she sat up stiff and stern; she never shouted or clapped her hands or patted her feet like the others. She was too proud—though she was as black as anybody, and ugly too. Her cheeks were spattered with white scars like rose petals and she had a trick of passing her hand over her face as though she were trying to brush them away. Folks said they were the marks of smallpox.

She lived with her son on the bank of Cane River, about half a mile from the crossroads store. The cabin stood back from the road and to get to it you had to walk a long way between the furrows. She had lived there twenty years, ever since she came first to the plantation, when Bull was nothing but a baby. Even old Aunt Dicey, washwoman for the white folks at the big-house, couldn't find out anything about her and if Aunt Dicey couldn't there was no use asking about her. But she hadn't been at Cane River a year before folks got to know her as a sick nurse and granny doctor. In spite of that she had few friends. She just didn't mix with folks; that was all there was to it.

Bull had grown to be a big lazy boy, as black as the back of the chimney, slow-moving and good-natured. It was his burly body that gave him the name and he was proud of it. "Dat ole boy is sho' built lak a bull!" the other boys said when they went in swimming with him in the late afternoon.

But in spite of his fine body, Bull didn't care for women. True, he tripped up the girls in the furrows—as the others did—and sometimes would go drinking and sporting on Saturday night. But usually you would find him in the evening, lying on the floor of Lizzie's gallery in the shadow of the gourd-vine—halfway naked, halfway asleep, slapping at the mosquitoes that whined over him. And Lizzie just spoiled him to death, folks said, waiting on him hand and foot, feeding him like a fattenin' pig. Just the same, even old Aunt Dicey granted he was willing enough behind the plough, and the little strip of land that Lizzie rented on shares from Mr Guy, the owner of Yucca Plantation, grew as much cotton as anybody's acres.

Sometimes Aunt Dicey would come over in the evenings and smoke her pipe in the moonlight on Lizzie Balize' gallery, while Bull lolled on the floor humming to himself.

"Funny 'e don' fool wid wimmin mo'," Aunt Dicey ventured. As she rocked back and forth and plied her black-bordered palmetto fan, Lizzie Balize answered: "Shucks, ole woman, Bull ain't got wimmin on his mind."

It was true enough. Some of the nigger boys were just like animals. On Saturday nights you could hear them howling and yelling in the fields, and you could hear the girls squealing. It was scandalous and a shame, Aunt Dicey said, ignoring the fact that when she was a young wench she had screeched as loud as any.

Lizzie passed her black hand over the scars as though to brush them away: "It don't bother me none," she said. She rocked back and forth and plied her fan against the mosquitoes. "Yo' know, Dicey, the ole folks haz got a sayin'—Ah wonder ef yo' knows it?—Dey say dat de 'ooman what looks for nassiness smells nasty. Better watch out!"

Dicey hoisted herself up from her chair and put her cold pipe into her apron pocket: "How come yo' sass a 'ooman two times as ole as yo'?" she snorted. Then when she had eased her heavy body down from step to step, "It's dese heah shut-mouth, lazy, stay-

at-home mens yo' got ter watch! Yo' jus' wait till de right gal come dis way and see how Bull goin' tuh behave! Ah've knowed sons smash down da' own mammies w'en dey got love-crazy." And she walked to the gate grumbling to herself.

Lizzie sat rocking in the moonlight, moving her fan back and forth and looking down at Bull as he snored there beside her.

One night as Bull lay sleeping and Lizzie was slapping at mosquitoes, a woman on horseback rode up. She looked so pale in the moonlight Lizzie thought she was a white woman, but she saw that the horse belonged to her neighbour, old John Javilee. No mistaking that calico pony. The girl was sitting sidewise on a man's saddle and she was wearing a shiny light dress and a Cape jasmine stuck back of her ear. When she reached the gate she said:

"Mis' Lizzie, kin Ah come in a minute?"

Lizzie answered with the usual greeting to a visitor on horseback: "Yas'm, sho' kin. Won't yo' git down?"

The girl slipped from the saddle and trailed up the walk, careless-like and slow. The lamplight was shining through the open door and Lizzie could see who she was. It was that bad one, Nita, who had made so much trouble two years ago that the white owner of the plantation had run her off the place. Now she was back again, wearing a silk dress, too. Lizzie's voice hardened:

"W'at yo' want comin' heah dis time er night?"

The girl didn't answer, but came slowly up the steps, dragging her pink dress after her. She almost stepped on Bull who lay sprawled in the moonlight with his mouth open. She drew back with a cry, and Bull sat up, rubbing his eyes and staring at her.

But the girl's business was conducted inside the cabin with Lizzie. Women's business. Finally she climbed on her horse and rode away. When Lizzie came back to her chair, Bull began to ask questions.

Lizzie was not communicative, though bitter in her accusations against the girl. "Jus' a low-down sport-woman," she said. "Dat's all Nita is."

"Is she name Nita . . . ? Dat's pretty."

That made Lizzie angry. She told Bull all the bad things she had ever known about Nita, and she was in a position to know. Nita had fooled with white men at the store; it had made Mr

Guy so angry he had sent her packing off the place. Everybody knew it. She was just plain worthless.

Afterwards she was sorry she had said so much. It was white folks' talk and she knew Bull didn't care what Nita had been.

He lay awake a long time that night; and lying beyond the thin board partition, Lizzie couldn't sleep either.

Well, it wasn't a week before Bull and Nita were the talk of all the black men who sat along the store gallery at night, smoking their pipes and gazing at the moon as it hung like a red-hot stove lid above Cane River. It was crazy weather and Bull was a crazy man. He slept all day and never went into the field. And he was gone all night.

When Lizzie spoke to him he didn't answer; he just sat looking out across the cotton rows at the heat waves rising like steam from a pot. His eyes were bloodshot and his mouth hung open like a conjured man's. Nita had taught him to love her; he was possessed, as folks get possessed with devils.

You can't draw water from the well if you sit all day on the bucket, and it wasn't long before Mr Guy's overseer rode over to see why Bull wasn't ploughing in the cotton-field. Lizzie said he was sick and the white man rode away only half satisfied.

That week Nita came to live in Lizzie's cabin. The black men on the store gallery didn't know what to make of it. And wouldn't have believed it, if they hadn't seen Nita sitting there alongside of Lizzie Balize in the moonlight.

And it wasn't a month before trouble began. Nita was always wanting things, dresses and shoes and hats, and if Bull wouldn't give them to her, other men would. Lizzie had saved a little money; it was sewed in her mattress, and Nita found out about it. She begged Bull to get it for her. Lizzie finally gave in. In another week there were only some empty bottles and a sleazy red silk dress to show for it.

And daily Nita grew more restless. She would sit dreaming in the doorway, looking out along the cotton rows: "What's de matter, honey?" Bull would say, following her gaze, and she would answer: "Seems tuh me everything looks so pitiful-like out heah."

"Yas, it do," he would agree sullenly.

"It ain't never looked pitiful to yo' befo', Bull!" Lizzie said, bridling.

Sometimes there were quarrels in the light of the smoky lamp, and once in defending Nita, Bull sent Lizzie sprawling on the floor, just as Aunt Dicey had said he would; and crying bitterly his mother crept into bed without another word.

Lizzie was glad when Mr Guy sent for her to come over at night and sit with his wife; she had been having malaria, and there was nobody to wait on her. It was easy and the pay was fair. Bull and Nita were left to themselves.

That was just what Nita wanted, and within a few days she had persuaded Bull to leave Cane River and go to the saw-mill seven miles away to work for cash. Mr Guy told Lizzie that she was a fool to let her son leave the share-land in the middle of the season. Bull and Lizzie had promised to take care of these acres for a year, but Lizzie could do nothing and finally Mr Guy had to take the land and they got nothing for their six months' work. Bull knew what it would mean if he left—but he went, and Nita and Lizzie were left alone in the cabin. Bull would come home Saturday night and leave before daylight Monday morning.

And it wasn't a week before Nita was slipping other men into Lizzie's cabin at night, while Lizzie was away. The black men gathered on the store gallery, wondered what Lizzie would do when she found it out; she had always been so straight-laced and respectable. Bull was a fool, tricked by a yellow woman. Aie yie! They had seen things happen before. But they felt ashamed for Lizzie, all ignorant of things. When she passed by on her way to Mr Guy's that night she heard a smothered guffaw from the black men lolling on the gallery and guessed what it meant. She felt so low and broke-down she could hardly walk past. And all night—her last on duty—by the ill white woman, she brooded. She wanted to die. She had lived too long. Jesus and Bull had turned their backs on her. In her mind these two were somehow connected; she had worshipped them both.

As she was going home, shortly after sunrise, her money in her apron pocket, Aunt Dicey called to her and told her what Nita had been doing. Lizzie didn't say anything. She just stood looking out over the cotton-field. Finally, when the old woman

stopped talking, Lizzie passed her hand over her scars and without a word went stumbling down the path between the furrows.

Nita lay across Lizzie's bed, asleep. There was a burnt hole in the sheet and a cigar butt on the floor beside the bed. The cabin reeked of smoke and perfume, but it was the cigar butt that roused Lizzie's anger. She sprang at the sleeping girl and shook her:

"Yo' low-down sport-woman!" she shouted, "Ah'll tell Bull an' he'll kill yo'!"

Nita, only half awake, screamed: "Tell 'im! Tell 'im, an' see ef I keer! An' see ef'n he'll believe yo'!"

Knowing which Bull would believe, Lizzie turned away baffled, and after a while began to clean the cabin. Hate hung like a curtain between them.

It was Wednesday and Bull wouldn't be back till Saturday night. Lizzie wondered how she was going to stand it till he came, but Nita seemed to have no cares. The shadow of the well measured four o'clock as she walked along between the furrows to the gate, and looked off down the road. By and by she came back and stood in the doorway, staring at Lizzie who sat listless in a corner.

"'Tain't no use in us sittin' heah fussin' till Saddy night," Nita said lazily, "so Ah'm goin' off. Ah'll be back befo' Bull gits heah. He done promise me ten dollars. We goin' tuh have us a time!"

There was a sound of buggy wheels in the road and a man whistled sharply. Nita turned and waved her hand, then looked back at Lizzie and said: "Well—good-bye."

Lizzie did not raise her head, but sat mumbling to herself.

She was alone in the cabin. The smoky lamp threw its ring of light on the white ceiling, but the corners of the room were dark. She was not doing anything. Her hands, usually busy, hung limp between her knees. Little white moths flew round the lamp; mosquitoes whined. It was airless, and from the trees by the door the odour of rotten figs came in. Sickly weather.

She was alone now; strangely enough she did not care. It was finished. But there was the misery in her head; thinking wouldn't let her rest. Studying out things was too much. She had tried praying but it did no good. God had forgotten her.

Hour after hour she sat listening to the night sounds; a cow lowing somewhere beyond the river, and a night bird repeating its mournful call. Then suddenly she shivered; from close by came the chitter of a screech-owl. The signs all against her. Just now a dirt-dauber's nest had fallen from the ceiling on her bed. That meant death. Aunt Dicey's dog had howled; and now this screech-owl. It was too much. Lizzie walked to the door. She could see two birds in the chinaball tree, and shaking her apron at them cried: "Shoo! Shoo!" There was a flutter of wings and they were gone—two streaks against the sky.

She looked out over the cotton stalks massed in the moonlight. Here and there a blossom hung pale against the night, and far off a rooster crowed—faint and clear. It was nearly midnight. Why couldn't she sleep? What was happening out there?

She went inside again, closed the door, and began, heavily, to undress. She lay down and looked up at the smoky lamp; she could hear the mosquitoes. Then at the sound of the gate and of fumbling on the porch, she raised herself and called:

"Who dat?"

There was a muttering outside, something slumped against the door, and she knew it was Bull; but when she saw his face she reeled.

"Oh Jesus . . ."

His face was covered with whitish blisters. It was smallpox. Somehow she got him to bed—moaning and delirious; he kept asking over and over: "Wha's Nita?"

She undressed him, on her own bed, and began putting wet cloths on him. His head was hot, and his tongue thick. Somehow he had walked the seven miles back to the cabin. Until dawn she tried one homely remedy after another, but by the time the sun rose she knew that she must have a doctor.

As soon as she heard the first shouts in the field, of men ploughing, she went outside and called. A black man left his mule and she asked him to ask Mr Guy at the store to telephone for the doctor to come; she had the money and could pay him. But the man must have guessed something, because it was not much after ten when Mr Guy's overseer rode up: "Bull!" he called, "Answer me, you Goddamned nigger!" Lizzie went outside to explain: "Bull's mighty sick."

"Tell that nigger to put his head out of the window," the overseer shouted, cursing her.

Bull was moaning and turning in bed but Lizzie helped him to sit up, and the overseer looked through the window.

"Jesus Christ!" He drove spurs into the horse and his face was pale as he galloped away.

Lizzie knew the word would travel up and down Cane River, as it had travelled five years ago when a whole family had been wiped out. She had nursed them and she knew how the thing terrified everybody, white and black. She wondered if the doctor would come. He did come, late that afternoon—not into the room though. He left his buggy in the lane and walked up through the cotton-field. He talked with her and finally came as far as the door. He left some ointment and quinine and told her what to do. She must make a smudge to keep out mosquitoes and flies and she must keep Bull from scratching at himself. She went into the yard and cut down the clothes-line and tied Bull's hands to the bed.

Bull kept moaning—the same thing over and over. "Nita . . . Nita . . ." His tongue was black and swollen and Lizzie would draw cool water from the well every half hour and give him little sips of it. She thought Aunt Dicey might come over to help; she had nursed her so many times; but at dusk when she heard the rumble of wheels and looked up, she saw Aunt Dicey sitting on a trunk in a wagon while a half grown boy whipped the slow old horse. She was moving and didn't even look toward Lizzie's house.

Lizzie realized that nobody was going to help her. It was just Lizzie and Old Death wrestling for Bull. Well, she had a lot of strength left. Maybe she could pull him through.

He was worse in the night and kept moaning for ice. Early in the morning she started up the road, her money clutched in her hand. The black men on the store gallery dispersed as she came. Some ran down the road, and some mounted and rode off. Before she got to the store, the clerk came out and waved her back, calling: "Don't you come here! Stop!"

She stood ankle-deep in the dust and said: "Please suh, could yo' spare me a piece o' ice? I kin pay for it—wid cash money."

He hesitated, then said: "Stay where you are."

Presently he came out and put some ice on the edge of the gallery and asked: "Anything else you want, Lizzie?"

She named some groceries and they were placed alongside the ice, in an old sack. When the man had retreated Lizzie picked up the package, laid the money on the edge of the gallery, and went away. From down the road as she looked back she saw the clerk pouring disinfectant on the money.

Bull grew worse and in his delirium was calling Nita. As his strength ebbed his passion for her seemed to grow. That night he never stopped moaning. Lizzie longed to kill the girl. It was Nita. She had forced Bull to go to the saw-mill to work so he could buy silk dresses for her. She had fooled him and now when he was brought low, she was gone.

By Saturday Lizzie knew Bull was going to die.

“Oh Gawd, Oh Jesus, lissen,” she prayed, “. . . jus’ a minute, Jesus . . . jus’ a minute. Oh Jesus . . . lemme git Nita for ’im . . . lemme git ’er, so he can die easy.”

A buggy rattled by in the road. Was it the doctor? It was the middle of the night. Had Jesus heard her prayer and sent Nita back? She went outside. The buggy had stopped and Nita was climbing out. She swayed drunkenly between the cotton rows, her silk dress trailing out behind her. Lizzie went to meet her. There was some good in the woman, then. She had come back to nurse Bull. “Oh Nita,” she said, “Yo’ is jus’ in time.”

Nita stood swaying there in the moonlight: “What’ yo’ mean, I is jus’ in time? Is Bull inside?” and she laughed a little defiantly.

She did not know then what Bull had. In some strange way Nita was the only person that didn’t know. Lizzie, sick with weariness, could not think it out.

“Wha—wha—is ’e sick? Wha’s matter wid ’im?” Nita stopped beside a yellow rose-bush. “Is ’e got some catchin’ sickness?”

They stepped over the threshold. Bull lay on his back, his breath coming in gasps. The odour of smallpox filled the room, but a card stuck against the lamp shaded the bed. Nita went close, staggering a little, to look. “Bull . . .” she said, “it’s me, honey. . . . It’s yo’ Nita.”

Lizzie turned the lamp so it shone full on his face. For a moment Nita gazed transfixed, then sprang to the door and with a bound was down the walk. But Lizzie was after her, running

with her head forward like an animal. She caught her as she was fumbling with the gate, grabbed her round the waist, and without a word the two women wrestled. But the thin young mulatto was no match for the negro woman; together they fell to the ground—Lizzie's fingers closing around Nita's throat, pressing harder.

When the other had stopped struggling Lizzie carried her into the house, untied Bull's wrists, and with the cord tied Nita down beside him. She stood holding the oil lamp and looking at them as they lay there. Nita was regaining her senses, moaning now and turning her head from side to side. She was like a crazy woman when she realized what had happened. Then she quieted down, cried, prayed and begged Lizzie to let her up, promising to stay and nurse Bull, to work for Lizzie—anything. But Lizzie was deaf to her. She did the work, nursed Bull and fed Nita—even lengthened the rope so the girl could sit on the edge of the bed.

She had a few dollars left and every second day she went to the store to get groceries and ice, and walked home again. Folks gave her a wide berth. On the ninth day she called to the clerk that Bull was dead and that he'd better tell Mr Guy to send men to bury him.

They came that afternoon and dug a grave near the front steps in Lizzie's little flower-garden. They were old men, scarred with smallpox, and were not afraid. When they had dug the hole they went inside and helped Lizzie put Bull's body in the rough pine box they had brought. It was then they saw Nita lying in Lizzie's bed, covered with white sores. No one knew she had come back.

Lizzie nursed her as she had nursed Bull and she got better, but her face was covered with red scars.

One day she was able to sit up, and Lizzie pulled a chair out on the narrow gallery for her so she could look past the flower-garden, past the cotton-field to the road where folks were going by. Nita had asked for a mirror, so Lizzie left her while she went to the store to get it. It would cost a dollar.



STILL-LIFE. BY MARKO VUKOVIĆ

ENGLISH APHORISMS

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

II

IN one of his note-books Coleridge wrote, "I should like to know how far the delight I feel, and have always felt, in adages and aphorisms of universal or very extensive application is a general or common feeling with men, or a peculiarity of my own mind." The delight of our great English critic has apparently not been shared by his countrymen, since, as I have said, our rich store of aphorisms has been so slightly regarded. It is indeed difficult to regard as anything but preposterous Lord Morley's statement that "with the exception of Bacon, we possess no writer of apophthegms of the first order." Bacon, however, if by no means the greatest, is at least the earliest of our English aphorists. He not only collected in his apophthegms a large number of other people's sayings, and also wrote in his *De Auxiliis* many Latin maxims, but he embodied as well in his essays many saws and aphoristic sentences. His essays have been called a mosaic of aphorisms, and many sentences of this kind are to be found in his *Advancement of Learning*. In these aphorisms of Bacon we already find two characteristics which mark the English as contrasted with the French aphorism. The French aphorism is often the expression of the bitterest pessimism. Many of the sayings of La Rochefoucauld, of Pascal, and above all of Chamfort, seem to be written with sulphuric acid and to scorch the page on which we read them. Vitriolic sayings of this kind are, however, rare in English, and are replaced by a kind of practical and prosaic worldliness which is almost more distasteful than the profoundest disillusion. Bacon's maxims are for the most part concerned with the means of personal success in courts and politics—good advice, as Blake said of them, 'for Satan's Kingdom,' and they smack of what Bacon himself called the wisdom of rats and foxes. He is concerned with the externals of character and conduct, rather than with an analysis of the inner motives of human

nature; and in his preoccupation with worldly success, he has been followed by many other English aphorists, from Halifax and Chesterfield to the prudential saws and shopkeeping maxims of Benjamin Franklin. We find also now and then in Bacon's sayings another and contrasted quality, which Sainte-Beuve, in his essay on Chesterfield, noted as a characteristic of English aphorists—an element of imagination and poetry in their wit. Although for the most part dry, jejune, sententious, Bacon's phrases flash like jewels now and then; 'Revenge is a Kind of Wild Justice,' he writes; 'Faces are but a Gallery of Pictures: and Talk but a tinkling Cymbal, where there is no Love.' Bacon's sentences, however, being written before La Rochefoucauld had found for the aphorism its perfect form—before it had become the custom to polish phrases and print them by themselves—are as a rule somewhat wordy, and lack the conciseness and finish of the aphorism at its best. They possess however a merit which is one of the greatest merits in this way of writing, they are authentically his own; 'Reading maketh a full Man, Conference a ready Man; and Writing an exact Man;' 'Wives are young Men's Mistresses, Companions for middle Age, and old Men's Nurses;' these pithy, familiar sayings bear the indisputable mark of the mint-master who has coined them.

The next English aphorist after Bacon is another great lawyer, John Selden, and his *Table Talk* is well known for its sound good sense, its homely English wit and humour. It is also, like Bacon's *Essays*, a treasure-house of worldly wisdom, and presents a very vivid picture of the habits and thought and modes of expression of a learned, hard-headed, liberal-minded, but rather scornful English lawyer. Selden, more than any English aphorist, expresses that contempt for women which is often a characteristic of this class of writers, who, since they have all been men, have naturally, as Dr Johnson said, put the blame on women for 'making the world miserable.' It is right, this legal authority tells us, that a man who will have a wife should meet her bills, 'for he that will keep a Monkey, 'tis fit he should pay for the glasses she breaks.'

Misogyny could hardly be carried further; but aphorisms of this unamiable class are not numerous in English, and Mrs Poyser, our great female aphorist of fiction, answered these masculine libels on her sex with pungent adequacy, when she remarked,

“I’m not denyin’ the women are foolish; God Almighty made ’em to match the men.”

Selden did not write his aphorisms; they are sayings noted down by his secretary from his talk. Conversation is indeed one of the main sources of the aphorist; and it is generally when minds clash in talk together that these sparks are struck out—that these witty sayings find their perfected expression. Many collections of sayings have been made from the table-talk of famous persons, of Luther, of Goethe, of Johnson, and Coleridge; and more than one Greek or Chinese sage has, by one single remark, achieved immortal fame. La Rochefoucauld’s maxims were polished in Madame de Sablé’s salon, and some of Pascal’s also; Rivarol and Chamfort were famous talkers; and Joubert’s *Pensées* were largely suggested by his conversations with Fontanes and Chateaubriand, and come to us clarified by these brilliant minds and filtered through them. The wealth indeed of aphorisms in French, and their shining quality, is largely due to the supremacy in talk of that social nation, and their deliberate cultivation of the arts of human intercourse. The great flood of delightful talk which has flowed for so many centuries through the salons and palaces of France has left behind it on the shores of time a bright sediment of imperishable sayings—of shining pebbles and iridescent shells rounded and polished by those waves.

Our next great English aphorist, George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, was one of the most famous conversationalists of his age. Lord Halifax, who was born in 1633, was a great statesman, in whom was embodied that moderation, that political good sense which is John Bull’s most admirable characteristic; but in whom, as his editor, Sir Walter Raleigh, has said, we enjoy the rare delight of finding John Bull a wit. Lord Halifax’s wit, which alarmed his contemporaries and seemed to them a fault of character, may have injured his influence in practical affairs, but we cannot but be grateful for it, as it gives a brilliant quality to his writings, and again and again flashes out in his aphorisms. These aphorisms, which were written between 1690 and 1695, after La Rochefoucauld had started the fashion for this way of writing, but which were not published till long after Halifax’s death, form the most notable collection of aphorisms which we possess in English, our nearest parallel to the French collections of this kind. Into these maxims—there are more than six hundred of them—

Halifax distilled the essence of his thought and observation. In his political maxims, in all he says of kings and ministers of parliaments and mobs and parties, he tells us, as his editor has pointed out, many things which other politicians know but never say; and taking us behind the scenes, he shows us the wires which move the bedizened puppets that play their parts upon that illustrious scene.

'State-business,' he tells us, 'is a cruel Trade; Good nature is a Bungler in it.' 'It is the Fools and Knaves that make the Wheels of the World turn. *They are the World*; those few who have Sense or Honesty sneak up and down single, but never go in Herds.' 'The Government of the World is a great thing,' we are assured by one who played a notable part in it; but, he adds, 'a very coarse one, too, compared with the fineness of Speculative Knowledge.'

To his Political Aphorisms Halifax added a large number of 'Moral Thoughts and Reflections' treating without illusion, but without malice, most of the stock subjects of the moral aphorist, Man and his passions, his youth and age, his knavery and self-deception and his folly.

Halifax, like other authors who possess the aphoristic turn of thought and expression, often enriches with aphorisms his essays and other compositions. His *Advice to a Daughter*, written before her marriage for his daughter Elizabeth, who afterwards became the mother of another famous aphorist, the Earl of Chesterfield, is full of wise and disillusioned sentences, which picture the world as it is, and offer no great hopes of happiness. Lady Elizabeth's husband, he seems to suggest, will very likely be a spendthrift, or a libertine or drunkard; but the best she can do is to turn a blind eye to his failings, rejoicing indeed that he is not without them, 'for a Husband without faults is a dangerous Observer.' As to her children, she was to have as strict a guard on herself among them, as if she were among her enemies; a wise remark, as Sir Walter Raleigh says, but not one, he adds, which makes home seem a cheerful place.

The more one reads Halifax's writings, the more one is impressed by their interest and importance. His *Character of Charles II* is a masterpiece of portraiture, equal to anything in Saint-Simon's memoirs; his *Character of a Trimmer* is full of the profoundest political wisdom; and the aphorisms scattered throughout his essays are, with his *Thoughts and Reflections*, among the best in our own or any language. They are sometimes poetic in

their expression and enriched by shining images: 'There is a Smell in our Native Earth, better than all the Perfumes of the East'; 'Esteem to Virtue is like a cherishing air to Plants and Flowers which maketh them blow and prosper'; our frailties 'pull our Rage by the sleeve, and whisper Gentleness to us in our Censures'—in phrases like these we find that imaginative quality which Sainte-Beuve noted as characteristically English.

It is, however, their subtlety of thought, their profundity of observation, more than their phrasing, which impresses most the reader of Halifax's *Thoughts and Reflections*. We note certain sayings which strike us at the first perusal, and when we read the book again, others and still others, begin to gleam on the page and darkly shine, like little wells in whose depths some truth is half apparent.

We are told by a contemporary that many of Lord Halifax's reflections occurred to him suddenly in conversation with his friends; we cannot but ask ourselves, however, who of his contemporaries were worthy to be the friends and intellectual companions of this spiritual son of Montaigne, who was nourished on his essays, and who appears to us a somewhat lonely figure amid the world of the Restoration, in the politics of which, nevertheless, he played a part of such importance, although, both as a statesman and an author, his name is barely remembered now.

The name of the next great aphorist on our list, Halifax's grandson, Lord Chesterfield, has not been obscured by Time; yet Time, by tarnishing it, has treated it with even more injustice. To be distinguished and forgotten—or rather to have one's name live on, as Halifax's has lived, in the memory of a few distinguished spirits—this is a much more kindly fate than to glare before the public in the lime-light which a series of unlucky incidents has cast upon the figure of Lord Chesterfield. The most damaging, in the eyes of posterity, of these incidents, is the famous clash or encounter of this piece of delicate porcelain, with one of the weightiest vessels and hugest iron pots that ever swam in English waters. Dr Johnson's letter to the patron who had failed him, full of immoderate, barely-deserved, but immortal indignation, would suffice to sink any reputation; and another giant of our literature, Charles Dickens, has in his character, or caricature of 'Sir John Chester' dealt, with almost equal force and unfairness, another blow at this accomplished but un-English figure. The incident, however, which most shocked Lord Chesterfield's contem-

poraries, was the publication after his death of his letters to his son. The son was illegitimate, and the letters intimate; designed though they were for a particular character and a special purpose—to prepare namely a shy and awkward boy, born out of wedlock, for the diplomatic service, and teach him the good manners indispensable in that career—they were read as if they contained everything Lord Chesterfield regarded as necessary to form a complete system of moral education for the young.

Few things are more shocking to those who practise the arts of success than the frank description of those arts: that one should practise what one preaches is generally agreed, but any one who has the indiscretion to preach what both he and his hearers practise must always incur—as Lord Chesterfield has incurred—the gravest moral reprobation. Lord Chesterfield was a man of the world, and avowed himself as such; like his grandfather he had played an illustrious part in public affairs, and had also preserved, what so few who play such parts preserve, an uninjured reputation. His knowledge of men and affairs, of the causes of success and failure, were the fruit of much experience and profound observation. As the grandfather had wished to do for Chesterfield's mother, so the grandson, with an impulse apparently hereditary in the family, desired to do for his son, to impart to him the acquired knowledge of a lifetime, and supply, by his own experience, the boy's ignorance of the world. This world, which the old nobleman knew so well, the world he had mastered and enjoyed, and which, having retired from it, he viewed with complete disillusion, was that limited but lucid world of eighteenth-century society which reached its most shining perfection in France, whence its illumination spread over the rest of Europe. Of this finished culture, this achieved civilization, this rational epicurean mastery of the art of living, Lord Chesterfield was the most accomplished and finished representative in England. He was as much at home in Paris as he was in London; Voltaire and Montesquieu were his friends, as well as the diplomatists and great ladies of the Paris salons; he shared the rational enthusiasms of the French thinkers, as well as the cynical wisdom of France's statesmen; he was, unlike Lord Halifax, completely at home in the age in which he lived; breathing its air and basking in its golden sunshine, he enjoyed to the full the fruits which were brought to ripeness by them. Among the fairest of these fruits

was a certain exquisite art of social intercourse, a delicate perfection and grace of bearing and conversation, a gentleness and amiability in the art of pleasing, which was no growth of the English soil, but could only be acquired abroad. Most young Englishmen of condition were, in Lord Chesterfield's opinion, little more than louts; they had made indeed the grand tour abroad, but had learnt nothing from their travels, on which they had herded together in drunken debauches, returning home as refined and polished, he said, as Dutch skippers from a whaling expedition. That his son, and also his godson and heir, to whom he addressed another series of instructive letters, should not resemble these unlicked cubs, but become accomplished young men, fitted to adorn their age and country, was Lord Chesterfield's great desire and the purpose of his letters. These letters were not, he said, the severe and discouraging dictates of an old parent, but the friendly and practicable advice of a sincere friend, who remembers that he has been young himself, and knows the indulgence that is due to youth and inexperience. 'Yes,' he adds, 'I have been young, and a great deal too young. Idle dissipation and innumerable indiscretions, which I am now heartily ashamed and repent of, characterized my youth. But if my advice can make you wiser and better than I was at your age, I hope it may be of some little atonement.'

Lord Chesterfield's letters, which he wrote as an atonement for his youthful errors, and which to many have seemed a strange atonement, are full of worldly wisdom and advice which find a terse expression in the many aphorisms which adorn their pages. Besides these scattered maxims, he composed for the instruction of his son, a set of aphorisms which are printed by themselves.

'Most maxim-mongers,' he says, in his preface to this collection, 'have preferred the prettiness to the justness of a thought, and the turn to the truth; but I have refused myself to everything that my own experience did not justify and confirm.' His aphorisms are indeed sincere expressions of his own thought and observation, but they are often little masterpieces of the literary art as well. Inheriting as he did his grandfather's gift for terse expression, and nourished as he was on La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, whom he continually quotes, and believing, as he believed, that form was as important as matter, and that indeed it was the form rather

than the content of a phrase which impressed it upon us and fixed it in our memory, he had given a life-long attention to the art of expressing thought in words. His aphorisms float sometimes on the wings of images—'Cunning,' he says, for instance, 'is the dark sanctuary of incapacity;' Wit, those who possess it, should wear like a sword in its scabbard, and not 'brandish it to the terror of the whole company;' the art of life was to make the world one's bubble, rather than be the bubble of the world.

But of all the wings of winged sayings—and aphorisms must have wings to make them fly from mouth to mouth—the neatest are woven of a kind of verbal felicity, which Chesterfield called the 'turn.' The 'turn' is generally a deft antithesis of phrasing, by which some antithesis of thought is echoed and reinforced. 'It is very disagreeable to seem reserved, and very dangerous not to be so'; 'the weakest man in the world can avail himself of the passions of the wisest'; 'Many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request'—these among many others are instances of the antithetical turn in Chesterfield's aphorisms. An antithesis is not, however, indispensable to the turn; often this verbal felicity is produced merely by the happy repetition of one word:—'let blockheads read what blockheads wrote,' for instance; 'What pleases you in others will in general please them in you.' In the art of using the 'turn' Chesterfield's model was La Rochefoucauld, who sometimes combines the antithesis and the repetition in one finished phrase, as for instance when he says, 'We can often forgive those who bore us, but we cannot forgive those we bore.'

Although Lord Chesterfield was a master of the turn, he did not allow, as he says, the turn to be his master, and thus he avoided another pitfall of the aphorist, that of pretentiousness, of using a verbal felicity to give an appearance of thought where thought is lacking. When, for instance, Disraeli, who often fell into this pitfall, remarks 'nobody should even look anxious except those who have no anxiety,' the turn of expression he uses gives a momentary look of depth to an extremely shallow observation.

We have only to look at Sainte-Beuve's luminous portrait of Lord Chesterfield, with its sympathetic interpretation of this accomplished figure, to realize that our accepted notion of him is a caricature of the coarse old English kind. Sainte-Beuve, who calls Chesterfield the La Rochefoucauld of England, describes him as one of the most brilliant minds of our country, and as an accom-

plished moralist—using the word in the wider and more humane sense which it preserves in France—a moralist, not of Zeno's or Cato's school, but of the more amiable school of Aristippus or Atticus. His letters, Sainte-Beuve says, were letters that Horace might have written to his son, if Horace had been a parent; he praises the spirit they breathe of tenderness and wisdom, the paternal affection of this patient, delicate, indefatigable father, striving to make out of his indolent and awkward son an accomplished man of action. If, after reading the essay of this fine critic, we recall Dr Johnson's saying that Lord Chesterfield's letters 'teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing-master,' we find ourselves in a very different critical and moral atmosphere. But even Dr Johnson in a less exasperated mood was too enlightened not to admit that Chesterfield's correspondence, expurgated of what he considered its immoral precepts, would make a book which 'should be put into the hands of every young gentleman.'

Lord Chesterfield was supposed to have described Dr Johnson as 'a respectable Hottentot'; and the phrase, though apparently not meant for Johnson, was taken by their contemporaries as representing what the polite nobleman thought of the uncouth scholar. These two notable eighteenth-century figures lived indeed in worlds very different from each other; each was famous for his wit, but while Chesterfield regarded this quality as a possession dangerous for its possessor, Dr Johnson, disporting himself in a less polished sphere, was hampered by no such scruples. To shine in conversation was in him, as Sir Joshua Reynolds said, a predominating passion; he fought on every occasion as if his reputation depended on the victory of the moment; and he fought with all the weapons. Among those he wielded with complete recklessness that shining sword of wit which the politic earl had said should be kept safely in its scabbard, and not brandished to the terror of the company. The strokes of this mighty Samson still reverberate in history; still he strides like great Hector sounding war's alarms among the dead; but we feel no pity for his victims. Time has changed into delight the terror of those lightning strokes of repartee; we listen safely across the intervening years to their thunder. But more than by his wit Dr Johnson still lives for us, and his voice still reverberates in our ears, as the master and monarch of wise sayings. He is the greatest of our English aphorists—indeed for the number, the originality of his apophthegms he has no equal in the world; there is no talker of ancient or modern times

of whose general observations about life so many are remembered and constantly repeated. We owe the profusion of this store of course to his indefatigable and incomparable biographer; but their most enduring quality is the immense common sense, and the weight of experience and feeling behind them. They have their sources in the depths of deeply-feeling nature; they are full of the knowledge of the good and evil in his own heart, and in the hearts of others. With this concrete experience of life was combined an extraordinary generalizing power, a wide grasp of thought, a power of applying general truths to particular occasions, of seeing little incidents in the illumination of large ideas, and of being inspired by them, as he said himself, to very serious reflection. A tub of butter when contemplated by the actor Munden, amounted, Charles Lamb wrote, to a platonic idea; and the most trivial object or occurrence when contemplated through the magnifying glass of Dr Johnson's mind, assumed gigantic proportions; he went through life making mountains out of molehills. This gift of aggrandizement, of bestowing what he called the 'grandeur of generality' upon his sayings, was due in part to a vocabulary which was the product as well as the organ of that gift. 'He that thinks with more extent than another,' he wrote, 'will want words of larger meaning,' and his large acquired store of sonorous Latinisms served well to express his extensive thoughts. This power of clothing his thoughts in words adequate to their ample meaning, was the product of a life-long effort; he had early made it a fixed rule, he told Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'to do his best on every occasion and in every company; to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in,' and this had become, he said, by constant practice habitual with him. His notions, one of his listeners writes, 'rose up like the dragon's teeth sowed by Cadmus, all ready clothed and in bright armour too, fit for immediate battle,' and only occasionally Boswell enables us to see him pausing for a moment to give his thought a still more impressive form.

Dr Johnson's aphoristic gift—and the power of generalizing observation and abstracting from it imposing truths is the very essence of that gift—is apparent in his earlier writings, in *Rasselas* and *The Rambler*, and his other essays are rich in the substance of aphoristic thought. Although their expression in these passages is often ponderous and diffuse, there are some of them which, from their weight of meaning and the perfection of their phrasing, deserve to

rank as aphorisms; for the aphorisms of La Rochefoucauld and the other masters of this art, though generally brief and pointed, are sometimes more ample in their form—paragraphs and almost little essays of distilled and essential thought. No literary form admits indeed of precise and strictly formal definition; long sentences may be sometimes aphorisms; but the briefer they are the better; and it is for the most part in the recorded conversation of Dr Johnson's later years, when his weapon of speech had been tempered in the fire and vociferation of innumerable verbal contests, that his sentences acquire their point and perfection. Thus, for instance, in one of the *Ramblers* he writes, 'The time present is seldom able to fill desire or imagination with immediate enjoyment, and we are forced to supply its deficiencies by recollection or anticipation.' Twenty-three years later, arguing with Boswell and Langton at General Oglethorpe's, he expressed this thought in a much more vivid manner by saying 'a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk.'

There are no aphorisms that bear more clearly than Dr Johnson's the impress of their maker; these massy coins are authentically stamped with his imposing wig and features. Johnson awed his contemporaries not only by the 'loud voice and slow deliberate utterance' which Boswell so well describes; they were also impressed by the wit and wisdom of his remarks, but above all by the fact that it was he who made them. The weight of his extraordinary character, with all its amazing contradictions, gives them a resonance and importance that strongly affect us. Most sages and most aphorists have achieved a consistent attitude towards life; like La Rochefoucauld, or like Chesterfield, or like Goethe, they have mastered both themselves and the world, small or large, in which they dwell, and this gives a kind of uniformity—sometimes a kind of monotony—to their sayings. But Dr Johnson had achieved no such harmony; he was not in this sense a master of the world or of his own nature. He lived, as he tells us, entirely without his own approbation; he was continually forming resolutions and continually breaking them, and it is Boswell's supreme merit that he had the courage to reveal the contradictions and failings of his hero's character. High acts and noble qualities may win our respectful admiration, but it is after all people's errors, as Goethe said, which make us love them; and some of Johnson's eulogists have wronged his memory by trying to make him into a consistently

noble and enlightened figure. Johnson was fond also of paradox, and his most paradoxical remarks were accurately recorded; and when Boswell, wishing to be sure that none of them should escape him, enquired whether he had said that 'the happiest part of a man's life is what he passes lying awake in bed in the morning,' Dr Johnson replied, 'I may perhaps have said this; for nobody, at times, talks more laxly than I do.'

The self-confessed contradictions between Dr Johnson's principles and his practice—the way, for instance, he preached, and, as he said, very sincerely preached, early-rising from an habitual bed of noon-day sloth—and all the other contrarieties of his character; his liberal sympathies and his fierce, narrow, party-spirit, his profound unhappiness and his amazing zest for life, his bluff common sense and his primitive superstition, and almost insane terror of death—all these contrasts, and the various vistas into life they opened for him, enabled him to grasp those glimmerings of truth and odd aspects of experience which are the aphorist's nutriment—the game he hunts, and the object of his pursuit. But of all the contradictions of Dr Johnson's nature, what makes him our supremest aphorist as well as most endears us to him, is the contrast between his craving for affection, his dependence on it, and his profound sense of the weakness and fragility of all human ties. 'We cannot be in his company long,' as Mr Desmond MacCarthy has finely said, 'without becoming aware that what draws us to him so closely is that he combined a disillusioned estimate of human nature sufficient to launch twenty little cynics, with a craving for love and sympathy urgent enough to turn a weaker nature into a benign sentimentalist.'

The next aphorist on our list, though a younger contemporary of Chesterfield and Johnson, seems to belong to an age very different from theirs. If a saying can create a world—and the universe we inhabit was thus, we are told, originally created—one saying of William Blake's seems to transport us into a sphere of thought and feeling as remote from that of these eighteenth-century figures as the furthest planet. Blake's Proverbs in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, with the other aphorisms scattered through his prose writings, are indeed remarkable achievements, and contain, as Swinburne said of them, the quintessence and fine gold of his alembic. 'Each, whether earnest or satirical, slight or great in manner, is full,' Swinburne adds, 'of that passionate wisdom and

bright rapid strength proper to the step and speech of gods.' Swinburne seldom indulged in understatement; but Blake's Proverbs of Hell are certainly little masterpieces of this delicate art. No other aphorist has succeeded in compressing greater depths of meaning into fewer words; and save for a few apophthegms of the Greek Sages—'Know thyself,' 'Seize the moment,' 'It is hard to be good,' 'Most men are bad'—it would be difficult to find in any literature sayings more brief and pointed than 'Damn braces. Bless relaxes,' and many other of Blake's tiny but pregnant maxims.

The ground covered by Blake's aphorisms includes the three kinds of experience which, as we have seen, form the subject-matter of this way of writing. Some of them are commonplaces, new-minted and given a fresh lustre by their phrasing and imagery: 'The busy bee has no time for sorrow'; 'The fox condemns the trap, not himself,' for instance. Others contain bits of experience with which we are not unacquainted, though no one else has embodied them in words. But Blake's most characteristic sayings belong to that rarest and most precious class which seem like new intuitions, seem to have been coined from a vein of gold hidden far below the surface of the familiar world: 'the soul of sweet delight can never be defiled,' for instance; 'weak is the joy which is never wearied'; 'the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.' Blake is remarkable among other aphorists in many ways, but most remarkable in that his proverbs have often a mysterious oracular quality; they seem to us pregnant with a kind of mystic meaning, although we are hard put to it to say exactly what that meaning is. 'One thought fills immensity'; 'The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction'; 'Eternity is in love with the productions of time'—phrases like these impress our imagination with a kind of awe, although reason may suggest that they are perhaps little more than nonsense phrases. But Blake is a poet among our great aphorists; his phrases were coined in the mint of the imagination, he speaks, not with the voice of disillusioned age, but with that of romantic youth; and it is in reading one of his sentences, full of light and poetry, that we can best appreciate La Bruyère's saying that 'a delicate thought is the finest product, and, as it were, the flower of the soul.'

(To be concluded)

GAMBIT ENDING

BY DON LOCHBILER

In the angling rain
the grey rocks moved again,
leaves fell like cast skins.

Memory's lash escaped
the crusted eye, kept
clean the thirsting roots.
The tree her slender thoughts

found no satiety
of hand or leaf,
live twig or finger's teem
or vessel's flame.

Clawing light
coiled with glass,
shaving wind
turned shafts of grass.

Half of the hollow
wind went free,
wedge of no arrow
cleft the tree,

only the core
of the stream returned
when the dust destroyed,
when the water burned,

after the marriage
of leaf and stone
filling the turf
and the tree with sound,

rutting the earth
a shadowy road,
weeping the death
of the fretted god.

SECOND DECLAMATION

BY KENNETH BURKE

WHEN people are both discerning and unhappy, they tend to believe that their unhappiness is derived from their discernment. For how may we dare to solicit the kindness of Providence, we who have killed many bugs? In seeking causes to exist, one should not scruple at the choice of allies, and if noble motives seem weak, let him be quick to hunt out ignoble ones. We may be encouraged to continue purely by the thought that our death or default may later be turned to wholly praiseworthy purposes. Life is most difficult for those who are gnawed at by the morbidity of justice, particularly if their own ambitions and appetites force them into unjust actions. We must be content to possess only as much of nobility as resides in the contemplation of it, while yet remembering that such an equipment will not enable us to live on better terms with our neighbours. The world is made more tentative if all sagacious things are said by despicable people, and all stupid things by the lovable—and wisdom, in becoming a kind of self-appointed martyrdom, constitutes the sage's one claim to coxcombry. Could we, by deliberateness, by refusing to do otherwise, come in time to imagine a less defensive kind of living, and even to acquire something of that geniality which is most intelligently advocated in the books of the sick? Or could we call despair a privilege without implying that mankind should show it preference over happiness when the choice could be settled by a toss? No one's discomfitures are above suspicion, for those who possess neither a great man's power nor his torment, record their own maladjustments at length in the belief that they are somehow displaying the rest of greatness.

I have considered the highly selected breeds of cattle which are most prized when grossly overweighted with beef, or so hypertrophied and distorted in motherhood that the naturally brief sparing flow of the mammae is prolonged and made excessive, as women in certain regions of Africa are deemed beautiful whose thighs and buttocks have become enormous from disease; and I have realized that men beneath the same sky, with the same readings of ther-

mometer and same averages of rainfall, are bred to vastly differing environments, so that frailty may be but the outward aspect of exceptional vigour and tenacity. The apparently weak are merely schooled to other strength and may be easily enduring hardships which are intense and even still unnamed. While the man who triumphs has done so by acting in accordance with other rules, like one who would win at tennis by shooting his opponent.

If life moves with sufficient slowness, or is relentless enough in its consistency for us to awaken day after day upon the same issues, we may contrive to keep our terminology abreast of it, at least to the extent of being able to avow, in written, spoken, or meditated speech, any surrenders which were forced upon us in actuality. What we have been compelled to do, we find it easy to admit. Accordingly, it costs me little effort to tell you that I have many times cherished details of your life as though they were my own; that not only in the loose talk of bar-rooms, but in the solitude of my thoughts, I have occupied myself with such transferences, saying not "he" but "I," and peopling with experience places which I am entitled to recall solely as objects. I have knelt as you would kneel, though aware that you yourself did not put sufficient content into the posture to find it difficult. On one occasion, when I had overstayed myself, and suddenly realized that the two of you were waiting for me to leave, the abruptness of this disclosure was imposed upon me like some overtly unpleasant act; and I remained still longer, as though to bury it in further sociability. And I have since stood in that room, and seen the door close behind me, heard my footsteps diminish in the hall and, in your person, turned smiling to my companion. Yet though I have thus drearily mimicked you, I can say with authority that your enviable condition arose from absurdities unperceived, from your failure to hamper your own life by certain self-questionings which insufficiency alone can enable one to neglect, though their presence bespeaks more powerlessness than quality. We were living in no status of outward peril, such as earthquake, attack, or flood, which would have made your instinctive manner adequate.

Oh, were I to leave some heritage of good counsel for the young, my code would advise the striving after such privileges as are not obtained through deliberation nor discipline, but could only be bestowed by hazard. "Go thou, young man," I should begin—and those things which I should tell him to go in quest of, would be

such as no quest had ever yielded. By watching you, I learned that blessings fall as manna, which feeds the trivial because the great have prayed. And by unescapably living with myself, I learned that when rewards are commensurate with efforts, they find us already too exhausted to enjoy them and too dispirited through the practice of long patience to feel assured that they will not be taken from us. You drew forth the good things of life like a magician pulling rabbits out of a hat. They came to you, that is, regardless of your character.

But I, who should have considered it my mission to make life more difficult for both of us, laboured instead to continue your good fortune. On seeing you so far entrenched in ways which I myself should have chosen, I was led by a kind of moral pedantry to make those aspects of your career over which I had some influence remain consistent with all that was independent of me. And nothing so much as the thought of my own unreasoning collaboration confirms me in my conception of you as one unjustly sunned upon and favoured.

Among those times when I lay sleepless, I should mention first our night at the farmhouse. I had not wanted to stop here, yet you insisted. Did you spontaneously know that this was the place for your purposes, or could you have turned any other equally to advantage? I was prepared to go with you down to the river, when I observed that plans of your own were already under way. I wandered through the barn alone—and later, coming upon the hired man, I asked him questions about the crops and learned the parts of a harness. It was also at this time that I made friends with the collie, whom I called old Fritz and buffeted into growling good humour. You were now well along the shore, and the hired man explained to me that your guide had returned recently from a convent which, I gathered, she had attended not in the interests of religion, but of delicacy. As evening came on, I sat waiting for you in our room, smoking in the dark by the open window. It was a long vigil, preponderantly a period of sound. The clock in the hall struck deep and sluggishly—and after each hour had been thus solemnly proclaimed, it was repeated in a hasty tinkle from the parlour. Our room too possessed a heart-beat, sometimes in the ticking of my watch, and sometimes in my own pulse. “I am waiting,” I thought, “like a wife,” with the exception that your return would comfort me purely as the cessation of your pleasure. With

this girl, I had noticed, there was a slight convulsion of the nostrils, a suddenness of breathing, when certain words were spoken. Yet in so short a time I could not perceive anything in common among these words but their effect, and I took them to betray some state of mind which in its deeper aspects was closed to me by unimaginativeness or lack of experience. It seemed to indicate a conflict between eagerness and retreat, as though she had included much within her scheme of the repugnant and the illicit, and yet by a powerful gift of sympathy was made constantly prone to weaken her own resistances.

At last you entered, bearing your disturbance like an emperor. I turned away, that no more might be conceded you, that your expressions should go unseen. "We must leave," you whispered, "leave quietly—not by the hall but through the window and down over the porch." Now we were allies, if not in our adventures, at least in our escape! And as I sat up in silence, you added, "She is hysterical." We left money by the unlit lamp, and in the yard I proved that I too had spent a profitable evening by having made friends with old Fritz who, at my whispered assurances, permitted us to go unmolested. And as we walked in the grass by the roadside, doubtless even the girl herself did not know that we were leaving.

Thus the two cronies trudged along through the night, while you tossed me the crumbs and bare bones of your evening. But eventually you grew critical, and proved to me at length why this girl was inferior to Florence, why she could not make Florence seem any less desirable, and in time your talk became one enthusiastic paean to Florence; until, as we arrived at the next village, and learned that you could telegraph from here, at your suggestion we sent her our joint compliments and expressed the hope that we would soon be with her.

There are many now who talk of so standing that the waves alone are in front of them, and the very vessel on which they advance is behind the outer limits of their vision. And I recall the words of a man (I did not like him!) who saw a great poet, now dead, hurrying along the city streets, suffering from physical pain, and through thinking of other things allowing himself to act as though the stresses of his mind and body could be outpaced. Travellers looking to improvement have testified to going long distances, and changing all the outward aspects of their life, and

yet finding that they awaken to no new internal dawn. Despite motion, philosophy, medicaments, the one unchanging self remains, to feed upon its store of remembered injustices, of stupidity triumphant, of suicidal worth, of resentments which, even though they may lead to the hilarious and the absurd, are none the less burdensome to their possessor. There was even the time when I talked with anguish in a public phone booth, and while Florence listened to words as desolate as my talent and my predicament could make them, I was grinning into the mouthpiece that the man beyond the glass, waiting to speak here next, might not suspect my condition. And on another occasion, when she discovered tears in my eyes, they had been unloosed by nothing more deserving than an accidental tap of a curtain string against the bridge of my nose as I stood at the window. These trumped-up tears I displayed as evidence of my unhappiness, and I can assure you that they were not deceiving. They lay in the otherwise stony eyes of one who knows that as a heavy bolt of lightning will, in its discharge, clear an entire countryside of electricity, similarly those near us who absorb good fortune must thereby detract it from ourselves.

BLOOD

BY STANLEY BURNSHAW

Cats move like water,
 Dogs like wind. . . .
 Only when our bodies
 Have shut out mind
 Can they learn the calm
 Motion of dream.

Would we could know
 The way men moved
 When thought was only
 The great dark love
 And blood lay calm
 In a depthless dream. . . .



Courtesy of the Galerie Simon, Paris

LES SALTIMBANQUES. BY PABLO PICASSO



Courtesy of the Galerie Simon, Paris

L'ACTEUR. BY PABLO PICASSO

SURREPTITIOUS PEEPS AT CELEBRITIES

BY DOUGLAS L. MARTYN

MANY golfers have paused on the thirteenth tee of the Rye Golf Links, in the midst of a losing struggle with bogey, to gaze with relief at the charming old-world town—the church, poised solidly on the pinnacle of a little hill, with the grey-tiled houses around it, like a mother chicken with her brood of young; so stolid, remote, and immovable.

When I was young, one of my first solo walks took me up winding cobble-stone streets to the lovely Landgate Tower, one of the four entrances into the old walled town. Here, all unknowingly, I experienced my first moments of aesthetic joy. Its Cassandra-like top, a glorious mass of richly scented yellow and brown wall-flowers. What rapture I used to feel! In the years that followed I would sometimes dream I was the old clock half hidden among the flowers.

How often had it pealed to the sound of musketry when repelling a French attack! While the striking-hour must have given the signal to many a smuggler. Could that immobile face but talk, give its impressions of Edward I or Queen Elizabeth, of John Fletcher, of Henry James, of Cromwell and The Iron Duke, and hundreds of other celebrities, what a book we should have!

After a while, becoming bolder, I journeyed further afield. I discovered Ypres Castle, a quadrangular building supported by four towers, built in the twelfth century, a relic of Stephen's time. I would think for hours about the first Earl and his archers, and in fancy would even see the molten lead pouring upon his too venture-some enemies. What days!

From beneath its walls you can catch a glimpse of the twin village, Winchelsea. It is about two miles across the marsh, usually half hidden in its rich mellowed charm. Somewhere amidst its foliage dwelt Dame Ellen Terry. The townsfolk of Rye still speak of Winchelsea in relative terms as a new town, because it was rebuilt by Edward I on the present spot about two miles inland.

I used to retrace my steps by way of Watchbell Street, delightful and unchanged for centuries. By degrees I overcame my fear

of the huge old church; it gave me a feeling of sanctuary. Partly Norman, its dominant note is peace. The gilded words high up over the clock:

‘Time is but a shadow,
Which forever passeth away,’

admirably express its philosophy.

Inside hangs a wonderful pendulum, almost sweeping the floor. I once heard the verger telling some visitors that it was new, a present from Queen Elizabeth. The beautiful stained-glass windows abundant in virgins and haloes, breathe subtly of pre-reformation days. Examining the church records we find that during the vacillations of those times the sum of thirteen shillings and sixpence was paid to cleanse the church of popery; while receipts for money paid for replacing the virgin over the altar-piece, and knocking it down again, frequently occur, testifying to the source of Britain’s strength in diplomacy.

Mermaid Street! Where can you find its peer? A cobble-stone lane, descending at an angle of forty-five degrees, its heavily timbered old overhanging gables will no doubt be there when the Woolworth Building is no more. Each year it inspires hundreds of artists to forget the poverty of their art. Half-way up is the Mermaid Inn, now a mecca for golfers, with its rumbling secret interiors and beautiful open-fire hearths.

At the top is the house in which Mr Henry James lived for so many years, and where I believe Mr Wilder now intends to dwell. Wedged between the church on one side and the Old Mermaid on the other, with an enclosed garden at the back, it might well suit the originator of Uncle Pio. Surrounded by romance and antiquity, Mr James’ detached personality must have enjoyed many hours of bliss in this fragment of a world which lives on so happily in ignorance of the new. Did this simple town influence his style? I wonder. Delightful but sometimes exasperating.

My first conversation with him remains vivid in my memory. My brother and I were playing on the sands one day—building a huge castle and moat—busy in our efforts to beat the tide, when Mr James appeared from over the sand dunes. There was no mistaking his deliberate gait; his thoughts appeared to be leading him forward into another world, very, very, remote. He stopped and addressed me abruptly; a mannerism.

“Boy, at what hour is the tide high?”

"In about two hours' time, sir," I replied.

"Say hence, boy, say hence!"

A second later he was moving forward again, deep in thought, leaving behind him a humiliated little boy. Later, on a few rare occasions, I spent some happy intimate hours in his library. He was most generous and helpful to any that he thought possessed the love of books.

The years passed. I delighted in Dumas and Stevenson; my heroes lived only in books, and my gods were those who wrote them. Wells fascinated me; Chesterton "intrigued" me, although he taught me to laugh.

Everywhere the townspeople were in high spirits, for a circus had come to town—a splendid excuse for mild carousal. Everyone wore an air of excitement. The big tent was already pitched upon the village green. The greeting of the day which for centuries had been the age-old formula, "Howdo!" was temporarily substituted for "Be ye going to-night?" The mayor and aldermen would of course be there, occupying the expensive red plush shilling seats, while the less opulent would sit blissfully content on hard boards for the modest sum of sixpence.

I was wandering around, kicking pebbles and wondering how I could raise sixpence, for my mother disapproved of shows, when my chum came tumbling up, bubbling over with news.

"Mr Chesterton is here! Come on, I'll show him to you." He spoke of the master of paradox as if he were big circus type. We had read his last book and pretended to like it.

"How do you know it is he?" I asked sceptically as we stumbled over tent-pegs.

"Easy; he laughs with a loud guffaw." The word seemed so conclusive that I remained silent.

Dodging the gaping crowds, we reached the spot, only to be informed by a rustic, 'that the big bloke had just gone in.' He had entered, it seemed, one of the many side shows. This particular one promised to be interesting. The village idiot had been persuaded to accept a challenge for a silver cup, which had been on display for the past week at the only barber-shop in town. It was to be a knockout battle between him and a circus man, no quarter given. One to be armed with unlimited soot, the other with red paint; toss for choice. The idea was that each belabour the other with a short-handled mop; it promised to be a delight.

There was no help for it, I appealed to a higher court for funds—to my father who revelled in Mr Chesterton's weekly column of a Saturday.

When we entered, the fight had started and the crowd was an uproarious riot of mirth. Stripped to the waist the two combatants waged war in primeval fashion, ignoring style for caveman methods. When one momentarily faltered, owing to an unexpected mouthful of red paint, the cup was dangled in front of him by a vociferous master of ceremonies with encouraging shouts: "You're winning! Give 'im 'ell!"

Mr Chesterton was easily discovered amidst the sea of laughing faces—shaking with uncontrollable Gargantuan laughter. Falstaff-like and foremost in the riot as he rippled in ecstasy, he was using an immense handkerchief to suppress incongruous tears. For a little while I thought it derogatory to the celebrity's dignity to indulge in such ribald merriment. I found myself unkindly repeating:

"You will find me drinking rum,
Like a sailor in a slum—"

But I quickly forgot it in the joy of laughter.

A youthful tragedy befell me about this time, perhaps more than youthful. My mother had gone out to visit an old friend who was ill. One of the Huguenot families that had been settled in Rye since the middle of the sixteenth century. With my knees on a chair, my head buried in my hands under a flickering oil lamp, I had been transported to other worlds by the sheer beauty of Shelley, when my mother returned.

"I have brought you a few books."

Books! There had never been enough; they came to the house singly, and in diverse ways; it was unwritten law among us that any that came into the house were mine.

"I brought only the newest," the mater went on in her affectionate inconsequent way, "we burned a lot, they were all that old English stuff, that one cannot understand."

"How could you burn them?" I was looking at my treasures with feverish haste. Five of them made an aggregate of well over a thousand years, and my mother had brought home only the new ones. I felt cruelly wronged, a lump rose in my throat, and I

turned away to hide my tears. My mother looked pained, but smiled the indulgent smile that children hate.

"My son, you never would have understood them, I could not read them myself."

I have the latest of the five before me as I write. History of His Most Sacred Majesty King Charles I. Martyr. John Ashburnham—published 1704—written in 1660.

It was maddening to be obliged to leave Stalky & Co., to go to the grocer's for sugar. Parental authority forbade anything more than shrugs, and sullen demeanour. My feelings were not modified by the grocer who was also the mayor. He seemed reluctant to serve lest his dignity suffer. Standing at the shop door with thumbs negligently caught in his waistcoat under the armpits, he shouted fitfully, once, twice, for Bill who perhaps in the absence of customers was filling his time with odd domestic duties. A customer who had come in appeared excited, and in an awed whisper, said to the mayor,

"Rudyard Kipling is outside, just come out of Deacon's." While Bill, red of face, entered at the back, I rushed out of the front. He was about to step into his car with a friend; the dark smoked glasses with a rather heavy undergrowth kind of moustache, established his identity. I was disappointed. He looked more as I had imagined an anarchist would look. Youth gleans impressions from the eyes and they were veiled. I suspected some of the mysticism of Kim, but for the life of me could not see before me the creator and part hero of Stalky & Co. As if detecting my disappointment, he enquired the way to Battle. So astonished was I, that I could find no ready answer, nor was it needed; an obsequious mayor bowed himself forward. On my way home I called at the library and obtained one of The Jungle Books. Now was the time to read it.

My brother at this time was at work with a contractor in restoring Winchelsea Church, a more beautiful and older building than the church at Rye. Inspired by his accounts of skeletons they were uncovering, one spring morning I took the low-lying road across the marsh to visit him.

They were busy in the chancel when I arrived. Slabs had been removed, and the ground opened up to permit of strengthening pillars. Exposed to view were two coffins. One of them immediately attracted my attention, a huge affair measuring more than seven

and a half feet. With difficulty I made out the inscription: "Admiral Gervaise Haller"—"First Admiral of the Cinque Ports." Musty it smelled in that gloomy hole breathing the odour of death. Since then, on a few occasions during the war, I recalled that dry smell, the breath of the definitely dead, in insufficiently oxygenized space, when it gave me an eerie feeling.

The Admiral's coffin had temporarily to be removed; his bones were threatening the safety of the church. Four men gathered around; it seemed a terrific weight. Quite suddenly one end dropped; the centuries' old oak had given way. The Admiral's skull grinned at us from the inside of the coffin. The solemnity of death had not yet obtruded upon the innocence of my years. To caress a skeleton in all its nakedness seemed the next best thing to chasing a ghost. If I reasoned at all it was to feel that I was looking at the eternal enemy of life in grinning shape, but so infinitely remote that I need not bother about it. I touched the teeth; they were perfect. My curiosity was insatiate. Was I touching lips that hundreds of years ago had perchance inspired passion in feminine dust that barred his path and constituted the furniture of fleeting beauty?

Between the tremulous ribs of the ancient giant, my fingers searched the lead lined coffin for souvenirs. I had read in a vague way of things hidden, confusing the magnificence of Egyptian rites with those for a poor British Admiral.

The skull was badly broken at the back; indeed a modern coroner would perhaps have brought in a verdict of 'Murder'—by one of his own jolly sailors. The men were restive, and looked half frightened. One could almost read their thoughts. 'If that is an Admiral??' They must have found little consolation in their own humble positions. Besides, the boss might come along and view the disturbed warrior and things would not be pleasant. The lid was clumsily mended, but not before I had placed a piece of the skull in my pocket; it would support a fact that must tend with the years to incline towards fiction.

Alas! It was not to remain in my possession. My brother and I used it to replace the always missing white checker in our games of an evening, superbly oblivious as we moved the armoured plate of the Admiral's brains to and fro. Alas! a time came when it was his turn to be lost.



PASTORAL. BY CARL SPRINCHORN

ITALIAN LETTER

September, 1928

FRANCESCO FLORA'S first novel, *La Città Terrena*, has attracted the attention of critics and of the reading public almost at the same time with that other first novel, Bacchelli's *Diavolo al Pontelungo*; but while the latter book has been welcomed with unanimity of tranquil admiration, the former has met with extravagant and dithyrambic praise in some quarters, and in others with fierce opposition. It would be malicious, however, to try to attribute the difference to the fact that Flora is a militant and outspoken critic of contemporary literature, and therefore subject to either gratitude or resentment from his colleagues, while Bacchelli is a kind of literary recluse; the true reason is deeper, and lies in the nature of their work, since the *Diavolo*, as I tried to show in my last letter,¹ being the fruit of the calm and detached contemplation of the past, is not coloured by any other passion than a purely aesthetic one, by any other interest than a general human interest arising from the varied spectacle of mortal life in every time and place—but *La Città Terrena* is the idealized confession of the joys and sorrows, of the errors and hopes of a passionate child of our times.

Some years ago² I introduced Flora to the readers of *THE DIAL* as a critic and a poet: they may remember that I wrote of him especially in connexion with his book *Dal Romanticismo al Futurismo*, which also, though disguised as a sweeping survey of modern Italian literature, is the confession of a personal and intimate experience of intellectual and moral life. In rapid succession, after a few years of silence, he has given us a book on D'Annunzio, this novel, and a book on Croce. His earlier work had consisted in a reducing of the dispersed and chaotic pre-war literary life to the intellectual and moral norm of Croce's Idealism: these new critical essays might well be considered as its epilogomena, placing D'Annunzio and Croce, in sharp opposition to each other, as the two poles of the present moral life of our country. Flora's critical

¹ May, 1928.

² February, 1924.

interests are identical with his ideals as a poet and as a novelist: the whole of his literary activity is in fact guided by one thought which provides at the same time a rule of conduct and a criterion of truth, that might be defined as the thought of a progressive and perpetual ascent from the world of mere matter and sense—from what is disorganic and lawless—to a world in which sense and matter are not mortified and annulled, but transfigured as aspects of a wider and higher life and stamped with the impress of its spiritual law.

The novel presents in an imaginative form the theme which finds its speculative and historical development in the critical writings, and the close connexion between the two modes of elaboration is still more clearly emphasized by the author's choosing a poet as the hero of the novel: a dangerous choice in any case, because of the possible confusion of the hero with the author, and of the objective and poetic tone with the autobiographical and practical. The ideal image of a poet, as of any rare individuality, can never be made to appear wholly plausible and real unless it is supported by historical data; and even then, the heroic character of a poet lies always entirely in his work, and only by exception in his daily life. A poet's significant history is his poetry, since no man becomes a poet except by abstracting himself from his biography and from the practical communion of men, and by creating in that sphere in which he is no longer the man of passions and desires, but a pure organ of aesthetic vision: the personality of a poet springs from the sacrifice of his individuality. Therefore the poets of fiction can never be possessed, as poets, with full concrete life. Their poetic quality being supposed and not actual, what remains in a novel (witness the favourable instance, because not unsupported by historical data, of that clever novel, Maurois' *Ariel*) is but a pale, shadowy figure, half man or less, with all the vices of the sentimentalist, dilettante, or epicurean. Such are the considerations, I believe, which afford some justification for the charge against *Flora* by some of his critics, that he, though himself keenly aware of the weakness of D'Annunzio's ethical vision, should have now invested the world of his own imagination with a sensuous atmosphere reminiscent possibly of the heavy scents and warm animal breaths of the older poet's novels.

But those critics have not been subtle enough to perceive that *Flora's* sensuousness, though at times overpowering and almost

cloying, remains on a plane totally different from that of D'Annunzio, never going so deep as to affect and corrupt the quality of the aesthetic vision. In fact, the whole of D'Annunzio's work might be looked upon as a series of new Metamorphoses in which man, retracing the stages represented in ancient mythology by deities partaking of two natures, the Fauns, the Tritons, the Centaurs, aspires towards the condition of the animal and of the plant, of the rock and of the sea; in which, as it were, the human spirit, renouncing its divine prerogative, strives to become all and only Nature. Flora, on the contrary, is firmly rooted—not as a thinker only, but as a poet—in the Idealistic position which submerges the whole natural world in the human and divine spirit, in the perpetual miracle of the spirit that creates out of its own substance the object of its contemplation and the conditions of its activity. Of the moral dangers to which a hasty transposition of this speculative doctrine into the world of practical experience may easily lead, no one, I think, is more acutely conscious than Flora himself, and his novel could be summarized as a kind of pilgrimage of the spirit, questing after the infinite wealth of which it knows itself to be the creator, then losing itself in the maze of that infinite wealth as in the "*selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte*" of the Mediaeval Pilgrim, and finally returning to itself humbled and restored within its individual limits by the double evidence of the unreflecting and instinctive morality of simple souls, and of the omnipotence of death.

The whole life-experience of Giuliano Solari, the hero of *La Città Terrena*, culminates in two episodes, if the word be allowed its original meaning and dignity: a woman in love with him finds, through love for her child, the strength to resist his love and is afterwards punished by her child's death, for the sin she has not committed; another woman dies in his arms when he goes back to her after trials and errancy, and the poet is left with a child born of her. It is through this doctrine of the actuality of the spirit, in which he had first found support for his amoralism and superhumanism, that Solari becomes conscious at last of his individual moral responsibility for all that lives and dies around him:

"In the certainty of his thought he found himself again, since it is better to live in sorrow, and even to have wept for desires that had been killed, and for a dead love, if he had seen joy, if his

soul could be tenderly moved by the innocence of his child, by the white head of his mother, if poetry throbbed and blossomed within him again: since it is better to live, better to be transfigured in death, than never to have been born. And he said to his heart: If this is not the voice of the only and true God, certainly He shall speak to the expectant soul, and I shall hear His word of light. Thus Giuliano Solari resumed his life."

The novel ends on this promise rather than in discovery of a new faith, of that religion of our time of which we all know the prophets and precursors, but which still awaits its messiah and its gospel.

The book is new, a book of and for our day, not only because a vision of the world, in a sense the flower of contemporary European culture, finds in it culmination and renovation, but also because its method, the images it employs, the sensitivity which it represents, are closely akin to the sources and modes of expression of the few young writers who in France, in England, in Germany, and in America, are endeavouring to create a language adequate to the complexity of modern experience. Flora does not imitate these writers: as a critic, he tends to regard somewhat scornfully, those he has read; but he is as alert as they are to that "*qualité d'ubiquité de la vie moderne*" which the distinguished French author already mentioned describes as the common subject-matter of "*la jeune littérature*" in France and in England; and similarity of conditions and of interests is after all bound to produce effects if not similar at least closely related. Flora's modernity, however, should not be confused with that rhetoric of literary modernism which is developing in Europe and in America—a limited and peculiar choice of subjects, that is to say; a marked preference for certain states of mind; tricks of language, of grammar, of punctuation, recurrent with slight variations, in all modern literatures, as signals of the truly modern writer. American readers who wish to see the Italian aspect of this international phenomenon ought to read the new magazine "900" (meaning, of course, the twentieth century) which was issued last year in Rome and Paris, under the editorship of Massimo Bontempelli, containing original contributions by Mac Orlan, Soupault, Fargue, Ribemont-Dessaigues, Cendrars, and other young French writers, and French translations from McAlmon, Kaiser, Joyce, Gomez de la Serna, but especially from Bontempelli himself and a few other Italians like Cecchi, Aniante, Alvaro, Solari, and Barilli.

I may have occasion, in some future letter, to write more particularly about some of these writers, but suffice it to say that Bontempelli, who started his career with a volume of well-tempered, classically modelled, almost scholastic verse has, through a phase of violent futurism, reached his present position as a kind of leader of the modernistic movement. A literary virtuoso, a temper sensitive to the rapidly changing tastes and moods of successive generations—since generations, if not epochs, seem now to be succeeding each other at a distance of not more than two or three years, one at the heels of the other—he has now and then been able to strike a note, if not original, certainly happy, as in a series of grotesque and humorous short stories, which are among the best produced in Italy in a *genre* substantially foreign to our national temperament. His later literary tendencies, as shown even by the editorial plan of the “900,” were bound to make him favour a sort of literary internationalism, since those peculiarly modern aspects of our life, which he now considers the only possible sources of inspiration for a present-day writer, are common to the whole of western civilization, and are rather more prominent in other western countries than in Italy. It has been easy for his adversaries to bring against him the charge of being at variance with the prevailing, officially countenanced, tendencies of our national culture, and the term *Stracittà*—meaning over-emphasis on the mechanical, artificial, cosmopolite elements of modern life—has been invented and thrown at his head by an eyrie of younger writers, self-styled inhabitants of *Strapaese*, the Italian village *par excellence*, in which the solid virtues as well as the solid vices of our race are supposed still to exist for the inspiration of thoroughly indigenous authors.

This literary guerrilla is fairly hard to follow in its intricacies, because, even to an outsider, it is evidently complicated by motives of a merely practical nature. Bontempelli has given up his international “900,” and is now issuing it in Rome in Italian; and has associated himself with nine more writers of a more or less established reputation, among whom are Marinetti and Fausto Maria Martini, the group known as “I Dieci,” who are writing a novel in collaboration, establishing prizes for new authors, and trying generally to gain for the literary profession in Italy a status more dignified and self-sustaining than that it has had hitherto. His adversaries, on the other hand, have succeeded in getting hold of our most important literary weekly, *La Fiera Letteraria*, published in Milan, and have waged a vehement campaign against the Dieci

and all their methods and enterprises. Both groups seem to be doing their utmost to secure the monopoly of official support, but the outcome of all their alarms and excursions is not to be easily predicted.

Some more thoughtful writers, in the same Fiera Letteraria, have recently introduced new arguments in the polemic between Modernism and Traditionalism, stating, rather surprisingly to me, that what we are suffering from is too much intelligence. Personally I should have thought that any charge but this particular one might have been brought against the majority of our writers of fiction. What goes by the name of intelligence among them is merely a dose of natural wits that would be often deemed insufficient for the average business man or politician; it is amazing, on the contrary, that men living in an atmosphere saturated with the consciousness of critical and historical problems, should remain intellectually so innocent. But the accusation has a meaning if we interpret it as pointing to the excess of programmatic and voluntary elements in modern fiction over the spontaneous and creative; it has a meaning if we apply it, for instance, to Pirandello and to his so-called philosophy, which in reality is no philosophy at all but a chaos of undigested psychological paradoxes, which yet succeeds in vitiating and falsifying the modicum of native inspiration that even his sharpest critics do not deny him. But if the author of this particular charge, who is a young critic of some distinction, Gino Saviotti, had been better trained in the use of critical terms, he would not have said intelligence when he meant intellectualism, a vice born not of too much intelligence (inconceivable when speaking of positive virtues or qualities) but of too little; and he would not have chosen as an illustration for his thesis, Giraudoux, a writer in whom a keen and delicate wit or *esprit* is exquisitely exploited for the creation of an elegant and subtle, ironic and elegiac, *marivaudage* or suite of variations *in sordina*, on the sweetness and sadness, the heartlessness and pathos, of these our too modern times.

That intelligence should necessarily kill poetry is a curious misapprehension, though partly justified by the truism that many minor poets have belonged and belong to the intellectually *minus habentes*. But the only possible measure for the higher poetry is that determined by breadth of moral consciousness and height of intelligence in the poet. Years ago, in my Cambridge days, I made

a close study of the chronology of Dante's *Canzoniere*, and was able to discover stages of lyrical development marked by successive broadenings of intellectual outlook, while poetical inspiration seemed to lag, as being for a time insufficient to enkindle the new matter; then suddenly, with a leap of the flame, it took possession of the wider world presenting itself to the poet, the stages leading him gradually from the juvenile sonnets of the *Vita Nuova* to the miraculous tercets of the *Divina Commedia*, where they can still be traced in lyrical ascent from the *Inferno* to the *Paradiso*; but the conclusion holds true that only minor poetry can be killed by intelligence, and that great poetry can grow only on the soil of a great intelligence.

These considerations may have brought us a little too far from the quarrels and programmes of which we were speaking; but not so far as might seem from Francesco Flora, who is familiar with this mode of thought, being at the same time an intelligent man and a poet. And with him I leave the reader, extracting from *La Città Terrena* a passage which, though losing in translation and out of its context, may perhaps make him feel the quality of a style both modern and traditional:

“And yet, to travel, to multiply space, what a primitive thing it still is! Sailing day after day to touch the edge of the earth, sinking into sand month after month to gain the edge of the desert, while our thought is wholly without barriers of distance or of time, while, even to-day, a sound can be made synchronous to our ears and to those of a negro at the furthest confines of the desert, and of a sailor in mid-ocean! Thus voice conquers matter and space: one man's work has sufficed to accelerate sound-waves, to make them simultaneous at the most various distances. The supreme contemporaneity of earthly things is the destruction of matter; or, better, the redeeming of it to a human, and therefore divine, condition. How shall we not conquer even the weight of our bodies, that mere thought may take us anywhere by an act of the will?”

RAFFAELLO PICCOLI

BOOK REVIEWS

NEW LIVES OF OLD POETS

CATULLUS AND HORACE, Two Poets in Their Environment. *By Tenney Frank. 8vo. 291 pages. Henry Holt and Company. \$3.*

FROM another critic the sub-title, "two poets in their environment," might well be a warning. Taine's insistence on the rather obvious importance of literary "*milieu*" has too often in criticism been the excuse for much detail that has no literary bearing; and we still have too much crude sociology heaped about poetry. But here is really a study of poets; it bears constantly on their poetry; and it writes their chapters in the history of literature. This is the focus of the archaeology that has lately become an adventure as well as a science; of the metric, and even the occasional grammar, rescued from the pedants; of the social history, yielding significant dates; above all, of a biography that is neither chronicle nor psychopathy.

The superficial contrast between Catullus the "pure" lyrist and Horace the "reflective" lyrist is ignored with many other critical labels. There is no attempt to tell us again the correct things to say about two famous poets. The appraisal of achievement is sometimes even destructive. Horace's ninth epode "has not a single good line or phrase, though it presents an interesting picture" (189). Again, "his ten years of literary effort thus produced only three rolls, and half of this might well have been omitted" (192). But the few cases of destructive re-appraisal are merely incidental to a fresh discrimination. The Epistle to the Pisos "must not be read as Horace's full expression of his poetic creed" (261). "It was not meant to be what later writers have chosen to call it, an 'Art of Poetry'" (275). Such distinctions throw into relief what in each poet is characteristic and significant, and make appraisal subservient to literary history.

The recent revival, for all its vagaries, has reminded us that biography is a fine art. It demands suggestive interpretation of

patiently verified facts in relation to the development of individuality; and the development of a poet is too delicate to be summarized in easy generalizations.

“When Horace’s father in the prime of life closed his bank and invested what seemed a meager fortune in order to live on the returns so as to devote the rest of his days to the education of his only boy, he had done a very uncommon thing. He was not an ordinary man. That Horace never forgot. To him it was not trite to say that wealth is dangerous, that it is well to limit one’s getting, that there are spiritual values worth more, that natural desires may as well be curbed. When Horace speaks in this fashion and laughs at Rome’s behavior, he is remembering his father . . . and he is also parting company with the practical creed of Maecenas and most of the powerful men of Rome” (183).

The larger environment, the pressure of the time on the man, is adjusted expertly. There is none of that laborious digest of history which makes many biographies both dull and unconvincing. Horace’s “un-Roman interest in merchants and men of affairs” (135) is derived in a paragraph. Two pages create the human scene of the boy Catullus. The sharpest challenge to this art must have been the difficult but necessary figure of Clodia. That this too-famous lady was the “Lesbia” of Catullus may be dismissed with easy cynicism, or expatiated into either racy description or tragic irony. Here, instead of either of these evasions, is a really biographical relation at once precise and delicate. Clodia and her society, made to reveal each other, are together woven into the story of Catullus.

“She read much in an age when literature was made for men, and she took an interest in her younger brother’s ambitions and acquired a taste for political intrigue” (15). “Cicero, despite his hatred of her, constantly refers to her lustrous eyes” (17). His defence of Caelius “threw the onus on Clodia. The speech seethes with innuendo . . . contingent and concessive clauses that would protect him in case of cross-examination. . . . Caelius was acquitted, and Clodia lost the last shred of her reputation” (80).

Such suggestive phrases, like the “bachelor diction” (219) of Horace, are not patches; they all mark the unfolding pattern. So

are those details of the history which are more specifically literary: the actual artistic use of the Greek Anthology, the relation of the revolt against Ciceronian oratory not only to the fall of the Senate, but to the clash of artistic ideals in poetry, the traditional sense of the soil in Horace's references to peasant cults, the deviation of drama into recitation. Even the famous four lines beginning "*Qualis in aerii perlucens vertice montis*" are made to yield fresh suggestion by reminding us of similar anticipations in the English eighteenth century.

"It is one of the most striking landscapes in Latin verse, and may be a reminiscence of one of the many capricious cascades high on the mountain side that one passes in the Adige valley as one travels north from Verona to Trent. . . . Had Catullus written fifty years later, after the mountain folk had been pacified so that the Alps were made accessible to Roman travellers, he might well have discovered mountain landscape as a theme for poetry" (47).

Metric, always essential in the study of poetry, has often been obscured in presentation. From age to age it has been stiffened by pedagogues and disputed by theorists. Here the technical precision without which the study must be idle, and may be misleading, is both guided by reminders of fundamental distinctions and enlivened by analogies.

"Verse based upon quantity—as we may judge from music, which is quantitative—shows more sensitiveness to metrical variety than verse based, like ours, upon stress alone. Moreover, our meters are so few and simple, and these few must do service for so wide a range of expression, that we are utterly unfit to appreciate the fine distinctions wrought by the great abundance of feet and cola in Greek and Latin verse" (269).

The difficult Galliambic rhythm is first related to the dubious Cybele cult and to the Greek setting of the *Attis*. Then it is defined as a "rapid, orgiastic, dance-march rhythm," its typical movement is scanned, and its variations explained. With this clue we read nine characteristic lines. After a warning against Tennyson's imitation, our younger artists, "who have had to learn several new rhythms in recent dances" are consoled.

“Rhythms that have survived have corresponded to the beat or wail of instruments that kept time to leaping, dancing or marching feet. Feet in their movements are fairly well restricted to regular intervals of time; but the timbrels, especially by the use of syncopation, can set the arms and head off on a secondary rhythm which clashes with the tread of the feet, or can transfer the beat with more or less regularity from the tread to the lift of the foot. And such effects even to-day are more frequently sought after in Arabic, Berber and Turkish music than in European forms” (75).

In a word, the exposition is carried through. It serves others than the few who already know. It makes technic suggestive. The frequent use of metric for interpretation is the more cumulative because of the steadying conception of verse as essentially rhythm of movement. Kin thus to dance and also to music, it nevertheless has its own technic because it has its own scope.

Beyond this technical expertness Professor Frank is little concerned here to appraise Catullus, even less to rank him. He does, indeed, stress his directness. At its artistic height that quality is so essential as almost to constitute lyric. Has Catullus that height? *Nox est perpetua una dormienda* is recalled again; it must be; it is one of the perfect lines. But it is also final in the sense of comprising the poet's whole scope. He has no vision. Occasional poetry as he conceived it is strictly limited. Even when the lyric intensification is more than physical, it has short range of insight. How far the lack is due to his time is implied in the abundant historical detail. How far insight is a measure of poetry may be inferred as we pass on to Horace and look back. But those who hold it extraneous will hardly be disturbed.

The style, as will be evident from the quotations, has edge; but it shows no anxiety to cut. It is not restless. Recognizing soon the author's scholarly singleness, his faithful intention to display not himself, but his poets, we trust ourselves to a guide who is witty because he is winsome, and tranquil because he knows. The usual things about Catullus and Horace may be read elsewhere. Many of them are worth reading. This book, without trying to supersede them, makes a fresh contribution to literary history.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

MR. WESTON'S GOOD WINE

MR. WESTON'S GOOD WINE. *By T. F. Powys. 8vo.*
317 pages. The Viking Press. \$3.50.

IN MR. WESTON'S GOOD WINE, a merchant comes to the village of Folly Down to offer to the folk there his vintages. He deals in two sorts, it appears:

“Although we are very glad to see so many take an interest in, and wish to taste, our light and less heady vintages, that are fittest to drink—and there are many who know this—in any gentle and green valley about this time of evening, yet there is still a lack of those who order our strongest and oldest wine that brings to the buyer a lasting contentment, and eases his heart for ever from all care and torment.”

The merchant travels through the country in a Ford car, and he has an assistant, a young man who is named Michael. He writes the name of his good wine on the sky in letters of flame; the clocks stop when he arrives in the village. He is an author—in fact, he is The Author—and his assistant is an Angel. All whom he has dealings with have some heaven or hell consummated in themselves. Mr. Weston's Good Wine is a story that seems to have been written to illustrate with the crudity of a woodcut upon a ballad-sheet the saying, “Closer is He than breathing and nearer than hands or feet,” and the other saying about His coming having the casualness of a thief in the night.

We have in this story the English village that is always in Mr T. F. Powys' books, and we have the same assortment of characters—wanton and longing girls, loutish fellows, eccentric recluses, depraved women, harmless devotees, and earth-bound rustics. They never develop as a novelist's creations develop—all that happens to them is that, according to their faculties, they become aware of the mystery of human destiny. There is Tamar Grobe. For her there is no development; there is consummation. There is her maid, Jenny Bunce, whose “young body is as plump as a

robin's, and her eyes look so naughtily into yours when you meet her that it is near impossible to refuse their asking." For Jenny, too, there is consummation—much more ordinary than the consummation to Tamar's desire—Tamar, of whom Mr Weston is told, "The grassy downs know the tread of her little feet and the light pressure, and there is no tree nor bush that would not give all its flowers and leaves—yea, its very sap—to be a man for her sake, because her wishes are so burning." Then there is Mrs Vosper who plots the degradation of the village maidens; there are the brothers Mumby who are more carnal than the beasts; there is Mr Bird who longs to possess Jenny Bunce and who in the meanwhile preaches Christianity to the geese and to Mr Mumby's bull; there is Mr Grobe the rector, Tamar's father, who longs to find again his dead Alice—all these enter into their heaven or their hell as they have dealings with the wine-merchant.

In reading Mr. Weston's *Good Wine*, one wonders what gift Mr T. F. Powys has that makes the reading of his books a real experience. As stories they are incoherent; his people never develop, and obviously they are distorted. And yet, in spite of all that, something of a revelation comes out of all his books. There are writers who can construct a narrative, who can give a development to their characters, and who yet cannot give their characters significance. Mr T. F. Powys can give significance to his distorted characters: that is the first of his gifts. He can also evoke pictures of the English village and the English countryside—pictures that remind one of those left by the great eighteenth-century painters who made pigs at a trough, or men drinking on benches in an inn, scenes to be remembered always. And he puts desire into his books; he is able to make us feel something that is immense and urgent.

His books have defects that could have been got rid of. Mr. Weston's *Good Wine*, like a few of his other books, is about a third too long. It is a fantasy, after all, and a story that is much longer than *Candide* is too long for a fantasy. And the desire that is back of his books, that gives his books their urge, often becomes sick and morbid. Many of T. F. Powys' characters are uncongenial, not because they know the violence of sexual desire, but because they know nothing else. Sex to them is an obsession, and in actual life we try to get away from people with obsessions.

T. F. Powys' books are never constructed as narratives. His

plots are merely a trellis over which his imaginings trail as vines trail. For all his outer unlikeness to them he has more affinities with the great confession-writers than he has with the story-tellers. I feel that when I write down this sentence from Amiel's Journal I will be stating the theme of Mr. Weston's Good Wine and of the other books:

"An indifferent nature? A Satanic principle of things? A good and just God? Three points of view. The second is improbable and horrible. The first appeals to our stoicism. . . . But the third point of view alone can give joy. Only is it tenable? . . . To nature both our continued existence and our morality are equally indifferent. . . ."

Like this great confession-writer, T. F. Powys is an explorer of the inner life, and an explorer especially at the point where the inner life seems to sink into the life of nature. Like him, he is occupied with the problem of human destiny. Unlike the story-teller, the novelist, he has no particular interest in human relationships: his people only focus a meditation upon "an indifferent nature? A Satanic principle in things? A good and just God?" But with him desire dominates intellect, and all he sees in nature is filled with vitality:

"The hedges were white with sloe-blossom, and the willow bushes were in flower; a few butterflies were abroad and the bumble-bees. The blackthorn blossoms were shed; the new green of the hedges came, and the sweet scent of may blossom. The may faded, but in the meadows the deeper colour of the buttercups—those June brides—took the place of the maiden cowslips until the hay-mowers came, and then the white and red roses bloomed in the hedges. Midsummer, that time of rich sunshine, was soon gone; the meadows were yellow again with hawkweed, while in the rougher fields the ragwort grew in clumps, upon which the peacock butterflies fed until near drunken with honey."

PADRAIC COLUM

THE HYPOCHONDRIACK

THE HYPOCHONDRIACK. Being the Seventy Essays by the celebrated Biographer James Boswell, appearing in the London Magazine from November 1777 to August 1783, and here first reprinted. *Edited by Margery Bailey. Two volumes. 340 and 356 pages. Stanford University Press. \$15.*

THERE is no doubt that James Boswell—undoubtedly “celebrated Biographer”; “Corsica” Boswell: long in Scots technical phraseology “Younger of Auchinleck” and latterly able to drop the “Younger”—would have been, for the nonce at any rate, quite free from Hypochondria if he could have seen these two very handsome volumes. They are faultless in print and paper: the latter being free from that synthetic or syncretic quality which is apt nowadays, both in America and in England, to make books unduly heavy to hold. The binding in black and silver, if slightly funereal, suits the subject, is agreeable in itself, and brings out the Boswell arms and motto (with the bird-crest whose perkiness fits the celebrated biographer so well) in an admirable fashion. To get these seventy Essays reprinted at all would have been an infinite joy to Boswell, though perhaps he would have regretted a certain combination of bad luck and good temper which cut short the existence of another edition, independent of this, in England. But with this itself even he could find no fault. For Miss Bailey has taken really surprising pains to collate this work of his with his previously known work: and it is common to find more than half the page taken up with parallel or explanatory passages from the great Life, from the Hebrides book, from the Letters, and from the Boswelliana. Even she has now and then, purposely or not, failed to be quite exhaustive here: for she has not cited, as she might have done, on I, 224 as companion to Boswell’s confession that “Imagination can easily cherish a fondness for a pretty chambermaid”—though he thinks one for a “cookmaid” would be indelicate and disgusting—that exquisite passage in the account of his travels where he tells us of the positively chivalrous feeling

which not the ladies but the ladies'-maids at Inveraray excited in him. This is almost a pity: for the gradation of cookmaid, chamber or dairy maid, and *soubrette* is interesting.

But this is a digression. There is plenty of pleasure remaining still in the book for its really invaluable but much abused author. Perhaps Miss Bailey has not chosen the happiest phrase in speaking of Carlyle's "emotional apologies." There is a good deal more than "emotion"—a term at the present moment almost contemptuous—and something quite different from "apology" in Thomas's vindication of James. But she herself though by no means unconscious of her hero's unheroicnesses is evidently fond of him, takes considerable and genuine interest in the matter with which she is now supplying us, and would doubtless scout if not directly resent the suggestion that her labour, however admirable in itself—and it certainly *is* admirable—is if not actually lost at any rate spent on a subject than which many better worth it still wait unattended to.

It is, however, just possible that some readers not quite of a grumbling, still less of a Devil's-Advocate temperament, may harbour or even advance denigrating observations of this kind. In a complete "Works" of James Boswell (and how Jamie would like *that!*) the Hypochondriack, anonymous though it originally was, might of course find a place—might indeed, claim one. But in that case the immense labour which Miss Bailey must have spent would be largely reduced, and the space which the results of that labour take reduced more largely still. And, to speak honestly and plainly, the book (still except as a completion of the "Works") is not of much value. That it is almost destitute of those exquisite bits of innocent self-revelation which disgusted contemporaries and made even men of a later generation but of something like an eighteenth-century temper such as Macaulay unfair, is a thing of which it would be also unfair to complain. Indeed Miss Bailey's cornucopia of parallel passages, though it did not furnish the instance mentioned above, is itself rich in such things. Who but Boswell after quoting one of his absurd letters to his father would quite solemnly have asked his friend Temple whether he, the friend, would not be proud of having a son like that? But as a rule the text shews if not a deliberate exclusion of these inimitable self-characterizations, a quite deliberate endeavour to be as serious as possible—as much up to the level of the more serious eighteenth-

century essay itself as might be. Now this seriousness is not merely not what a vain posterity demands of its author: it is something that any posterity is quite justified in regarding with very limited interest. On the other hand occasional attempts to be more or less elaborately though quite decently funny are a little dreary. No. XLIX "On Identification by Numbers" which would be better titled "An Essay on Buttons" is an instance. Such things however are rare: and the others are abundant. It is not absolutely necessary to be unamiably reminiscent of the fact that Boswell's own Hypochondria was sometimes regarded as better called by another long Greek word which instead of referring "dumps" to something going wrong under the cartilage of the breast-bone assigns them to excessive previous indulgence in stimulants and excitements of one kind or another. To these Bozzy was notoriously and indeed confessedly given: and though he is fairly liberal here of moral advice on this subject as on others, the word at the top of each page is rather a provocative to asking the question, "Have you any business to find fault with your *χρόνος* at all? And if you have could you not possibly administer to that peccant cartilage rather livelier medicaments than these?"

Another slight drawback to the results of Miss Bailey's in themselves admirable labours is that as his wisdom is almost exclusively drawn from other people, and especially from Johnson, we are apt to get Johnson-and-water in the text with pure Johnson in the notes, which suggests an improper process of reading the notes only. However let us cavil no more. The stuff is sometimes very good stuff and never very bad; it is agreeably presented in all mechanical respects; and the labour spent on it is vigorous and knowledgeable. A person named Prometheus did certainly once apply rude language to certain kinds of labour. But when you are spreadeagled against a rock with uncomfortable detaining devices at your hands and feet you can hardly be said to be in a position to deliver calm and well-balanced judgements.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

BRIEFER MENTION

THE REDEMPTION OF TYCHO BRAHE, by Max Brod, translated from the German by Felix Warren Crosse, with introduction by Stefan Zweig (12mo, 289 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) has a spaciousness and eloquence which only a first-rate imagination can bring to the art of the historical novel. The spiritual conflict between Tycho Brahe, Danish astronomer, and Kepler is traced with a dramatic intensity which suggests Ibsen, and there is something of the elemental tragedy of Lear in the life of Tycho himself. Max Brod has taken stubborn material and—by sheer creative fervour—made it plastic and richly subservient to his purpose.

ARMANCE, by Stendhal (Henri Beyle) translated from the French by C. K. Scott Moncrieff (12mo, 282 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50) is neither a first-class novel nor an interesting one in spite of the publishers who jacket the book with a promise of sexual interest. It is an early work of a genius; it has a few profound observations and readers of *Red and Black* and *The Charterhouse of Parma* will find in its characters early sketches of the towering figures of those novels. The suggestion that Stendhal was writing a novel about an impotent man and concealing the fact is not out of keeping with his private character, but is neither consistent with his methods as a novelist nor borne out by the text.

BAMBI, by Felix Salten, translated from the German by Whittaker Chambers, with a foreword by John Galsworthy (10mo, 293 pages; Simon & Schuster: \$2.50) is composed with such simplicity that it might well serve as a text to trace the distinction between fine writing and fine feeling. There is no artifice here, unless one gives that name to an occasional twinkle of gentle irony. The story is unfolded so quietly that one can quite hear the stillness of the forest in which it is set. Being a poet, the author is not so much concerned with what may be reported by observation as he is intent upon what may be conveyed by imagination. He has written a story about animals which is neither condescending nor conventional.

SWAN SONG, by John Galsworthy (12mo, 360 pages; Scribner's: \$2.50). One can very well admire here, the dexterity, judgement, and continence of a practised novelist getting up loose ends of prior tales into a story of some worth and being. *Swan Song* is not an advance upon *The White Monkey* or *The Silver Spoon*, its companions in the wake of the *Saga*, nor is it any more than they, a needed convoy for that great ship of fiction. Yet it is well-contained, and what can be done it does with an eminent technique and sympathies that though thin at several points are rich at others. The tale seems principally concerned with the recrudescence of Fleur Forsyte's passion for her cousin Jon Forsyte, but perhaps the deeper centre of sympathy in the picture lies in her father, Soames, the man of property, that "dry grey spirit." The depiction here is no better than that in the *Saga*, but it is certainly good.

THE EEL AND OTHER POEMS, by Evan Morgan, with foreword by Alfred Noyes (10mo, 55 pages; Brentano's: \$1.50). These poems breathe a spirit of resignation not far removed from melancholy, and one has the feeling that the mood is dictated less by experience than by the conscious assumption of a rôle. The poet speaks truly when he addresses Uriel, the Angel of Death: "Oh, I have thought of you too much. . . ." The brooding quality of the verses is akin to an exquisite line from *The Infanta Passes*: "Distant murmurs ever ebbing nearer murmurs overtake."

NOCTURNES AND AUTUMNALS, by David Morton (10mo, 52 pages; Putnam: \$1.75). No reader who has been saturated with old poetic sentiment can fail to respond to these gentle, sad, plaintive sonnets. As free from rhetoric as they are immune to modernity there is here such authentic response to the more wistful undertones of Nature that the absence of human intensity, of any revolt or of any acceptance of life, in the philosophical sense, is felt to be a relief rather than a drawback. The technical difficulty of the form itself does not obtrude. From sonnet to sonnet we are beguiled along an easy way, melancholy, tender, slow; and are touched without being transported.

THE OXFORD BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE, 18th to 20th Centuries, chosen and edited by Bliss Carmen (12mo, 680 pages; Oxford University Press, American Branch: \$3.75). What this substantial and mechanically well-made volume must suggest are the limitations of American poetry. Certain of the selections, it is true, such as that from Whitman's *Song of Myself*, or from the Santayana sonnets, or from Robert Frost, afford satisfactions. But one cannot feel that all or perhaps even a majority of the inclusions are of this sort. The polished pedestrianism of Henry Van Dyke, Thomas Nelson Page, Maurice Thompson, Charles W. Stoddard, William Winter, Edward S. Martin, Richard Burton, Rose Terry Cooke, and too many others of the same calibre here included is only such, the reader must feel, as can—and will ultimately—be spared.

HUC AND GABET: Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China, translated from the French by William Hazlitt, now edited with introduction by Professor Paul Pelliot (2 vols., 8vo, 793 pages; Harpers: \$10) is a narrative so curious and so antique in flavour that one might readily imagine it to be the work of Marco Polo's contemporaries rather than the travel recital of two nineteenth-century monks. The two adventurers seemingly bore a charmed life, going serenely forward in the face of all hazards, inclined to take a charitable view of what they observed, no matter how contrary it might be to their own belief. Concerning certain worldly details, of course, they manifested a proper degree of monastic indifference. The jewelled adornments of the Tartar women, for example, are dismissed as "spangles of gold and silver, pearls, coral and a thousand other toys, the form and quality of which it would be difficult for us to define, as we had neither opportunity, nor taste, nor patience to pay serious attention to these futilities." Perhaps it was opportunity—rather than taste or patience—which they chiefly lacked. In any event, they had plenty of all three for most purposes, as these chapters abundantly testify.

CONTEMPORARIES OF MARCO POLO, edited by Manuel Komroff (8vo, 358 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3.50). Curious are the customs and strange are the practices which came to the notice of the four worthy travellers whose records have been made beguilingly accessible in this volume. That William of Rubruck and John of Pian de Carpini and Friar Odoric and Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela are all equally reliable reporters one is quite ready to believe for the sake of the relish which their recitals impart, although Friar Odoric is the only one sufficiently mindful of the scepticism of posterity to put his probity on oath, in these solemn words: "I—before almighty God—do here make record of nothing but of that only of which I am as sure as a man may be sure." In any event, one does not doubt that the Tartars, as Friar William affirms, "are very scrupulous, and take diligent heed not to drink pure water by itself." To these colourful narratives, Mr Komroff contributes an introduction and a bibliography.

TRAVELS IN NORTH AFRICA, by Nahum Slouschz (12mo, 488 pages; Jewish Publication Society of America: \$2). The penetration of French civilization into the African countries bordering the Mediterranean will inevitably do away with the distinctive type of African Jew; Mr Slouschz has made a valuable contribution to the social history of his race in this first-hand survey. Traits and traditions which have endured for centuries are rapidly being submerged. This transitional period is not, in the opinion of the author, without compensations. In general, he finds himself in harmony with the French policy of "gallicizing the Jews without dejudaising them."

ADVENTURES OF AN AFRICAN SLAVER, by Captain Theodore Canot, edited with introduction by Malcolm Cowley, illustrated by Miguel Covarrubias (8vo, 376 pages, A. & C. Boni: \$4) is a supremely interesting autobiography of a man who was either a glutton for adventure or, as one suspects, ascribed to himself whatever adventures seemed most interesting. The book is written in the style of the 1850's—the actual verbiage being by one Brantz Mayer; nevertheless it is vivid, it has terrific go, and it tells terrible things. The modern editor has done an excellent job, the make-up and illustrations are excellent, and the whole makes one wonder why—since this is a success—shoddy like *Trader Horn* should also succeed.

KIT CARSON, *The Happy Warrior of the Old West*, by Stanley Vestal (8vo, 297 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50) will not fail to quicken the pulse of even the least pioneer of readers. Mr Vestal seems to have had a happy endowment for his task; he has served up his hero with an effective blend of appreciation and restraint, so that the picturesque trapper and fighter is delineated neither as a circus-poster absurdity nor as a stock pattern for five-reel westerns. The measure of the man, as his biographer points out, is discernible in the brief notes on his own life which he dictated but could not read. "Constantly in his memoirs," remarks Mr Vestal, "he uses the expression 'concluded to charge them, done so' all in one sentence. To Kit decision and action were but two steps in one process." One suspects that Wall Street chooses its executives from Kit Carson stock.

HAVELOCK ELLIS, Philosopher of Love, by Houston Peterson (8vo, 432 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$4.50). This biography is not perhaps in the tradition of incisiveness, and even suffers somewhat from over-quotation, especially from the elsewhere available works of Dr Ellis. Still these are not impassable hindrances to those who are interested in the subject, and in reading through these four hundred pages one comes to a very full impression of the immense and various activities of scholarship, the poise and courage, the humanity, the tranquil and elastic mind that have made Dr Ellis so great a modern.

W. E. GLADSTONE, by Osbert Burdett (8vo, 307 pages; Houghton Mifflin Company: \$4). Not perhaps the most completely shaped and stated of biographies this volume yet represents effective sifting of the apparent multiplicities of Gladstone's vast life, a sifting from which there issues an intelligible impression of the man's inscrutably vital personality. The hortatory powers, the tremendous earnestness of this "muscular Christian of politics" were not, we learn, at the service of convictions particularly his own but rather of his obscure but delicate sense of the convictions of his constituents, or of his even obscurer but even more profound sense of what would be their convictions on the political morrow. It was not that he was insincere. On the contrary, it was his sincerity that made him the mountainous figure he was in British politics. The biography is a considered and persuasive interpretation of character.

THE TRAINING OF AN AMERICAN, The Earlier Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page, by Burton J. Hendrick (8vo, 444 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5). If he is not a genealogist the reader would do well to begin this book at Chapter V, which deals with Page's apprenticeship to journalism. The previous chapters are the customary eulogium of parents, grandparents, school-fellows, and early days. With Chapter V, however, the letters begin to appear, in those short explanatory settings which were so successful in the preceding volumes. There is then present to the reader, in the person of Page, the editor of *The Forum* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, and throughout, an individuality of pungency and mark, amply prejudiced but with an inspiring range of imagination, infused with idealistic fire but having also a telling sense of what could and could not be accomplished in the contemporary scene. Pagan *mots* are frequent, such as, "It is easy to mistake bad judgment for bad luck; indeed they do belong to the same family."

CHRISTOPHER C. ANDREWS, Pioneer in Forestry Conservation in the United States: for sixty years a Dominant Influence in the Public Affairs of Minnesota: Lawyer: Editor: Diplomat: General in the Civil War. Recollections: 1829-1922, edited by his daughter Alice E. Andrews, with an introduction by William Watts Folwell, LL.D. (8vo, 327 pages; Arthur H. Clark Co.: \$6). The title-page quoted above suggests, correctly, that the subject had an interesting life and met interesting and important people, that he was a good public servant and citizen. The book adds nothing to that suggestion.

CONTEMPORARIES: Current Forms of Composition From Lawrence C. Woodman's Coe College Freshman English Classes 1927-1928, edited by Roland Kampmeier, with introductions by Jay G. Sigmund, Lawrence C. Woodman, and Louis Burkhalter (12mo, 200+60 pages; Kruse Publishing Co., Vinton, Iowa: \$2 post-paid from Lawrence C. Woodman, R. F. D. # 4, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; \$1.60 post-paid to teachers of English). In these specimens of creative writing, one is trammelled by various standard phases of journalistic abundance—by “thrilled”; “weird”; “wonderful”; “enthused”; and “quite” used in the sense of somewhat; by jocoseness, selfconsciousness, didacticism; and by other burst bonds which collegiate monasticism should take account of. But an instructor's belief that his students can write poetry, plays, essays, or fiction, constitutes help which customary willingness to depend upon text-books “a lot”, and despair of “around half the students”, cannot give. Certain of the selections attain depth of presentment, and exhibit a concentration and simplicity which do charm one.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, by Joseph Gordon Macleod (12mo, 303 pages; Viking Press: \$2.50) formulates an aesthetic standard—“in Art everything is permissible except bad Aesthetic”—and applies it rigorously to the whole range of literature. Mr Macleod does not moisten his tongue and affix labels in the facile manner of the superficial critic; he thinks hard and in a straight line. “There is no fence between naïveté and supreme genius: for both are the speech of isolation,” he writes. Again, “You cannot read poetry as you read grammar, because in grammar there are no silences.” Particularly illuminating is the distinction which the author makes between art “that is a channel to sublimation” and art which is an avenue to the sublime. One can hardly hope to reduce Mr Macleod's cogent reasoning to a paragraph. Those who still find the analytical study of literature exciting will welcome the refreshment of these pages.

CHARACTER AND THE CONDUCT OF LIFE, by William McDougall (10mo, 394 pages; Putnam: \$3.75). Professor McDougall here presents a treatise on the art of self-management from the psychological point of view. His counsels are no doubt psychological and rational enough, and one is perhaps the better persuaded to virtue in being afforded psychological reasons for it. Yet all in all, there seems little more here than any tolerably informed modern adult would have taken for granted. The reader will find a more lively, compact, and suggestive contribution to the same subject in Arnold Bennett's *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day*.

THE METAPHYSICS OF PRAGMATISM, by Sidney Hook (8vo, 144 pages; Open Court Publishing Company: \$2). Though *un*-controversial this brief book is yet, within its scope, not far from a model apologia for the pragmatist. It contributes substantially toward the just synthesis of the positions of the pragmatic pioneers (Pierce and Dewey more than James) with the positions of their critics, the philosophers of the classical tradition. In such assimilation, doubtless, both parties to the treaty must suffer modification, but the present author can be seen to possess the tact of thought, the readiness to see more than parts, which is often able to show that “modifications” are really “harmonies.” Not least among the merits of the book are the ease and order of its expression.

COMMENT

STRANGE things are said about good people and none stranger than remarks hazarded about geniuses as if they were boxers or champion live-stock. When one cannot appraise out of one's own experience, the temptation to blunder is minimized, but even when one can, appraisal seems chiefly useful as appraisal of the appraiser.

In the months which have passed since the death of Dame Ellen Terry, the irresponsibility of some and the assumed responsibility of others have suggested these acerbities; but the sense of benefit one has always experienced in the thought of her makes acerbities not the right word, for her generosity should mellow us toward the littleness of those who would make little of her uncommon gift and attainments—to say nothing of her sense of honour—not always associated with genius. She felt it “hateful” to be “compelled to break faith,” “hated the idea of drawing a large salary and doing next to no work,” and felt that “not until we have learned to be useful can we afford to do what we like.” “The artist,” she said, “must spend his life in incessant labor” and she notes in Henry Irving “a kind of fine temper, like the purest steel, produced by the perpetual fight against difficulties,” his fortune “counted not in gold, but in years of scorned delights” and “deep melancholy.” The axiom is not a favourite with artists, that “before you can be eccentric you must know where the circle is,” but Miss Terry had the mystic's conviction that humility and common sense are the same thing. She recollects eagerly Mrs Kean's sharp lessons in enunciation: “You must say, *her* not *har*; it's *God*, not *Gud*; *remon*strance, not *remun*strance;” but she also notes that to take criticism in a slavish spirit is of little use and it is a picture of herself she gives us in bequeathing the instruction, pace “is not a question of swift utterance only, but of swift thinking.”

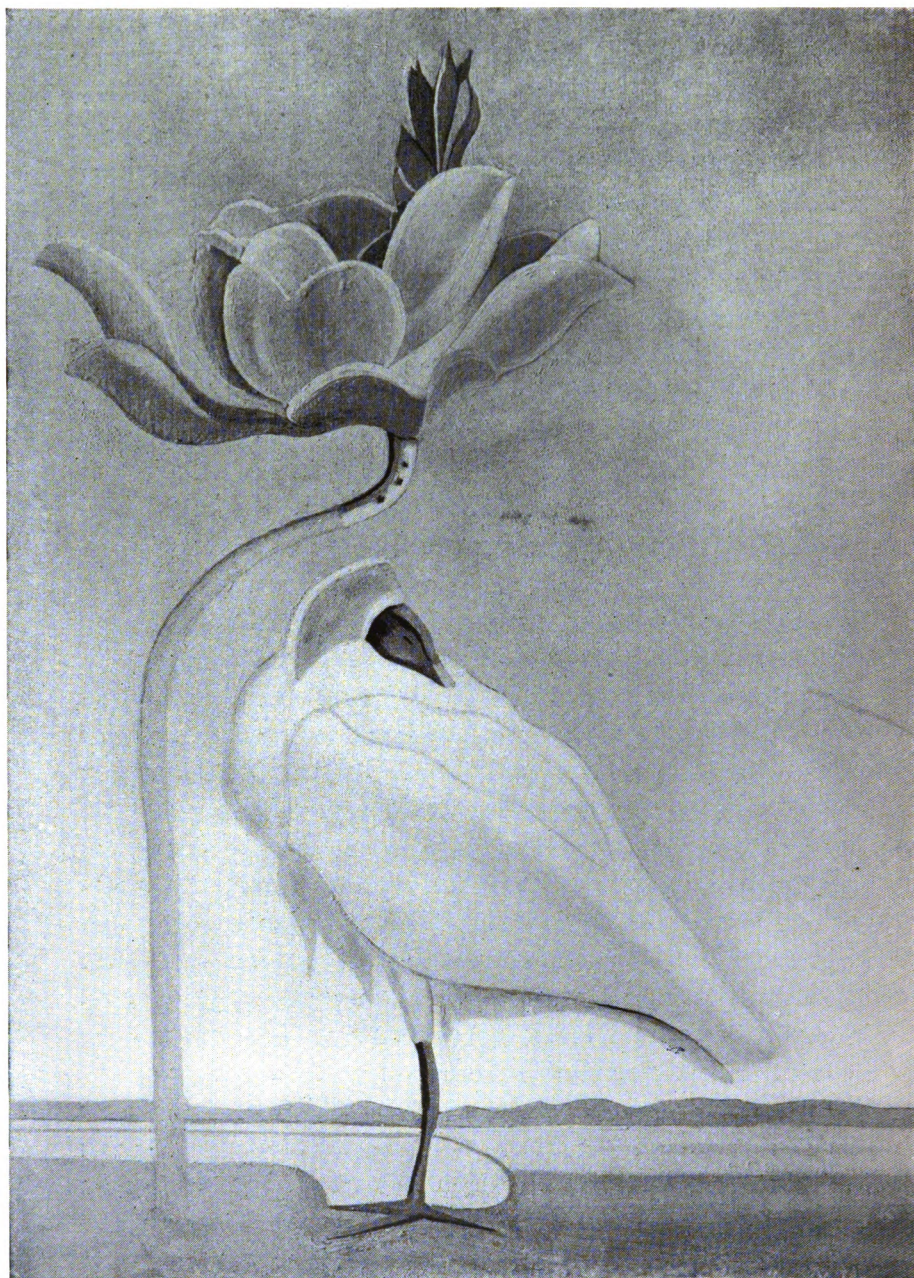
Familiar as the word gratitude is, and Ellen Terry was incandescently grateful, its fire is not something to be learned like the “ardent exits” she studied to perfect. With her it was innately a part of that goodness without malice which speaks so unself-protectively of our (America's) able architects, our scholarly critics, of our young girls each with a cast of the Winged Victory in her

room, and of our negro servants as "delightful," "so attractive," "so deft and gentle."

"Why the word 'theatrical' should have come to be used in a contemptuous sense," Miss Terry wrote, "I cannot understand;" nor can we, recalling the imagination and sensibility which some have brought to the theatre. The sense of "life as imagination"—shared by her son, but first hers—constitutes a nimbus before which death retires. Imagination receives homage, but "Principalities and Powers and Possibilities," that "crowd of unseen forms," "those words which are never heard," "those figures which seldom shape themselves more definitely than a cloud's shadow," bequeath more than bays. In such presence, as a writer in this issue of *THE DIAL* reminds us

"Time is but a shadow
Which forever passeth away."

Imagination, moreover, that is kind, travels far without occasion to carp, and despite the suddenness of certain "terrific" scenery which she did not quite like, Miss Terry thought America "a land of sunshine and light, of happiness, of faith in the future." We ourselves scarcely find it in harmony with the oldness of England. But not all of it is without usefulness—the modest value she bespoke for herself. One recalls her saying, "I *have* been a useful actress." A gallant bowsprit that leads when heavier vessels sink, she never spoke of being tired, though she says somewhere, "the long low lines of my Sussex marshland near Winchelsea give me rest." One instinctively envies the children who came to her garden of their own accord, but association so gentle was fitting; and those remote and deprived will cherish the lines well liked by Miss Terry herself, "e'en in our ashes burn our wonted fires."



Courtesy of the Dudensing Galleries

SERENITY. BY JOSEPH STELLA

THE DIAL

NOVEMBER 1928

A GLANCE AT THE SOUL OF JAPAN

BY PAUL CLAUDEL

Translated From the French by Lillian Chamberlain

WHEN I was asked by my friend, Gorai, collaborator with Professor Michel Revon in the compilation of that admirable *Anthologie de la Littérature Japonaise* (which never leaves my work-table) to discuss the subject of French tradition, I said that I was not quite equal to the task. It is almost as difficult to speak of one's country as of one's self. Between the impression which we have of ourselves and that which we make upon sincere and unbiassed persons who have come expressly to study us, there is a difference which the books of travellers permit us to savour in all its piquancy. And while it is easy to accuse them of naïveté or malice, is it quite certain that they are always in the wrong, and that we only are irrefutable witnesses of ourselves? For the most part, to tell the truth, people act without being really conscious of what they are doing, they are not actuated by reasonable and definite motives which they could instantly explain, but by habit, by instinctive, extemporized response to the impulsions of circumstance, duty, necessity—by an empirical application of instruction accepted without question and acted upon without reflection. We inhabit a certain corner of nature and society as we inhabit our bodies—in the same naïve, comfortable, ignorant, animal way—and when we are invited by a direct question or false inference to explain this or that action, are subject to confusion or offence much as if we had been asked to justify our eyes or nose. It has to be so because it *is* so, and we cannot visualize the pictorial,

NOTE: An address before the students of the University of Nikko.

pristine effect that we have on strangers. They alone can distinguish what is characteristic, special, and at times unique in an act or mode of behaviour, a mental attitude which seems to us natural and inevitable. A native, however, again has the advantage when he attempts to understand reasons for the often bizarre and disconcerting effect which he makes upon visitors. As throwing light on it he has in his possession a rich store of archives, of incidents, and of data, which afford him in relation to himself, somewhat the outside disinterested position of critic, and at the same time, a sort of intuitiveness and sympathy which enable him retroactively to prolong for his consideration the experiences of his forefathers and ancestors, very much as if their life were his own. It is this experience, short, long, conscious or unconscious—that we call national tradition. You have more direct access to it than is afforded in the briefs of our country or in a few arbitrarily selected illustrations. Entrance to this most intimate tribunal of our national mind, to this sort of continual parliament where all litigation is carried on, where all cases are heard and all judgements are rendered, this supreme record which enters into all our legal proceedings, all our intellectual customs, is our language. The French language is at once the most perfect product and most incontrovertible certificate of our national tradition. It has been the chief means of building up a people comprising twenty distinct races, from the residue of I know not how many invasions and migrations following one upon the other. Arrived at this land's end, brought up short against the European jetty, these peoples found themselves compelled to establish between their distinctive strata and cross-sections, a solidarity, an accord which the land also imposed upon them. Though ethnologically diverse, France is one and indivisible geographically, and counsels to disruption are less puissant by far than are the necessities for concentration. There could be among the French none but spiritual controversies, and to the intellect alone could the task of reconciliation be confided. Every citizen of this chance variform assemblage which had emerged from the ruins of the Roman Empire and the moraines of Barbary thus found himself inclined to become an orator, a diplomat, a jurist. He was led to seek in general and enduring forces underlying special fortuities, an explanation of the existence of the nation. Add that geographically France is not the slave of fixed conditions, is not committed indefinitely to a repetition of the same course of action, but is so

situated that nothing of general import can take place in the occident without involving her. And she must continually arrange her affairs in such a way as to balance conditions, modifying them at times by inducing, at times by arresting action, always counterbalancing some element in the general situation. To solve the new problems with which he was constantly being confronted the Frenchman had need not so much of empiricism as of a general principle for forming judgements. Our longest war, the Hundred Years' War, was but a juridic debate punctuated with appeals to arms. That France should have been placed by providence at the intersection of all continental interests precludes the possibility of rigidly prescribing her destiny or of arbitrarily setting limits for her. Law must intervene. The treaties of Westphalia and Utrecht and the acts of Vienna and Versailles were not mere redistributions of territory, they were above all, formulated principles of which the new map divisions were but a consequence. And what is true of our foreign policies is equally true of our domestic ones. Each Frenchman, . . . heir of twenty miscellaneous races, has always constituted—to himself—a little sovereignty carrying on a continual diplomatic and judicial interchange of thought and feeling with neighbouring sovereignties, under the authority of a sort of scattered but all-powerful tribunal called Opinion. From this fact arises not only the importance we attach to literature and to language, but also that thing so characteristically essential to both—whether it be prose or poetry, whether concerned with psychology or description—the passionate desire for accuracy. We are always explaining, and explaining ourselves. The desire with us to perfect the language and make it efficient has been not merely the ambition of a few highly cultured persons, but a matter of great practical importance; we could not too highly esteem and cherish the chief instrument of our national unity which, in the course of a continually open debate, has permitted us to take cognizance of our permanent mission and successive obligations. Thus was established little by little, this habitual attitude of the Frenchman to life, having for its main characteristic, inclination for discussion. He is by nature a jurist, in every instance his instinct is to seek causes and, if I may be permitted to play on words, also to plead them (since the same term with us is used to designate the explanation of a thing's existence and the legal process by which is established one's right to it). In France literature has not been the

expression of a few exceptional minds; it has been rather the necessity of an entire race, the uninterrupted means of communication between its different geographical divisions, conducive to mastering every new problem brought forward. Every Frenchman has always had the sense of speaking before a tribunal of experts, any one of whom was qualified to ask him to explain every word.

It is one of these Frenchmen whose mental attitude I have been trying to give an idea of, who would bring his still naïve testimony, before reflection and habit have had time to distort and blunt it. . . . Pilgrim of many journeys, it was but yesterday that he disembarked on this shore which for so many years had enriched his mental horizon. And having once passed the utilitarian zone in which the everyday needs of humanity are supplied in Japan as elsewhere by the same apparatus of machinery and buildings, he immediately finds himself face to face with a country which is not, like so many countries in Europe or America, a simple agricultural or industrial enterprise, the inn of a day or a night, patronized without special intention or thought—but an hereditary domain the significance of which is less the practical convenience of its immediate occupants than the composing of a solemn and instructive spectacle. Everything Japanese from the outline of a mountain to that of a hairpin or a *saké* bowl is in conformity with a single style. In order to discover Japanese tradition it is not necessary, as in the case of the French, to penetrate to that intimate tribunal in which ideas arise and mental attitudes make trial of their strength; there is nothing to do but open eyes and ears to this irresistible concert about us to which each generation must in turn tune its instruments and voice.

Let us listen, but in order to hear we must first create silence. Music begins only where noise ceases. Let this confused tumult of velleity and words subside in us. If I were one of your mystic pilgrims, I should induce this by having an ancient ritual prayer recited over me and should surrender myself to the benediction of the little brush which confers purity and contemplativeness. Here I am, one of the followers in the train of a certain personage in your literature, the poetess Murasaki, or the bonze Kennko, who persuades me to tread silently in the path of mysteries. It seems to me I hear the rustle of noble silk or the click of the chaplet against the alms-bowl. I follow an endless alley of enormous cedars with coloured trunks which lose themselves in black velvet; a fierce ray

of sunlight sears with lightning stroke an indecipherable inscription on a stone pillar. The windings of the strange road serve to evade demons and to separate me for ever from a profane world. Over a coral arch I cross a jade pool (is it this pool which by a fugitive gleam of light between the motionless pads of the lotus, will discover to me my invisible companions?). Shadowed by the centuries I pour upon my hands from a sebilla, water so piercing, so cold, that I am born again. Behind the closed door I listen for the bell tolling slowly as though meditating; a waxlight burns, and below in the chaos of leaves I hear the voice of the cuckoo answering the liturgy of the cascade.

And it is here I perceive the distinctively Japanese attitude to life to be that which for lack of better equivalent—French does not offer great resources for expressing this sentiment—I shall call reverence, respect, free acceptance of an exaltation too great for the intellect, the sinking of personality in circumambient mystery, the sense of an enveloping presence which makes incumbent upon one a measured decorum. It is not for nothing that Japan has been called the land of Kami, and this traditional characterization . . . seems to me the most perfect that has been achieved. Japan is like a dense bank of clouds on the bosom of a boundless ocean. Its jagged shores, its inner harbours, its mysterious openings are to the sailor a continual surprise. Its mountainous framework constitutes not only one of the most complex formations in the world, but one disturbed by mysterious convulsions, the precarious nature of which is attested by the tremors which still agitate the unstable soil. It is like a stage-setting which the mechanics have just left, the back-drop and wings still shaking a little. The plains of Japan are among the most populous parts of the world, but certain mountainous districts, vast tracts of veritable jungle recalling the tropics, are still as uninhabited as at the day of Creation. On every side, nothing but valleys, folded and refolded; forests blacker than night, inextricable tangles of reeds, ferns, and bamboos. Over it all, and at some seasons almost continuously, descends a curtain of rain; here wander those strange vapours of which ancient and modern Japanese painters have with such sovereign result availed themselves, vapours which by turns hide and disclose as though on purpose corners of the landscape, as if someone wished to call them to our attention and expose for a moment their occult significance. And above the whole country, dominating plain and mountain, sea

and island, the most majestic altar as it were, that Nature ever raised to her Creator—a landmark thousands of years old, worthy to commemorate the spot where the Sun after speeding far over watery wastes, prepares to engage in the human phase of its activity—rises the heroic form of Fuji.¹

Thus to whichever side one directs his glance, he finds himself surrounded with veils which open only to close again, with silent awe-inspiring retreats to which there are long winding paths like those of an initiation ceremony, with funereal shades, with strange objects—an old tree-trunk, a stone worn by water, like indecipherable sacred documents—with perspectives which discover themselves to him only through rock porticoes or colonnades of trees. All nature is a temple prepared for worship. In Japan there are none of those great rivers, none of those vast plains with gradually ascending sky-lines, which entice the dreamer and invite the spirit to endless voyaging. At each step the imagination is arrested as it were by the fold of a screen and an arranged perspective, the hidden meaning of which bespeaks the homage of his attention. The artist or hermit need only mark it by a Shinto gate-way or a lantern, or a splendid temple, or by erecting a simple stone. But it is never the edifice, however gilded, which seems to me to be as in Europe, its soul. It is a casket, a censer placed obscurely to induce a consciousness of the great solemnity of nature, and so to speak objectify it. Like these few characters or brush-strokes, with a vermilion seal added, which the poet or artist disposes on a sheet of white paper.

While the European of to-day sees in his environment a realm merely calculated to contribute to his comfort or profit, without doubt to the traditional Japanese, Creation is first of all the work of God, still permeated with divine influences; and since in Japan one does not enter the home of the humblest peasant without removing one's shoes, with what reverence ought not mortals to comport themselves in approaching the parvis before the abode of Higher Powers, privileged by them to use it in common with them? Repeating what I said a moment ago, just as temples here seem not to have been built with a deliberate purpose but rather in answer to the latent prayer of the landscape, thickening by art the dense forest shade, as here in sacred Nikko; guiding the voices of these ever-flowing waters; rendering permanent on the black of the

¹ In Japan a man need not pray; the very soil is divine. Hitomara.

foliage the gold and scarlet of a ray of sun; imprisoning the thunder under a bronze bell; repeating and making more solemn by the upward flight of porticoes and stairways, an ascending earth; reiterating by their avenues of giant witnesses the reticent appeal of the sanctuary; so in the same way, what else do their crowds of pilgrims venerate—those pilgrims who with an affecting zeal, do not cease to throng these temples?—what do they worship behind the ever lowered curtains? A mirror as it were reflecting heaven, a drop of the primordial Waters, the name of saint or ancestor carved on a tablet, something confounded with night—above all, night itself, that mystery upon which the naïve heart piously meditates.

I have been struck forcibly by the fact that as expressions of Buddhism during the primitive period in Japan, at Nara for example, one sees numbers of very beautiful statues. Later, and in proportion as Japan had time to impose her own character on the imported religion, these set representations became more and more rare. They withdrew into denser and denser shade until finally, in modern times, they have neither form nor voice.

It is something quite invisible in the sacred cave that they are trying to reach—this humble woman who claps her hands two or three times, this group of mystics who cast a handful of pennies into the box, this little girl who climbs the temple steps uncertainly and wakens the bronze frog at the end of the thrice-twisted cotton rope.

The supernatural in Japan is then nothing but nature, is literally supernature, that region of superior reality in which brute fact is metamorphosed into meaning. It does not contradict law but rather emphasizes the mysteriousness of it. The whole purport of religion is to induce humility and silence in the presence of that which is everlasting. The patriotism of the Japanese accordingly seems to me above all, unbroken communion with his country—that is to say, poignant contemplation of the face of nature. Among the crowds of voluntary pilgrims at all the noted scenic spots, nothing could be more striking than the long file of school-children whom their masters are conducting to a special point that they in turn may receive the impression by which so many generations have been influenced. This attitude of reverence and ceremony has here become a habit of the soul, not only upon visiting spots signalized as privileged seats of divine influence but in the presence of all

created beings who are, like us, the work of one father and the revelation of his will. The relationship expresses itself in gesture and ceremonial. I recall how, upon an early visit to Kyoto, as I walked in one of the beautiful gardens which are the charm of that incomparable city, a great pine that I saw stirred me, penetrating my consciousness; it was almost ready to fall, but was supported by a sort of enormous crutch that someone had piously fitted to it. This tree seemed to me not merely what it would be to an American or European—a mine of boards, a mute thing in the landscape—but a live being, a sort of vegetable grandfather to whom someone had lent filial assistance. Nothing is commoner than to see a tree of unusual proportions or a distinctively shaped rock encircled with a strand of sacred rice straw and thus placed among things Kami, testifying to the attention visitors have bestowed on it and to their gratitude for its existence. When a household pet has died, it is carried to the temple where the *nembutsu* is recited over it by the bonze; no life however humble is, in disappearing, too valueless for religious commitment. A merchant, a seller of rat-poison, will commemorate by a service, rodents his product has destroyed; and a stationer, old brushes which are past usefulness. Finally and prettiest of all—I read the other day in a newspaper that the wood-engravers' association of Tokyo had engaged in a ceremony to honour the cherry-trees whose substance they had used in their art.

It is this reverent, worshipful feeling—a kindly, tender fellowship with the world of creatures—in which the secret of Japan's art consists. It is striking that in appreciating the products of it, our taste has long been at variance with that of Japan. We prefer the engravings and paintings of the Ukigoye school, looked upon in Japan as of a rather decadent period, but one for which I may be pardoned for having, personally, kept my first enthusiasm: it admits of a strong, stately, dramatic, brilliant, witty, picturesque, infinitely varied and animated rendering of familiar sights, man in his customary setting and employments being given chief place in it. Whereas the trend of Japanese taste is toward antiquity—pictures from which man is absent for the most part or is present only in monastic equivalent, as immobile nearly as the trees and stones. A carp, a monkey hanging from a branch, a few flowers, a landscape with level superimposed above level, which a master brush has painted with strokes as definite as handwriting—such are the things presented for the most part on these priceless kakemonos

recovered from the depths of the past by their happy possessors and unrolled before us with infinite care. And sometimes just at first, we barbarians, who feel that we must be surprised and entertained, have a sense of disappointment. We lack the humility which would permit the soul to be affectionately united to this tender shoot beginning to quicken, to this potent stroke of the tail of the fish rising from the dusky slime into regions of aquatic light. It is but gradually we perceive that life itself is before us in this delightful suppleness, this exactitude, this exquisite suspension of movement which, for instance, directs and informs this monkey from the points of his claws to the tip of his tail (it is not a monkey in motion, but motion become monkey), this savant, naïve choice of treatment, this patient contemplation joined to lightning rapidity of hand, this rigidly austere suppressing of unnecessary alien elements; it is no longer art but life itself, in action, which is disclosed to you, more divine by reason of its anonymity. Observe this trivial fraction of life which, thanks to the devout unselfative artist, has become alive for all time. And even as the grand seigneurs of former days preferred to gold and crystal vases a simple earthen bowl to which the potter had imparted the resilience of flesh and the brightness of dew, so in striving to express the eternal, these great artists, often priests, have painted not only gods and symbols but things the most fragile and ephemeral, the most pristine stirring of the ineffable source, a bird, a butterfly, less: an opening flower, a falling leaf. By the magic point of a brush this has been so ordained. The very thing is here before us, alive and immortal, its transitoriness henceforth indestructible.

So evident is this to me that I shall not labour the manner in which a reverence so deep in the heart of the Japanese, has come to determine the modalities of their ordinary life. The nature of the tie between the nation and their sovereign is well known; it is not exaggeration, moreover, to say that in ancient Japanese society, all human relationships of family, clan, and corporation, were obedient to the dictates of an all but sacred ritual. In no country has the Confucian principle of seemly behaviour been more generally or more nobly exemplified. If indeed something of mystery and divinity be attributed to inanimate objects, how much more appropriately would it pertain to man. Japanese grammar yields itself to variations of time and circumstance, and to degrees of respect and formality required by the dignity of the speaker and

of the persons addressed, and of the occasion in question. It is marked by an hereditary politeness which I truly hope the Japanese will never lose despite the bad examples set them.¹ It is always a surprise to us occidentals to see one coachman salute another pleasantly in passing as though to apologize, instead of reviling him as would be the case in London or Paris. Can you imagine a chauffeur who, like the chauffeur of one of my Tokyo colleagues, goes weekly to burn incense at the tomb of the forty-seven Ronins? It is moreover the personal consciousness in each man, of something sacred and inviolable which explains the extreme nature of Japan's ancient code of honour. When the inmost sanctuary of his personality had suffered insult, a man had to disappear or cause his insulter to disappear. Finally, I detect this mystic instinct, this sanctity even in the sensibility which informs profound feelings and emotions, in the very care even, with which objects that you hold dear are concealed—even in the complicated art of boxes and multiple envelopes in which presents, purchases, and small domestic treasures are cunningly clothed and dissembled. Regarding this little thesis as no more than a surface enquiry into psychology, as but a tentative summing-up, I shall close with what illustrates as it seems to me the way in which Japanese religious feeling has something in common with that of humanity as a whole. I am reading with much admiration and benefit, the reminiscences of a man who has devoted his life to serving the poor, who lives among beggars and prostitutes in one of the most wretched quarters of Kobe, and I borrow from him to make myself clear to you. He writes, after having been converted to Christianity, that what made the strongest impression on him in the teachings of the gospel was the commandment not merely to love one's neighbour but also to honour him. Not only ought we to love creatures the most degraded spiritually and materially, but also to value and honour them as being, like us, the creatures, the living temples of Divinity. They, even more than we, bear the special mark of his hand (like this pine twisted into the supplicating attitude of a paralytic!). Nothing is more Christian than this sublime sentiment, and I rejoice to believe, more characteristically and profoundly Japanese.

¹ The profound, oft repeated reverences, set off by words and glances, with which Loti diverts himself in *Madame Chrysanthemum*, testify to the satisfaction we experience in penetrating further and further the identity of those we meet. They give time for preparation, for the adjusting of our hearts, *siaosin* in the Chinese proverb.

There remains for me but to glance back with you over the landscape we have been regarding, and to conclude with a consideration of certain prospects which the future holds out to us.

It seems to me that at the foundation of the traditional Japanese soul is respect—a subordinating of personality to the object considered, deferent recognition of the life and of the things which surround one. Religion in Japan has not thus far been the worship of a transcendent Being, but is specifically associated with nature and with that society in which it exists; and although it resembles the religions of India and China in that it is without belief in a precise revelation from the other world, it differs profoundly from both. The Indian is essentially a contemplative, meditating continually on the same thing—a verdure eternally non-existent, ever hiding and ever hidden. The Chinese, distributed over the greatest fertile tract of land on the face of the earth has been preoccupied for the most part with regulating the individual's relations to his fellow-man, with the formulating of moral and practical laws enabling brothers to divide an inheritance of land and water without violence or recourse to law. The Japanese belongs to an isolated unit that has shown throughout centuries its ability to forgo contact with the rest of the world. His country is a kind of sanctuary built and adorned, in which he watches a brilliant, significant ceremonial, progress throughout successive rites, from one year's end to the next, from January snows till the shoots make their way up out of the earth under the warm rain of the *nynbai*, from April's exhalations of the rose to autumn's conflagration. Life for him is participation in this august calendar as the child of an ancient family takes part in the traditional anniversaries of the household. He allies himself with nature rather than subjugates it, adjusts his life to her ceremonial, observes her, follows her, renders her speech and her detail more perfect; their lives intermingle. In no country is there more acute understanding between man and nature, or a more evident reciprocal imprint. For two centuries they have but contemplated each other. May one not hope that this communion shall endure and that its teaching to the rest of humanity shall not fail, that alien buildings, commonplace and unrelated to the ground on which they stand, shall not—like the howls of slaves and of the damned—drown with discord the music of these enchanted isles? As often as I return to France I note with chagrin the growth of a vile invention, a scourge worse than

phylloxera, which is destroying the beauty of our landscape: I refer to the machine-made tile, a thing of artificial and rigid aspect like the soul of a serf, whose strident red is replacing the beautiful tapestry of faded purple like Bokhara wool, the honourable old roofing of Champagne and Provence. Introduced into the most harmonious landscape, a single touch of this insolent, inexpugnable carmine is enough to ruin every other effect like an imbecile's laugh shattering orchestral harmony. So, in Japan also, unless means are found to check these pernicious materials, I fear that re-enforced concrete and zinc may work like havoc. According to an old Chinese superstition, the *fong shui*, natural harmony cannot be impaired with impunity, and should nature be travestied or its form and meaning effaced, human beings in that dishonoured region will be exposed to every malign influence. I hope there may never be such a day for Japan, and that peaceful union of man and earth will endure through the ages, as in the words of your national hymn, "like the moss on the rock."

N. E. LANDSCAPE

BY MARSHALL SCHACHT

Now to this rusty field
 crows gather, and the autumn yield
 is lost in smoke.
 What once was oak
 is nothing but the memory of oak,
 a song upon a reed,
 a fallen star, the windy seed
 of the milkweed flower
 that winds devour
 in fields that speak the language Lazarus spoke.



MAX WEBER

WOODCUT. BY MAX WEBER



MAX WEBER

WOODCUT. BY MAX WEBER

THIRD DECLAMATION

BY KENNETH BURKE

COMING upon the rock, we likened it to a gun-boat, or to the crust of some enormous pre-historic turtle, and climbed aboard this monster's kindly back to ride statically through the woods of hickory and oak, and among the scattering of lesser boulders. I, in this early springtime, had not yet learned to distrust the seasonal promises which lead us to mistake exaltation for futurity, and which fulfil themselves not in renewals of our life's texture, not in metaphysical disclosures to correspond with metaphysical whisperings, not in the quickening sap of changed relationships, but solely in the delicacies and amenities of arbutus, liverwort, and violets protruding through the fallen leaves. I have since found good cause to meet this graceful season with sullenness. Yet I am not one to turn with over-promptness against the uplift of receptivity. I can tolerate in advance that man whom I am later to call a fool; I can make allowance in the abstract for those whom I shall despise in the particular. And I have always striven to maintain as much of nobility as resides in the contemplation of it. Like an earnest woman in pregnancy, I have observed beautiful forms and colours, and listened carefully to harmonious sound, in the hope that such experiences might somehow become incorporate in me and pleasantly affect my issue. And if I now refuse to consider the problematical, it is because the certainty of grimness is preferable to the possibility of disappointment—if I stickle for better prices on Tuesday, it is as one who on Monday bared his breast to the elements.

You and I had not yet taken our trip together, on this day I spent with Florence in the woods. We did not yet have reason to suspect that the subsequent months would prove so favourable to you and so disastrous to myself. We knew that you were at the theatre, reciting your lines as Alcaeus with sporadic energy, waving your right hand as you would later wave it before the audience, while consulting from time to time the still unmemorized script which you held in your left. Surely, of all those details which

conspired to assist you, this casting in the part of Alcaeus was among the most momentous. It endowed you with a character which you could profitably project beyond the limits of the fiction into your own actual situation. And when on the night of the *première*, the emotions of the audience brought freshness to your repeated lines, I soon discovered that it was not you, but Alcaeus, who walked among us after the curtain had fallen. Even had we not been predestined as enemies, this incident would have remained an oddity between us. I did, it is true, defend you; I could still forgive you laughingly, but with such readiness that I allowed my resentment to continue.

Long after the theatre was closed, and when we had carried our conventional celebrating to the point of ribaldry, you retained your vicarious dignity, and tossed off your glass with the defiance of the Grecian in the play. And thus incited, Florence too prolonged her part as Mary, and sat drinking humbly among us as none less than the Mother of God. The bar-maids and kitchen scullions and manservants and apprentices, all those who had provided the background of obscenity to this theme of intense moral effort, were still moving about in their costumes—and this was enough, with their drunken jests and singing which they had no need of borrowing from their roles, to repeat in reality the scene which you and she had enacted upon the stage. Here was religion for the godless, the inverted piety of distorting the sacred legends, the profane worship of those last pillars of the faith who painted the image of Christ upon their feet that they might blaspheme him in walking.

And the momentousness in the retaining of these roles came not from the characters themselves, but from the fate to which they had been subjected. Implicit in your mimicry, was the determination to duplicate the plot as well. When the aged Joseph, with his difficult code of purity, has learned the full import of Alcaeus' tirades, has learned that a different avowal of ethical convictions must necessarily entail a divergent scheme of conduct, and that this Hellenic poet has refused to recognize the barriers of an Hebraic household, we understand the marriage of tetragrammaton and Artemis which was transmitted to the West; with Joseph we see that Mary has been refined by something more subtle than abstinence, by exposure to vacillation between opposites, by reverence for

both Joseph and Alcaeus at once—so that he may still, when the Wise Men appear at the incunabula of this new faith, confirm them in their worship, while himself compelled to do homage to a secondary, and more mental, aspect of virginity. The playwright who could conceive devotion under this guise, could also readily entertain its dramatic counterpart—so that as Joseph prophesies (a *vaticinium post eventum* in which he foresees broadly the whole of Europe's history under the Christian exaltation) the vulgar supernumeraries enter, and begin their dalliance about the edges of the stage, while Joseph, Mary, and Alcaeus stand apart, untouched—and thus the curtain may fall upon a tableau of contrasted austerity and coarseness. What more, I ask you, was needed to bring together two who had borrowed their characters from these sources, what more was needed to give them that illusion of splendour which could make their idyll inimitable?

With a few fallen branches, as dry and brittle as chalk, and some dead leaves gathered from the crevices, I made us a bedding, where we half reclined and talked. The snow still lay about in irregular patches, like spots of sunshine filtering through the crowns of the trees in midsummer. Also, a few of last year's leaves were clinging to the oaks—and it was these leaves now which began to rustle, first far off in the valley under a slow breeze which came upon us a full minute in arrears of its own sound. So that we heard this rustling in other areas while the woods about us were still motionless; thus warned, we could observe the crackling foliage pass from its initial interrupted twitchings into a state of vigorous commotion. The tops of the trees then yielded, each after its fashion, and the woods were now beset by a miniature fury which was so thorough, so all-pervasive, that it even caught at the hem of our coats, suggesting to me in the general flurry the thought that I might, with mock-possessiveness, act as though shielding her in some grave onslaught. We peered studiously into the vacant forest as the breeze dropped away, and everything again became silent, leaving no echo but that in our own minds.

I have rehearsed such miniature cycles as of that day, such minor episodes of ebb and flow which, if our life were a scrapbook, could be cut out and pasted upon a page for myself and others to turn back upon, just as I have kept with me a picture of that boulder where we sat. Oh Florence, oh Anthony, call me Florentinus,

call me Antonine, as Cato the Younger was called Uticensis for having put an end to his existence at Utica.

For I have never consented to console myself with the thought that we may be rich in spirit while tangibly impoverished. Wealth—wealth in love, money, the admiration of oneself and others—is indispensable to those who would surround themselves with the flatterings and stimulations of beauty. Let any one, I repeated in self-admonition, who feels that he possesses some elect and distinguished insight, make efforts to procure its replica in material property. For were we to live sufficiently in the past or the future, or in the contemplation of remote ideas, the present could rot without our protest or even our notice, so that our pretensions to order and repose would be disproved by the repugnance which we should arouse in others. And in resigning ourselves to deprivations, we make philosophy but another word for envy. Accordingly, I felt that I must acquire much more to retain even that which I already had, as one who would strive for millions to avoid starvation.

There was, in these subsequent months, when I watched the structure of your happiness being erected out of the timbers, the steel and marble, of my despair, one man who felt towards you as I myself, and we found each other with quick understanding, on the first occasion of our meeting. He was a sickly and unsightly creature, a mouse-faced man who chewed briskly, and whose enmity of you was cheapened by being part of a more general aversion. He hated his employer, his clients, and in particular all laughter which possessed the unthinking ebullience of health. His hostility, despite its constancy, was a blunt and undiscerning thing, and thus could be content with the scantest of documents. Indeed, in time it came to serve me not as a corroboration, but as rebuttal—and when he had accepted my statements against you, he felt authorized to share them with me like truths which we had enunciated in common, so that I found them no longer of validity and was compelled to seek new justice for my complaints. For how many weeks did I support this unseemly alliance, prompted by no motive but the fear of relinquishing it? But when, in his zeal as my colleague, he attempted to expand the field of his denigrations by including Florence as well, I found the release for which I

had been seeking, and tore at him like a fiend, so that we parted company for ever.

Yet I would not have you think that I have been wholly devoid of mastery. I do praise that niggardly configuration of the stars whereby I was enabled partially to deflect my frustrations into my dealings with another. I do glorify my fate that others thought her lovely, and her loyalty could thus yield me some portion of honour. What comfort to see gladness in her moist, doglike eyes; what harsh solace to feel her creep against me in petition! Nor was it an unfair contract. In her I nurtured sinister refinements of which, since she was contented and cheerful by nature, she would have been otherwise incapable. What harm have I done in bringing anguish into a life which was so well able to surmount it, and even to profit by it? Even in trickery and neglect, I knew how to value her, never forgetting that a woman of less delicacy would have been harder to deceive, and that one of no reveries could have added nothing to replace those lacunae in her knowledge of me which I purposely left open. For though she thought of me as unyielding, I had constantly made concessions to her—never revealing to her the details of my difficulties, consistently relying upon her to imagine such causes as would do best credit to myself, and remaining vague that she might lavish her charity upon me unfended. You, Genevieve, if at times of a summer evening, when the sun is setting beyond the orchard, and the mist and the indeterminate night sounds are arising, you go out to walk through the greenish, sea-like woods, I know that the corrosion of your melancholy is not intense, and that it is pure of my own untiring rancours. I know that you walk in sweetness, who believe unquestioningly in moral obloquy, and believe that I have impressed such upon you. As one carves his initials in a tree, so you will bear the mark of me perpetually—and for this also I am grateful. Yes, let life be dogged and weighted down by rigid scruples, that affection, in destroying such resistances, may prove itself imperious.

ENGLISH APHORISMS

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

III

AFTER Blake we return with Hazlitt to the flat earth again, and to the realm of reason; we listen again to that chorus of voices which, since before the time of Ecclesiastes, has been crying 'Vanity, all is vanity' in our ears. Hazlitt was in many ways as disillusioned as Dr Johnson, but he was, as Johnson was not, bitter and sardonic, and he hated rather than loved his fellow human beings. But his zest for life was even greater than that of Johnson, or was nourished at least by a wider variety of pleasures; the joys of solitude, of walking, of travel, of outdoor life and physical exertion added for him an intoxicating taste to the bitter draught of experience. And Hazlitt, though no poet, breathed the enchanted atmosphere of the great age of poetry in which he lived, while Rousseau, of whom he was a fervent disciple, had opened his eyes to the strange and deeply-coloured beauty of the world which shone about him. He was a painter, too, and no one could derive a greater joy from a picture or a lovely landscape. 'The contemplation of truth and beauty is the proper object for which we were created, which calls forth the most intense desires of the soul, and of which it never tires'—a sentence like this, which would have sounded like cant in the eighteenth-century ears of Dr Johnson, was nevertheless the expression of what was no mere aspiration, but the essential reality of a life otherwise so sordid, so acrid and unhappy.

Another romantic element in Hazlitt's nature, which would also have seemed like cant to Dr Johnson, was his passionate love of liberty; his hope, in spite of his knowledge of 'that toad-eating animal, man' for a reign of kindness and reason which might be ultimately established on the earth. His cry 'O Reason! when will thy long minority expire?' is a genuine expression of this hope which he still cherished, although he well knew that, as he put it, 'if mankind had wished for what is right, they might have had it

long ago.' Hazlitt, unlike Johnson, was a deliberate writer of aphorisms,¹ and a careful student of this form of literary art. In 1823 he published anonymously a volume of them entitled 'Characteristics; in the Manner of Rochefoucault's Maxims.' He had been so struck, he tells us, in the perusal of these French aphorisms, by the force and beauty of the style and matter, that he felt an earnest desire to embody some occasional thoughts of his own in the same form; and having written a few, both the novelty and the agreeableness of the task impelled him forward. In addition to the Characteristics, he also printed in various magazines three other collections. Hazlitt, like other authors with the aphoristic gift, enriched all his writings, his essays, and his Life of Napoleon, with such an abundance of terse sayings, that were they all put together, they would probably exceed in number those of any other English writer with the exception of Dr Johnson. Their quality is on the whole a high one; although they seldom possess that occasional surprise of diction which delights us in so many of Johnson's sayings, and are lacking also in the stamp of his warm and human character, they are often terse and profound and pointed, and unlike Johnson, he often makes use of the 'turn' to give them wings. 'It is the business of reviewers to watch poets, not of poets to watch reviewers'; 'there is a pleasure in madness which none but madmen know'—phrases like these recall the aphorisms of his French masters, or those of Chesterfield, their other English pupil. Hazlitt also reminds us of French aphorists like Chamfort in the occasional bitterness, the almost vitriolic quality of some of his aphorisms; old friendships, he says, are like stale food, 'the stomach turns against them.' 'We grow tired,' he says again, 'of everything but turning others into ridicule, and congratulating ourselves on their defects.'

After Hazlitt Emerson is the next, and with one exception, the last great aphorist who has written in English. Emerson's notebooks are full of detached thoughts and intuitions—the berries and wild fruit, as he called them, which he found in his basket after endless rambles in the New England woods and meadows. When

¹ Dr Johnson had however planned, among other schemes he never carried out, making a collection of 'Maxims, Characters, and Sentiments, after the manner of Bruyère, collected out of ancient authours, particularly the Greek, with Apophthegms.' (Life, IV, p. 382.)

he came to write an essay or address, he would turn to these notebooks for ideas and phrases more or less relevant to the subject he had chosen. His essays are, therefore, like Bacon's, a mosaic of detached thoughts and aphorisms; they are not organized compositions, but glimpses of truth, as he described them; flashes of light followed by obscurity, and then another flash; each sentence, as he said himself, an infinitely repellent particle. The interest and value of his writings is to be found therefore in these clearly-cut medallions of thought, these brief and pregnant phrases.

With the exception of Halifax, Emerson is the only writer in our language who has given his best care and attention to the detached—and the detachable—sentence; he is a master of the polished and perfected phrase. For all his decorum, benevolence, and apparent mildness, Emerson, like other aphorists, was also caustic and keen-sighted, and often drew upon that accumulated store of disillusion which this way of writing seems best fitted to express. 'A person seldom falls sick, but the bystanders are animated with a faint hope that he will die'; 'We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten'—sentences like these read like some of the most cynical of La Rochefoucauld's maxims. But to write of Emerson as a cynic and pessimist would be absurdly to misrepresent him. He could dip his pen in the blackest ink, because he was not, he said, afraid of falling into the inkpot. His spirit was loving and benevolent; his disillusion and ironic observation were softened, and sometimes too much softened, by his idealism and ignorance of evil; and although he found that there was a crack in everything God had made, and some foible in every man, however saintly, he put his conclusions in terms with so much humaneness in their daring, that they seem to add more to the gaiety than to the sadness of the human spectacle. In the sentence 'Let us treat men and women well: treat them as if they were real: perhaps they are,' he expressed both his disillusion and his tolerance for human beings—'chafed and irritable creatures with red faces' that we are.

As an aphorist Emerson ranks more with Blake than with any of our other writers of thoughts and maxims; in his sayings, as in Blake's, we find at its richest the imaginative quality of the English aphorism. 'We think our civilisation near its meridian, but we are only at the cockcrowing and the morning star'—this and other

characteristic phrases are luminous with a kind of poetic radiance, less brilliant than the flashing sunlight of Blake's genius, but more serene, more like the illumination of the stars, 'the delicately emerging stars,' to borrow one of his own phrases, 'with their private and ineffable glances.'

But Emerson was a preacher, the son and descendant of a line of preachers, and if his aphorisms escape—and some of them cannot be said to escape—being hortatory truisms, this is due partly to their imaginative phrasing, but still more to a certain humour which stamps them as his own, and a kind of provincial quaintness in their expression. It is unfortunate that the habit of oral delivery, of lecturing to uncultivated audiences about the country, led him to exaggerate this quaintness of expression, and somewhat strain and crack his voice. His best sentences are often to be found therefore in those journals in which he jotted down his thoughts and intuitions—the deposit, drop by drop, and day by day, of the life-long soliloquy of his mind. In his lectures, and in his essays (which were composed as lectures) a forced poetic note can sometimes be detected, a kind of shrill rhetoric, which obscures for too many readers that profundity of thought and that occasional perfection of phrasing which makes him rank as by no means the least important in that succession of great aphorists who have contributed to our literature so rich, so varied, and so disregarded a store of wise, pungent, or poetic sayings.

In addition to these writers—Bacon, Selden, Halifax, Johnson, Blake, Hazlitt, and Emerson—there are several minor English aphorists who must be briefly noticed. First among these is Ben Jonson, whose prose Discoveries are rich in pointed and profound sayings, and then James Harrington, the author of Oceana, who wrote two sets of political aphorisms in which he embodied his wise and liberal reflections on the troubled politics of his time. Three divines of the Church of England must be also mentioned, Thomas Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, and Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man. That miscellaneous and amusing writer Thomas Fuller, published among his numerous writings three series of 'Thoughts'—Good Thoughts in Bad Times (1645), Good Thoughts in Worse Times (1647), both written during the Civil Wars, and Mixt Contemplations on Better Times, published at the Restoration. The 'Thoughts' which make up these volumes are,

like the numerous 'Maxims' of his Holy and Profane State, little essays and reflections, and belong to that way of writing in detached paragraphs which the French call *Pensées*, but for which, though abundant in our literature, we have no generally accepted name. But among these Reflections or Laconics—and the old word Laconics is perhaps our best appellation for this way of writing—we find, as in all of Fuller's other writings, many aphoristic sentences, brief, pointed, and often winged with the quaint images which floated in such multitudes amid his wandering thoughts. 'Miracles are the swaddling-clothes of infant churches'; 'A fool's Paradise is a wise man's hell'; 'Anger is one of the sinews of the soul'; 'Pastime, like wine, is poison in the morning,' are examples of these brief and vivid phrases, and of the quaint originality of his way of thinking which gives an amusing twist to many of his sayings.

Our second divine is that great prose-poet, Jeremy Taylor, who, though his meaning was for the most part too richly adorned with splendid images to be bottled in a tiny phrase, yet gives us now and then in a brief and shining sentence the essence of his thought.

Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was born in 1663, and died in 1755, was, like Lord Halifax, a deliberate writer of aphorisms; and in his *Sacra Privata* and his *Maxims of Piety and of Christianity* we possess two large collections of pious and edifying maxims. Wilson is principally remembered—as far as he is at all remembered—by the praise given by Matthew Arnold to this holy bishop, who united, Matthew Arnold says, the most sincere ardour and unction 'to that downright honesty and plain good sense which our English race has so powerfully applied to the divine impossibilities of religion.' Wilson's maxims, his 'valuable precepts and admonitions of piety,' as Matthew Arnold calls them, have often a perfection of form which distinguishes them from the general run of pious reflections. But this art, with its taint of original sin—and it was by means of an aphoristic phrase that Satan tempted Eve—seems to have got the better of Bishop Wilson now and then. 'Love is a talkative passion' is a saying which his episcopal pen might innocently let drop, but on opening his *Maxims of Piety and Christianity*, we are surprised to find him saying 'When we attend a funeral, we are apt to comfort ourselves with the happy difference there is betwixt us and our dead friend.' Even

less edifying, and we must hope, less true, is the remark on the first page of this volume: 'How many are raised to high posts in the Church by the instigation of the devil, that their fall may be more dismal!'

In addition to these divines, there are three other seventeenth-century writers, Hobbes, Milton, and Sir Thomas Browne. The works of Hobbes are rich in aphoristic thought, but he seldom expressed it in aphoristic terseness; while Milton's prose reflections are almost all too ample, and too amply embroidered, for us to call him an 'aphorism', in a word of his own coining. Browne is more deserving of the appellation, for although his meditations hover, for the most part, on vast and dusky wings, they are sometimes brief and pointed in their expression. Another seventeenth-century writer, Samuel Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, was a more deliberate writer of aphorisms, and his works contain a collection of them, which are not, however, of much interest or importance. William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*, in *Reflections and Maxims*, which was published anonymously in 1693, with the *More Fruits of Solitude*, published in 1718, are collections of aphoristic sayings which enjoyed immense popularity in their time, and which Robert Louis Stevenson rediscovered and cherished with a peculiar enthusiasm. The ground for this enthusiasm is somewhat difficult to understand, as the reflections of the good Quaker show no great profundity of observation or subtlety of thought. Penn seems, however, to have studied La Rochefoucauld's maxims, and to have learned from him a certain neatness of expression, as when he says, for instance, 'They have a Right to censure, that have a Heart to Help,' 'Equivocation is half way to Lying, as Lying the whole way to Hell'; 'Every Stroke our Fury strikes is sure to hit ourselves at last.'

Of somewhat more interest is another contemporary aphorist who was also popular in his time, although he is completely forgotten now. This is a certain Dr Thomas Fuller, whose writings have been sometimes confused with those of Thomas Fuller, the celebrated divine, with whom, however, he seems not to have been connected save by name and possibly by some remote tie of kinship. Dr Fuller, who was born in 1654 and died at the age of eighty in 1734, spent his life as a physician at Sevenoaks in Kent, and toward the end of his long career wrote a collection of

3152 maxims, counsels, and cautions for the instruction of his son John, and the guidance through life of this well-advised young man. Many of these maxims are borrowed from other moralists, from the great store of didactic platitudes which has been accumulating ever since the dawn of moral reflection; there are others, however, which bear a more individual stamp, and seem to be the mellowed fruit of Dr Fuller's own experience—the experience of a wise, old, convivial, comfort-loving doctor in a country town. On almost every subject—on Friendship, Love, Marriage, Money, and Ambition—his maxims embody a singularly complete and practicable kind of wisdom. Young Fuller was admonished to think above all of his own comfort, to avoid ambition and the desire to play a leading part among his neighbours; he should marry a wife with money, and not too much money; he should shun the acquaintance of persons of high rank, whom it was easy, but extremely dangerous, to offend. Still greater care must he take to avoid making friends with poor people—the old doctor is most emphatic on this point; he himself had had several friends of this kind, whose endless sorrows and necessities had made him uneasy, and spoilt for him the enjoyment of his own money. Dr Fuller's maxims, though they embody an ideal of life which is not at all heroic, are full nevertheless of a shrewd and cautious kind of worldly wisdom which is often expressed in happy images and phrases. His books of maxims do not quite deserve the oblivion which has overtaken them. There is a dim light on their didactic pages of a kind of golden mediocrity, a mediocrity of ease and quiet and good food in a comfortable old house in Sevenoaks in Kent; and it is pleasant to think of the octogenarian doctor prosing away on summer afternoons to his deferential son, two hundred years ago.

The writing of aphorisms became something of a fashion in the eighteenth century. Lord Shaftesbury shows, in many a sentence of his *Characteristics* that he, like the French duke, and like Lords Halifax and Chesterfield, was a master of this aristocratic art; and Swift and Pope and Shenstone all left behind them collections of aphoristic sayings. Those of Swift are admirable in their sardonic terseness; Pope's are fewer; he possessed the aphoristic turn of mind, but employed it chiefly in his verses. When, however, he says 'A family is but too often a commonwealth of malignants',

he shows that he could have expressed himself, had he wished to do so, in vitriolic prose. The aphorisms of another poet, Shenstone, are much more numerous, and are not lacking in observation of others and of himself. But though his coins possess a certain weight, lustre is for the most part lacking in them; there is little distinction in their form and phrasing.

Aphoristic writing fell out of fashion in the nineteenth century; with the exception of Hazlitt and Emerson, none of its authors have paid much attention to this art. We possess several collections of Coleridge's thoughts and sayings, but these are, in their form, more brief essays or Laconics than aphorisms, and with few exceptions we do not find among them many terse and pointed phrases. This is true of the prose of his contemporaries, Keats and Shelley, in which however we catch now and then the gleam of some gnomic, and yet golden phrase.

From the writings of Disraeli and Oscar Wilde collections of sayings and maxims have been made; but Disraeli's pretentious aphorisms, and Oscar Wilde's paradoxes (for all their shining wit) must for the most part be classed among the counterfeit currency of thought. George Eliot's novels are rich in aphoristic wisdom; her mind had width and depth something like that of Goethe's, but she lacked for the most part Goethe's power of terse expression, although in Mrs Poyser she created the only female aphorist of whom our literature can boast. Another novelist, George Meredith, was a lover of aphorisms, and those he too sparingly quotes from the *Egotist's Handbook*, and from the *Pilgrim's Script* of Sir Austin Feverel, make us wish that we possessed more treasures from these imaginary collections. Of all our story-tellers, Robert Louis Stevenson was the most accomplished aphorist; he was a writer of moral essays as well as of fiction, and in these essays can be found many witty and wise sayings.

Three other nineteenth-century writers must be mentioned who were endowed with the aphoristic turn of thought; the first of these is Sir Henry Taylor, a poet whose play, *Philip van Artevelde*, is still remembered. Taylor was also an eminent Civil Servant and successful man of affairs, and for some strange reason it occurred to him to tell the truth about worldly success and how it is obtained—to describe the methods, the arts, and even the tricks by means of which ambitious men achieve, or try to achieve, the objects of

their ambition. In this book which he called *The Statesman*, and which was a cause among statesmen of considerable scandal, he condensed in brief aphoristic phrases much of that worldly wisdom which has so often found expression in our aphoristic literature. Sir Henry Taylor, when he found how much right-thinking people had been scandalized by his *Statesman*, pretended that he had written it with an ironic intention; but his maxims, like those of Chesterfield, possess a kind of weight and cynical integrity, as if he had embodied in them the frank expression of genuine experience, and had not, like most aphorists, made any attempt to be amusing or plausible or clever or ironic.

Of equal interest are the wise and pregnant sentences which abound in the writings of Walter Bagehot, that country banker who was not only the profoundest political thinker of his time, but also an accomplished painter of moral portraits, and a penetrating critic of literature as well. Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon*, like Samuel Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, was a copious writer of thoughts and reflections, but his *Note-Books*, like those of Coleridge, are more tiny essays than aphorisms, although they contain a certain number of famous and terse phrases. Coventry Patmore's *The Rod, the Root and the Flower* is a collection of detached religious meditations, which are hardly aphorisms; his biographer, however, has printed a number of briefer sayings of point and interest.

In other Victorian biographies, Rossetti's *Life*, and Benjamin Jowett's letters, we find other collections of sayings; Rossetti's are not very characteristic; the connoisseur in these matters would hardly attribute without evidence to the author of *The Blessed Damozel* the remark, 'No skunk can get rid of his own name by giving it to another.' The sayings of the famous Master of Balliol bear a more authentic stamp of his own image—'Young men make great mistakes in life: for one thing, they idealize love too much'; 'I hope our young men will not grow into such *dodgers* as these old men are. I believe everything a *young* man says to me'; 'Nowhere probably is there more true feeling, and nowhere worse taste, than in a churchyard';—Jowett's surviving friends and pupils will recognize in these sayings the acute accents of the Master's voice.

Of all these collected sayings in Victorian biographies those that

Mrs Creighton has printed in her life of Bishop Creighton are of the greatest interest and value. The late Bishop of London was, as Dean Inge has pointed out, a gifted aphorist; and when Creighton remarks, 'No people do so much harm as those who go about doing good', adding, however, for our consolation: 'It is wonderful how little mischief we can do with all our trouble,' we learn, as we learned from Bishop Wilson, that English prelates, when they take to writing aphorisms, can be quite as caustic as the lay masters of this form.

Dean Inge has also called attention to the aphorisms of Churton Collins, 'an able critic,' Dean Inge remarks, 'who, I believe, did not show much worldly wisdom in his conduct of affairs.' Some of Churton Collins' published aphorisms—'never trust a man who speaks well of everybody,' for instance, 'a wise man, like the moon, only shows his bright side to the world'—make us regret that of the hundreds of aphorisms which, his biographer tells us, Churton Collins wrote, only a small number have been given to the world.

The late Dr Bradley has printed a few—too few—philosophical aphorisms in the preface of his *Appearance and Reality*; but another and living philosopher, Mr Santayana, remains to show that this art, so difficult and so full of perils, is not yet among the perished arts, since one of its great masters is still living. Mr Mac-kail's writings show that he also possesses this gift, although he rarely exercises it.

Mr Bernard Shaw's witty *Maxims for Revolutionists in Man and Superman* are well known; among living writers he is, I believe, the only one who has published a collection of detached aphoristic sentences.

Man—this incomprehensible being—has been always the main object for the observation, moral or satiric, of gnomie writers, and his activities, as Dr Johnson said, will furnish 'the materials of speculation to the end of time.' . . . The passions of envy, anger, and emulation aroused by his encounter with the world, the fools and knaves he meets there, the arts by which he circumvents them, and the worldly prudence that should guide him, form the subject-matter of those worldly counsels in which our English aphorists abound. They seem to regard verbal encounters as of especial interest and importance, and to almost more than any other subject they have given their attention to the clash of tongues. 'A man is made

by conversation,' Dr Johnson said; his talk may establish or undo him in the world. A sage courtier of the Chinese empire once boasted that with his 'five inches of tongue' he had won his way to greatness in the world; and this world of kings and courts, of ceremony and pageants, of wealth and vanity and fashion, has been the subject of much moral as well as worldly observation; while to the aphorists of so political a race as the English, the subject of power and politics has always aroused of course a special interest.

Contrasted with these worlds are those of learning and literature and art and religion; and finally the great subject of death, with which this sententious creature vanishes from the scene of his activities, leaving behind him a few memorable comments upon himself, and his experience. . . . If the French are famous for the lucid perfection of their winged sayings, we may take pride in the far greater variety of our native species, all the many-coloured butterflies and dusky moths of English imaginative thought.

The End



GIRL'S BUST. BY HERMANN HALLER

THREE POEMS

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

ON GAY WALLPAPER

The green-blue ground
is ruled with silver lines
to say the sun is shining

And on this moral sea
of grass or dreams lie flowers
or baskets of desires

Heaven knows what they are
between cerulean shapes
laid regularly round

Mat roses and tridentate
leaves of gold
threes, threes and threes

Three roses and three stems
the basket floating
standing in the horns of blue

Repeated to the ceiling
to the windows
where the day blows in

The scalloped curtains to
the sound of rain

THE LILY

The branching head of
tiger-lilies through the window
in the air

THREE POEMS

And in the air a humming-bird
is still on whirring wings
above the flowers

By spotted petals curling back
and tongues that hang
the air is seen

It's raining
water's caught
among the curled back petals

Caught and held
and there's a fly
are blossoming

THE SOURCE

1

The slope of the heavy woods
pales and disappears
in a wall of mist that hides

the edge above whose peak
last night the moon—

But it is morning and a new light
marks other things
a pasture which begins

where silhouettes of scrub
and balsams stand uncertainly

On whose green three maples
are distinctly pressed
beside a red barn

with new shingles in the old
all cancelled by

A triple elm's inverted
lichen mottled
triple thighs from which

whisps of twigs
droop with sharp leaves

Which shake in the crotch
brushing the stained bark
fitfully

2

Beyond which lies
the profound detail of the woods
restless, distressed

soft underfoot
the low ferns

Mounting a rusty root
the pungent mould
globular fungi

water in an old
hoof print

Cow dung and in
the uneven aisles of
the trees

rock strewn a stone
half green

A spring in whose depth

THREE POEMS

white sand bubbles
overflows

3

clear under late raspberries
and delicate stemmed touch-me-nots

Where alders follow it marking
the low ground
the water is cast upon

a stair of uneven stones
with a rustling sound

An edge of bubbles stirs
swiftness is moulded
speed grows

the profuse body advances
over the stones unchanged

DR WILLIAMS' POSITION

BY EZRA POUND

THERE is an anecdote told me by his mother, who wished me to understand his character, as follows: The young William Carlos, aged let us say about seven, arose in the morning, dressed and put on his shoes. Both shoes buttoned on the left side. He regarded this untoward phenomenon for a few moments and then carefully removed the shoes, placed shoe *a* that had been on his left foot, on his right foot, and shoe *b*, that had been on the right foot, on his left foot; both sets of buttons again appeared on the left side of the shoes.

This stumped him. With the shoes so buttoned he went to school, but . . . and here is the significant part of the story, he spent the day in careful consideration of the matter.

It happens that this type of sensibility, persisting through forty years, is of extreme, and almost unique, value in a land teeming, swarming, pullulating with clever people all capable of competent and almost instantaneous extroversion; during the last twenty of these years it has distinguished Dr Williams from floral and unconscious mind of the populace and from the snappy go-getters who'der seen wot wuz rong in er moment.

It has prevented our author from grabbing ready made conclusions, and from taking too much for granted.

There are perhaps, or perhaps have been milieux where the reflective and examining habits would not have conferred, unsupported, a distinction. But chez nous, for as long as I can remember if an article appeared in Munsey's or McClure's, expressing a noble passion (civic or other) one cd. bank (supposing one were exercising editorial or quasi-editorial functions) on seeing the same article served up again in some fifty lyric expressions within, let us say, three or four months.

Our national mind hath about it something "marvelous porous"; an idea or notion dropped into N. Y. harbour emerges in Sante Fe or Galveston, watered, diluted; but still the same idea or notion, pale but not wholly denatured; and the time of transit is very

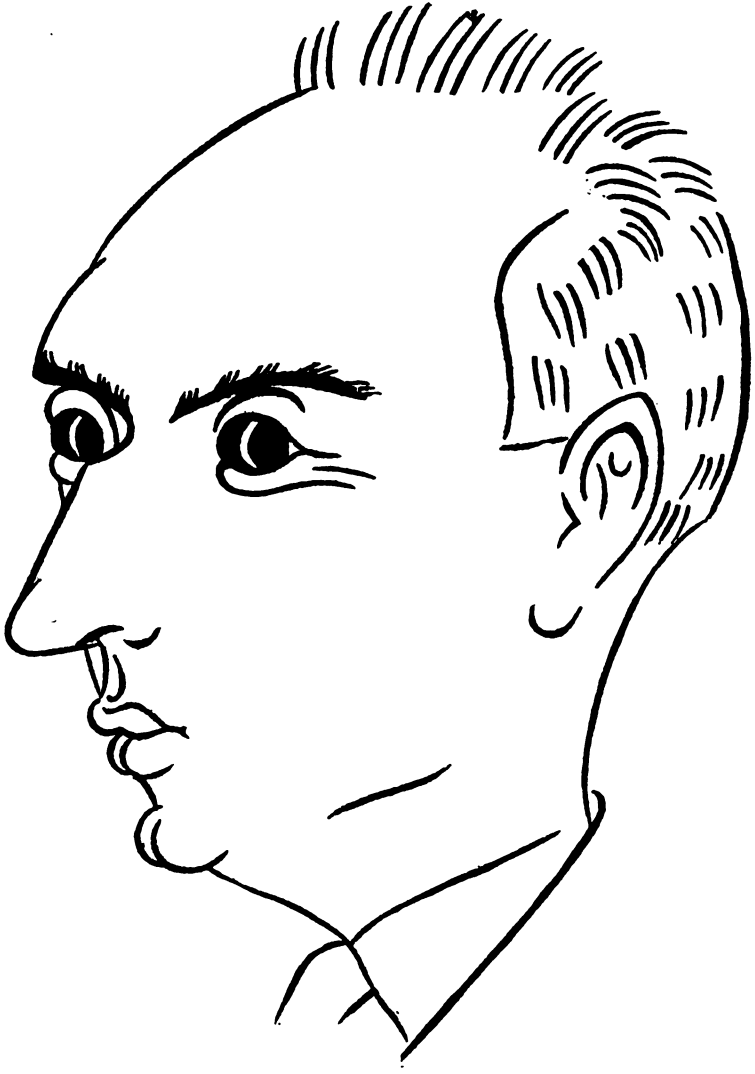
considerably lower, than any "record" hitherto known. We have the defects of our qualities, and that very alertness which makes the single American diverting or enlivening in an European assembly often undermines his literary capacity.

For fifteen or eighteen years I have cited Williams as sole known American-dwelling author who cd. be counted on to oppose some sort of barrier to such penetration; the sole catalectic in whose presence some sort of modification wd. take place.

Williams has written: "All I do is to try to understand something in its natural colours and shapes." There cd. be no better effort underlying any literary process, or used as preparative for literary process; but it appears, it wd. seem, almost incomprehensible to men dwelling west of the Atlantic: I don't mean that it appears so in theory, America will swallow anything in theory, all abstract statements are perfectly welcome, given a sufficiently plausible turn. But the concrete example of this literary process, whether by Williams or by that still more unreceived and uncomprehended native hickory Mr Joseph Gould, seems an unrelated and inexplicable incident to our populace and to our "monde—or whatever it is—littéraire." We have, of course, distinctly American authors, Mr Frost for example, but there is an infinite gulf between Mr Frost on New England customs, and Mr Gould on race prejudice; Mr Frost having simply taken on, without any apparent self-questioning a definite type and set of ideas and sensibilities, known and established in his ancestral demesne. That is to say he is "typical New England." Gould is no less New England, but parts of his writing cd. have proceeded equally well from a Russian, a German, or an exceptional Frenchman—the difference between regionalism, or regionalist art and art that has its roots in a given locality.

Carlos Williams has been determined to stand or sit as an American. Freud wd. probably say "because his father was English" (in fact half English, half Danish). His mother, as ethnologists have before noted, was a mixture of French and Spanish; of late years (the last four or five) Dr Williams has laid claim to a somewhat remote hebrew connexion, possibly a rabbi in Saragossa, at the time of the siege. He claims American birth, but I strongly suspect that he emerged on ship-board just off Bedloe's Island and that his dark and serious eyes gazed up in their first sober contemplation at the Statue and its brazen and monstrous nightshirt.

At any rate he has not in his ancestral endocrines the arid curse



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WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS. BY EVA HERRMANN*

of our nation. None of his immediate forbears burnt witches in Salem, or attended assemblies for producing prohibitions. His father was in the rum trade; the rich ichors of the Indes, Hollands, Jamaicas, Goldwasser, Curaçoas provided the infant William with material sustenance. Spanish was not a strange tongue, and the trade profited by discrimination, by dissociations performed with the palate. All of which belongs to an American yesterday, and is as gone as les caves de Mouquin.

From this secure ingle William Carlos was able to look out on his circumjacence and see it as something interesting *but exterior*; as he cd. not by any possibility resemble any member of the Concord School he was able to observe national phenomena without necessity for constant vigilance over himself, there was no instinctive fear that if he forgot himself he might be like some really unpleasant Ralph Waldo; neither is he, apparently, filled with any vivid desire to murder the indescribable dastards who betray the work of the national founders, who spread the fish-hooks of bureaucracy in our once, perhaps, pleasant bypaths.

One might accuse him of being, blessedly, the observant foreigner, perceiving american vegetation and landscape quite directly, as something put there for him to look at; and this contemplative habit extends, also blessedly, to the fauna.

When Mr Wanamaker's picture gallery burned in the dead of winter I was able to observe the destruction of faked Van Dykes etc, *comme spectacle*, the muffler'd lads of the village tearing down gold frames in the light of the conflagration, the onyx-topped tables against the blackness were still more "tableau," and one cd. think detachedly of the French Revolution. Mr Wanamaker was nothing to me, he paid his employees badly, and I knew the actual spectacle was all I shd. ever get out of him. I cannot, on the other hand, observe the national "mansion" befouled by Volsteads and Bryans, without anger; I cannot see liberties that have lasted for a century thrown away for nothing, frontiers tied up by imbecile formulae, a bureaucracy and system exceeding "anything known in Russia under the Czars" without indignation. And this comparison to Russia is not mine, but comes from a Czarist official who had been stationed in Washington.

And by just this susceptibility on my part Williams, as author, has the no small advantage. If he wants to "do" anything about what he sees, this desire for action does not rise until he has

meditated in full and at leisure. Where I see scoundrels and vandals, he sees a spectacle or an ineluctable process of nature. Where I want to kill at once, he ruminates, and if this rumination leads to anger it is an almost inarticulate anger, that may but lend colour to style, but which stays almost wholly in the realm of his art. I mean it is a qualificative, contemplative, does not drive him to some ultra-artistic or non-artistic activity.

Even recently where one of his characters clearly expresses a dissatisfaction with the American milieu, it is an odium against a condition of mind, not against overt acts or institutions.

2

The lack of celerity in his process, the unfamiliarity with facile or with established solutions wd. account for the irritation his earlier prose, as I remember it, caused to sophisticated Britons. "How any man could go on talking about such things!" and so on. But the results of this sobriety of unhurried contemplation, when apparent in such a book as *In the American Grain*, equally account for the immediate appreciation of Williams by the small number of french critics whose culture is sufficiently wide to permit them to read any modern tongue save their own.

Here, at last, was an America treated with a seriousness and by a process comprehensible to an European.

One might say that Williams has but one fixed idea, as an author; i.e., he starts where an european wd. start if an european were about to write of America: sic: America is a subject of interest, one must inspect it, analyse it, and treat it as subject. There are plenty of people who think they "ought" to write "about" America. This is an wholly different kettle of fish. There are also numerous people who think that the given subject has an inherent interest simply because it is American and that this gives it ipso facto a dignity or value above all other possible subjects; Williams may even think he has, or may once have thought he had this angle of attack, but he hasn't.

After a number of years, and apropos of a given incident he has (first quarterly number of *transition*) given a perfectly clear verbal manifestation of his critical attitude. It is that of his most worthy european contemporaries, and of all good critics. It is also symptomatic of New York that his analysis of the so-called criticisms of

Antheil's New York concert shd. appear in Paris, a year after the event, in an amateur periodical.

The main point of his article being that no single one of the critics had made the least attempt at analysis, or had in any way tried to tell the reader what the music consisted of, what were its modes or procedures. And that this was, of course, what the critics were, or would in any civilized country have been, there for. This article is perhaps Williams' most important piece of critical writing, or at any rate his most apposite piece; failing a wide distribution of the magazine in which it appeared, it shd. be reprinted in some more widely distributable journal.

As to the illusion of "progress," it wd. seem that this illusion chez nous is limited to the greater prevalence of erotic adventure, whether developed in quality or merely increased in quantity I have no present means of deciding; as to any corresponding "progress" or catching-up in affairs of the intellect, the illusion wd. seem to rise from the fact that in our literary milieux certain things are now known that were not known in 1912; but this wd. not constitute a change of relation; i.e., wd. not prove that America is not still fifteen years or twenty years or more "behind the times." That is to say we must breed a non-Mabie, non-Howells type of author. And of the possible types Williams and Gould perhaps serve as our best examples—as distinct from the porous types.

I mean, not by this sentence, but by the whole trend of this article: when a creative act occurs in America "no one" seems aware of what is occurring. In music we have chefs d'orchestre, not composers, and we have something very like it in letters, though the distinction is less obvious.

Following this metaphor, it is undeniable that part of my time, for example, has been put into orchestral directing. Very little of Dr Williams' energy has been so deflected. If he did some Rimbaud forty years late it was nevertheless composition, and I don't think he knew it was Rimbaud until after he finished his operation.

Orchestral directing is "all right" mais c'est pas la même chose. We are still so generally obsessed by monism and monotheistical backwash, and ideas of orthodoxy that we (and the benighted Britons) can hardly observe a dissociation of ideas without thinking a censure is somehow therein implied.

We are not, of course we are not, free from the errors of post-

reformation Europe. The triviality of philosophical writers through the last few centuries is extraordinary, in the extent that is, that they have not profited by modes of thought quite common to biological students; in the extent that they rely on wholly unfounded assumptions, for no more apparent reason than that these assumptions are currently and commonly made. Reputed philosophers will proceed (for volumes at a time) as if the only alternative for monism were dualism; among distinguished literati, si licet, taking personal examples: Mr Joyce will argue for hours as if one's attack on Christianity were an attack on the Roman church *in favour of* Luther or Calvin or some other half-baked ignoramus and the "protestant" conventicle. Mr Eliot will reply, even in print, to Mr Babbitt as if some form of Xtianity or monotheism were the sole alternative to irreligion; and as if monism or monotheism were anything more than an hypothesis agreeable to certain types of very lazy mind too weak to bear an uncertainty or to remain in "uncertainty."

And, again, for such reasons William Williams, and may we say, his Mediterranean equipment, has an importance in relation to his temporal intellectual circumjacent.

Very well, he does not "conclude"; his work has been "often formless," "incoherent," opaque, obscure, obfuscated, confused, truncated, etc.

I am not going to say: "form" is a non-literary component shoved onto literature by Aristotle or by some non-literatus who told Aristotle about it. Major form is not a non-literary component. But it can do us no harm to stop an hour or so and consider the number of very important chunks of world-literature in which form, major form, is remarkable mainly for absence.

There is a corking plot to the Iliad, but it is not told us in the poem, or at least not in the parts of the poem known to history as The Iliad. It wd. be hard to find a worse justification of the theories of dramatic construction than the Prometheus of Aeschylus. It will take a brighter lad than the author of these presents to demonstrate the element of form in Montaigne or in Rabelais; Lope has it, but it is not the "Aristotelian" beginning, middle and end, it is the quite reprehensible: BEGINNING WHOOP and any sort of a trail off. Bouvard and Pécuchet wasn't even finished by its author. And of all these Lope is the only one we cd. sacrifice without inestimable loss and impoverishment.

The component of these great works and *the* indispensable component is texture; which Dr Williams indubitably has in the best, and in increasingly frequent, passages of his writing.

3

In current American fiction that has often quite a good deal of merit, and which has apparently been concocted with effort and goodish intentions, the failure to attain first-rateness seems to be mainly of two sorts: The post-Zolas or post-realists deal with subject matter, human types etc, so simple that one is more entertained by Fabre's insects or Hudson's birds and wild animals; and the habits or the reactions of "an ant" or "a chaffinch" emerge in a more satisfactory purity or at least in some modus that at least seems to present a more firm and sustaining pabulum to reflection.

Secondly: there are the perfumed writers. They aim, one believes, at olde lavender; but the ultimate aroma lacks freshness. "Stale meringue," "last week's custard" and other metaphorical expressions leap to mind when one attempts to give an impression of their quality. One "ought" perhaps to make a closer analysis and give the receipt for the fadeur; though like all mediocre dilutations it is harder to analyse than the clearer and fresher substance. When I was fourteen people used to read novels of the same sort, let us say *The House of a Thousand Candles* etc of which one may remember a title, but never remembers anything else, and of which the author's name has, at the end of five or ten years, escaped one.

It is perfectly natural that people wholly surrounded by rough-necks, whether in mid-nineteenth century or in *The Hesperian* present, should want to indicate the desirability of sweetness and refinement, but . . . these things belong to a different order of existence, different that is from pity, terror, τὸ καλόν, and those things with which art, plastic or that of the writer is concerned.

Now in reading Williams, let us say this last book *A Voyage to Pagany* or almost anything else he has written, one may often feel: he is wrong. I don't mean wrong in idea, but: that is the wrong way to write it. He oughtn't to have said that. But there is a residue of effect. The work is always distinct from the writing that one finds merely hopeless and in strict sense irremediable.

There is a difference in kind between it and the mass of current writing, about which there is: just nothing to be done, and which no series of retouches, or cuttings away wd. clarify, or leave hard.

Art very possibly *ought* to be the supreme achievement, the "accomplished"; but there is the other satisfactory effect, that of a man hurling himself at an indomitable chaos, and yanking and hauling as much of it as possible into some sort of order (or beauty), aware of it both as chaos and as potential.

Form is, indeed, very tiresome when in reading current novel, we observe the thinning residue of pages, 50, 30, and realize that there is now only time (space) for the hero to die a violent death, no other solution being feasible in that number of pages.

To come at it another way: There are books that are clever enough, good enough, well enough done to fool the people who don't know, or to divert one in hours of fatigue. There are other books—and they may be often less clever, and may often show less accomplishment—which, despite their ineptitudes, and lack of accomplishment, or "form," and finish, contain something for the best minds of the time, a time, any time. If Pagany is not Williams' best book, if even on some counts, being his first long work, it is his worst, it indubitably contains pages and passages that are worth any one's while, and that provide mental cud for any ruminant tooth.

4

And finally, to comply with those requirements for critics which Dr Williams has outlined in his censure of Mr Antheil's critics: The particular book that is occasion for this general discussion of Williams, *A Voyage to Pagany*,¹ has not very much to do with the "art of novel writing," which Dr Williams has fairly clearly abjured. Its plot-device is the primitive one of "a journey," frankly avowed. Entire pages cd. have found place in a simple autobiography of travel.

In the genealogy of writing it stems from Ulysses, or rather we wd. say better: Williams' *The Great American Novel* 80 pages, Three Mountains Press 1923 was Williams' first and strongest derivation from Ulysses, an "inner monologue," stronger and more

¹ *A Voyage to Pagany*. By William Carlos Williams. 10mo. 338 pages. The Macaulay Company. \$2.50.

gnarled, or stronger *because* more gnarled at least as I see it, than the Pagany.

The other offspring from Ulysses, the only other I have seen possessing any value is John Rodker's "Adolphe 1920." The two books are greatly different. The *Gt. American Novel* is simply the application of Joycean method to the American circumjacence. The *Adolphe*, professedly taking its schema from Benjamin Constant, brings the Joycean methodic inventions into a form; slighter than Ulysses, as a *rondeau* is slighter than a *canzone*, but indubitably a "development," a definite step in general progress of writing, having as have at least two other novels by Rodker, its definite shaped construction. And yet, if one read it often enough the element of form emerges in the great American Novel, not probably governing the whole, but in the shaping of at least some of the chapters, notably Chapter VII, the one beginning "Nuevo Mundo."

As to subject or problem, the Pagany relates to the Jamesian problem of U. S. A. vs. Europe, the international relation etc; the particular equation of the Vienna milieu has had recent treatment "from the other end on" in Joseph Bard's *Shipwreck in Europe*, more sprightly and probably less deeply concerned with the salvation of the protagonist; I think the continental author mentions as a general and known post-war quantity: the American or Americans who comes or come to Vienna to find out why they can't enjoy life, even after getting a great deal of money.

In the *American Grain* remains, I imagine Dr Williams' book having the greater interest for the European reader. In the looseish structure of the Pagany I don't quite make out what, unless it be simple vagary of the printer, has caused the omission of *The Venus* (July *DIAL*), pages obviously written to occur somewhere in the longer work, though they do form a whole in themselves, and pose quite clearly the general question, or at least one phase of the question posed in the Pagany.

In all the books cited,¹ the best pages of Williams—at least for the present reviewer—are those where he has made the least effort to fit anything into either story, book, or (*In the American Grain*)

¹ *The Tempers*: Elkin Matthews; 1913. *Al Que Quiere: The Four Seas Company*; 1917. *Kora in Hell: The Four Seas Company*; 1920. *Sour Grapes: The Four Seas Company*; 1921. *The Great American Novel: Three Mountains Press*; 1923. *In the American Grain: Albert and Charles Boni*; 1925. *A Voyage to Pagany: The Macaulay Company*; 1928.

into an essay. I wd. almost move from that isolated instance to the generalization that plot, major form, or outline shd. be left to authors who feel some inner need for the same; even let us say a very strong, unusual, unescapable need for these things; and to books where the said form, plot, etc, springs naturally from the matter treated. When put on, ab exteriore they probably lead only to dulness, confusion or remplissage or the "falling between two stools." I don't mean that Williams "falls"; he certainly has never loaded on enough shapings to bother one. As to his two dialectical ladies? Of course he may know ladies who argue like that. There may be ladies who so argue, aided by Bacchus. In any case the effect of one human on another is such that Williams may elicit such dialectic from ladies who in presence of a more dialectic or voluble male wd. be themselves notably less so. No one else now writing wd. have given us sharp clarity of the medical chapters.

As to the general value of Carlos Williams' poetry I have nothing to retract from the affirmation of its value that I made ten years ago, nor do I see any particular need of repeating that estimate; I shd. have to say the same things, and it wd. be with but a pretence or camouflage of novelty.

When an author preserves, by any means whatsoever, his integrity, I take it we ought to be thankful. We retain a liberty to speculate as to how he might have done better, what paths wd. conduce to, say progress in his next opus, etc. to ask whether for example Williams wd. have done better to read W. H. Hudson than to have been interested in Joyce. At least there is place for reflection as to whether the method of Hudson's *A Traveller in Little Things* wd. serve for an author so concerned with his own insides as is Williams; or whether Williams himself isn't at his best—retaining interest in the uncommunicable or the hidden roots of the consciousness of people he meets, but yet confining his statement to presentation of their objective manifests.

No one but a fanatic impressionist or a fanatic subjectivist or introversialist will try to answer such a question save in relation to a given specific work.



DIE SCHNAPSBRENNER. BY ALFRED KUBIN

TWO POEMS

BY WITTER BYNNER

REMEMBERING

You are between my breaths, the out and in,
Closer than my own mind. If I begin
To think of you, you interrupt my will
With heart-beats that are lightning in me still—
As they were when by a look you let me know
That you would be beside me and then go . . .

VIGIL

Let me no longer separate my share
From the lot of other men; but let me dare
To be more forlorn than a man alone can be,
And yet more heartened by this adversity
Common to them and me and levelling all.
There never was singleness in a funeral.
Yet with each thought I take of life, your eyes
Are widened open and your limbs arise
Beautiful again, not only as they were
When I could touch your lips and feel them stir
The life that was theirs to laugh with and mine to love,
But by some miracle leaning above
My own in the same tender sacrament
Of night as when together we were blent.
Wherever love is, let me yield and share
This love of yours, and so be better aware
Of my beloved than I was, before
The door that seemed to close became no door.

EL PENITENTE

BY RAYMOND OTIS

ALBIQUIU lay sleeping in the moonlight. The jumble of adobes was luminous as with a radiance in the walls, its shining nuances of grey, flanked by black shadows. Silence as deep as the shadows, enveloped the town, the hills, the broad valley below the hills. The village had been built along a water-course, but had been moved from the valley and poised on a shelf half-way to the summit of the encircling ridge. As one looked by day, from the side of the plaza which over-hung the edge of the descent to the plain, the sweep of valley lay shimmering in a restless desert heat; by night it was a vast basin of darkness—except where the river came between the observer and the moon; a sparkle of moonlight was there.

The store—the centre of life in the town—was owned by Alberto Roybal, an old man, leader of the village; he was also head of the local chapter of Penitente Brothers. Full of strength and vitality he presented a curious contrast to his townspeople. He had made a collection of Spanish books from which he lent for the asking; there was no denying his sincerity; he waged war continually on American culture lest it undermine the faith of the brotherhood. Whence had he come? Why should one learned and full of enterprise cling to those full of indolence?

“Do not be deceived,” his voice would thunder in the *morada*. “You young men upon whom the life of the brotherhood depends, be not deceived with tales of grace and salvation. Accept that easy faith if you will and go to everlasting hell.” And he would finish with arms aloft, his whole body trembling in the candlelight.

He lived alone in a tiny adobe house. His bed was of boughs. One year he had been crucified, and of his many penances this had been the supreme ecstasy. Now the Lenten season drew toward Good Friday. In enacting the Passion and Death of the Saviour during Holy Week, he was the dominant figure; his back was covered with scars. The original three gashes down and three across had been all but obliterated by fresh disciplines. It was

terrible and inspiring to see him scourging himself, the blood clotting and fresh blood running down; but when urged to abandon the annual scourging, he smiled; his passion for pain, as strong as when he had first come to the village. Yet all had experienced the benefit of his love for them. It was impossible to hurt his feelings. His prayers for the members were many. They in turn prayed for him. The brothers had waived precedent and he had been *hermano mayor* for the past fifteen years. His zeal in keeping order and settling disputes was unrivalled, his own penance the more severe.

It was Wednesday—the morning of Holy Week and was still dusk. There was a knock at the door.

“*Como le vas, Señor Alberto?*” Alberto was seated on a rude wooden chair, reading from an old book that resembled a testament. Raising his eyes, he looked at his visitor without speaking.

“What do you read, Señor Alberto?” It was the priest who enquired, the only one abroad at that hour.

“A book,” said the old man sourly.

“I see. What book?”

“Young man,” said Alberto in scholarly Spanish, “forty years ago, we of the *Hermanos Penitentes* were members of your church and worshipped there. A letter came from the Bishop demanding that we abandon our practice of flagellation or be denied the Sacrament. We chose the latter. In trying to persuade me to obey the command of your superior, you waste your time. An heroic self-discipline gives life and unity to our brotherhood. I welcome you to my house, but I will not talk about my Order; that you must understand.”

“You want us to give up our ritual,” the old man went on with excitement. “What could be more repentant than scourging? It is the divine Passion and Death of the Saviour, which makes us . . .” Drawing himself to full height, he listened. “*El Pitero!* I must go quickly. It is the flute.” An indeterminate wail trembled in the air as he hastened across the plaza.

In the *morada*, a two-room adobe, the other officers were assembled; confessions were heard far into the night. The glow of a few candles showed bloody vestments hung against the wall—with here and there, *disciplinas*, some of fibre interwoven with bits of glass, Alberto’s lash conspicuous among them; the mesh was looser

that the blow might be more cruel. From time to time during the confessions the brothers would scourge themselves—so violently that blood was spattered on the picture of Mary and the babe, the blows accompanied by the chanting of the officers, the *Hermanos de Luz*:

Upon our knees,
We all implore
This blood of mine that
I am now about to shed.

I, sinner,
Have already sworn
To praise the blood of
This discipline.

To praise you I come,
Jesus and Mary,
To implore the blood
Of this discipline.

Confessions and scourgings continued throughout the night. It was dawn before Alberto returned to his house. Thursday, while the younger brothers carried crosses over the frozen ground—crosses five times a man's weight—he slept fitfully, summoning his powers for the approaching ordeal, dimly aware by the sounds which came to him, the wail of the flute and the chanting of the cross-bearers, of that which took place. Shortly before midnight he rose. Before leaving the house, he knelt in prayer, for himself, for his fellow Penitentes. The final words of his supplication he spoke aloud, in a trembling voice . . . "and Lord, I call upon Thee to witness the sorrow of my heart, to see the voluntary agony of my penance. May it please Thee and be good in Thine eyes; may Thou look favourably upon that which I am about to do. And Oh, Lord! preserve her whom I loved without knowing it, guard her and protect her until my happiness is death!"

He remained kneeling a moment. Then, murmuring, "For the love of God," he brushed back the coals from his hearth, closed the door, and made his way slowly to the *morada*. As he was about

to go in he saw the *pitero*, and nodded. A moment later a high melody pierced the air and reiterated itself in the hills. The Day of the Cross was at hand.

A procession filed from the *morada*, and moved with a kind of rhythm along a trail to the summit of a hill on which a cross stood spectral in the moonlight—a man with a lantern marching funereally at the head, swinging his light like a slow pendulum. Among the flagellants were cross-bearers. Towering above the rest was Alberto, naked but for a loin-cloth, for the fiftieth time humbling himself for the glory of God. The opening lines of a hymn were heard:

There is no one now
Who is not worth something,
Christ is already dead.

Christ is already dead
And life is ended,
Give him now your soul,
He calls for it.

Issuing from the *morada*, the march described a wide circle, returning again to the door of the *morada*. Small crosses on the way—stopping-places—represented the stations to Calvary. The hymn continued. Women had entered the procession and sang with the men. As they returned to the chapel the singing grew more impassioned, the scourging more violent, each step marked by its trail of blood.

Now Mary
With a broken heart,
Lays in the sepulchre
Her Lord.

The hymn, wild and high, lingered in lofty tremolos. Alberto, streaming with blood, bore a great cross which he had taken from the shoulders of a fainting brother. Muscles swelled; breath was short. Alberto moaned and pressed his eyelids tight. At the top he wavered, stood a moment, and stumbled. The great beams fell

on him and he lay still; one of the arms had struck his chest. He made a movement to rise, but was held down and they carried him into the *morada*.

"For the love of God, the three meditations of the Passion of our Lord!" he said.

"He thinks he's a *novio*," one of the brothers whispered, "saying the words of those who request the lash! God guard him."

The *enfermero*, the officer who cleansed the wounds of the brothers, bathed Alberto's back with Romero tea. Now and then the old man moaned; then raising himself on one elbow he repeated a part of the prayer he had made in his own house, "Oh Lord, preserve her whom I loved without knowing it!"

What did that mean?

"It may be he means Mary, the blessed mother."

"But he said 'without knowing it.' It could hardly be that."

Before long he rose, unsteadily, but with heroic determination, and bidding the others forget him and proceed with their devotions, he went home to his house.

By sunrise, however, he was up, prepared for the culmination of the Lenten ordeal. As if death were his only recompense, he accompanied the others, assembled by the flute for the march to the cemetery.

What if in the exalted office of *hermano mayor* one need not scourge himself! With his black hood, short white drawers, and the splotch of blood on his back—who could tell him from the others? But he was obliged to abandon the march and wait for the brothers in the *morada*.

When they returned and had taken their places before the altar, Alberto still sat with bowed head, in silence. Finally he spoke to the *hermano* at his side; small crosses and cactus were brought; he blessed them and they were taken into the *morada* proper. The flute sounded and the men picked up their scourges again for their final march to the cross. Alberto stood with bowed head as the Christo—upon the cross—was brought from the *morada*, and laid prostrate by the spot on which the crucifixion was to be enacted. The brothers gathered with some few women, relatives of the man who had offered himself for the ordeal.

The cross was then raised and in the silence which followed, Alberto read the sermon of the seven last words, after which he sank

slowly to his knees. When the *hermano* on the cross had fainted—the signal for the cross to be taken down—Alberto did not move; then slowly he fell, as if an unseen resistance retarded his falling. The cross was being lowered as they carried him to his house and laid him on his bed of boughs.

The next day a great crowd stood about, wailing and chanting prayers for him, the *hermano mayor*; hatless, in overalls, with fresh wounds from their penance, the *hermanos* clung to their dying leader.

Told that Alberto was dying, the priest came to the adobe, toward sundown. Looking at Alberto, he shook his head.

“What happened to him?” he asked in Spanish.

“The cross, it fell on him.”

“Have you had a doctor?”

“Stop,” commanded Alberto with his old vigour, “I do not want a doctor.

“Listen to me, all of you. I came to you many years ago, a young man, thirty years old.

“I am a Spaniard, a noble. My father owned land near Santa Fe, held by grant from the King of Spain. He was rich.

“Don Felipe Romero; that was my father’s name. I grew up on the *hacienda* near Santa Fe, but was sent to my own land to finish my education. At the University there were a number of us from New Spain and we banded together, learned evil ways from our fellows. When it came time to return I was persuaded to stay in Spain with my relatives. One of these, my uncle, loved my father with devotion and undertook to educate me in the great cities of Spain, but I was ungrateful. Life was sweet; my blood was hot; I was young.

“We went the round of the festivals, I and my wayward friends, spending, spending.”

Outside, the women thought of uncooked suppers; a few, impatient, drifted away and gradually the number dwindled. There were children to be cared for.

“That was a time, Padre, for your Church to save me. It was soon too late. I have lived long only because of this life here, not because I have wanted to. The power that my uncle’s position gave him had its echo in my arrogance and extravagance. I rode Arabian horses; our estate was famous for its magnificence.

"I met Manuelita at a royal ball in Madrid. *Por Dios*, how beautiful! She wore the Spanish comb, her eyes flashed. I was inflamed not with love but with desire; I tried to seduce her but she drove me off. There was a woman good by a natural endowment. I knew later. At the time I was offended and left for easier prey.

"I went from bad to worse; I surfeited myself with sin, and went home to my uncle but it was not for long. From across the sea my parents voiced their anxiety and one day my uncle told me he had arranged a marriage for me. When he told me it was Manuelita I was to marry, I was pleased, nothing more. She was rich, beautiful, amiable, and would make the right kind of wife for a free-living man. I could show her off and thus gain prestige. She came to visit us and between my sins I made love to her, thinking she cared no more for me than I for her.

"That was my first great mistake. My egotism was so monstrous a thing that I failed to see the sympathy in her eyes.

"We were married in my uncle's own chapel. The event was heralded throughout Spain—echoes of it carried even across the sea. I remember the cry that rose from my uncle's servants outside the chapel." Alberto paused. "Curious that I should remember that. The mind is treacherous with memories; faithful here and fickle there.

"It was brilliant—a brilliant match. Everybody rejoiced but Manuelita and me. Yet I was pleased, for she was an ornament of which I might be proud, but in my mind I was planning escape and fell swiftly into my old ways. Manuelita looked on with seeming indifference.

"She fulfilled her vows; I continued to be proud of her and to go elsewhere for my love. My sins were no secret. She knew but uttered never a word in reproach. I grew more abandoned; it did not occur to me that she cared. I urged her to take lovers as I was doing and failed to understand the look that she gave me; the wistfulness, the infinitude of sadness that was in it. My fortunes increased through the death of my family in the New World. I determined to remain in Spain and bought lands there.

"I had planned a festival for our tenth anniversary." Alberto interrupted himself. "Come closer, my voice goes. I am of you, *hermanos*.

"I had imported dancers, music from the city of the king and entertainers from Paris. A three-day *fiesta* was my plan, to end with a bull-fight, for which I built an arena big enough to hold all my guests and people without number from the countryside.

"God! that I should live to tell it, like this. In an enclosure half-way up the arena sat Manuelita. Arms waved and cries filled the air. In the midst of it all, the structure began to move, and crashed to the ground. She was pinned beneath an immovable beam of the platform I had made for her glory. It was then, for the first time, that I began to understand. In her look was that sadness. She spoke my name, softly, and raised her eyes to heaven. 'O God, forgive and save him!' she said. Her words plunged me in a transport of grief. I fell at her side asking what did it mean. 'God forgive him,' she said and died.

"I sought escape from my conscience; I tried every form of forgetfulness. Then it came to me that these whom I had pitied as ignorant unenlightened self-torturers, had nearest communion with Him who died to save such as I. There is peace in acting the drama of Christ, Padre; it is ageless.

"Padre, leave us. Death comes; his mist is before me. Go now, that my brothers may prepare the way for . . ."

On Sunday he was buried. Over the stony way they carried him to the Campo Santo, their voices rising in mournful *sudarios*. It was a great man going to his rest.

TWO POEMS

BY A. J. M. SMITH

THE CREEK

Stones

still wet with cold black earth,
roots, whips of roots
and wisps of straw,
green soaked crushed leaves
mudsoiled
where hoof has touched them,
twisted grass
and hairs of herbs
that lip the ledge of the stream's edge:

these

then foamfroth, waterweed,
and windblown bits of straw
that rise, subside, float wide,
come round again, subside,
a little changed
and stranger, nearer
nothing:

these

THE SHROUDING

Unravel this curdled cloud,
Wash out the stain of the sun,
Let the winding of your shroud
Be delicately begun.

Bind up the muddy Thames,
Hearken the arrogant worm,
Sew the seams and the hems
With fine thread and firm.

When the moon is a sickle of ice
Reaping a sheaf of stars
Put pennies on your eyes,
Lie you down long and sparse.

Fold your thin hands like this,
Over your breast, so;
Protract no farewell kiss,
No ceremonial woe,

But stand up in your shroud
Above the crumbling bone,
Drawn up like one more cloud
Into the radiant sun.

THE GOD OF TIME

BY JOHN COWPER POWYS

THE impersonation of abstract ideas so that they should contend together like living combatants is a notable achievement in philosophic literature. To endow such impalpable notions with life, to segregate them into opposite camps of ferocious antipathy demands nothing less than a genuine mythopoeic imagination. It is a beguiling entertainment to sit in the colosseum-seats of Mr Lewis' arena and turn our thumbs up or down as we watch the struggle of these embodied essences.

That almost all the thinkers who wear, under Mr Lewis' magic touch, the tiger-stripes of the Time-Demon belong to our age while their antagonists, the great white elephants of Sacred Space, are summoned from more remote "fields of sleep" does not lessen the piquancy of this cosmic circus. Mr Lewis himself, like a nimble metaphysical Mowgli, mounted on the back sometimes of Parmenides, sometimes of Bishop Berkeley, herds his drowsy hieratic animals against these devilish heretics.

Never has appeared a more timely book than this vivid humorous attack upon the hypnotic rôle played by the mysterious entity *Time* in modern philosophy.¹ A formidable issue outlines itself and becomes more and more exciting as we read these startling pages. Two diametrically different ways of responding to the universal spectacle are here brought into a dramatic opposition such as would provoke Hegel to cold fury. *Being*, in fact, is here confronted with *Becoming* and subjected to a degree of lively antithesis such as these mystic ultimates have rarely known. On the one hand we plunge into a whirling chaotic stream of *musical-emotional* life-forces wherein both the ego and what the ego "looks at" lose their separate identity; wherein "Matter" melts into mind, mind into "matter," to the loss of all those distinctive eternal values which give the universe of human discourse its richest worth. On the other hand we entirely separate "dead matter" from the personal

¹ *Time and Western Man*. By Wyndham Lewis. 8vo. 469 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$5.

“monad” which contemplates it; and, in harmony with the natural *spatializing imagination* of both plastic art and common sense, we allow the things contemplated to remain solid and substantial while the mind that contemplates them remains aloof in its psychic detachment. In other words the world of the Space-Orthodoxy is a cosmos of static calm—the calm of nature as we contemplate it with the eye of a pure artist or a pure scientist—while the world of the Time-Heresy is a chaos of feverish movement in which the difference between the observer and the observed is merged, fused, lost in a sub-human ecstasy of blind action and of blind emotion.

The earlier portions of Mr Lewis' book are especially directed against the literary allies of the Time-Devil; and it is here that he is at his best, so far as clairvoyant mischief is concerned. He is here at his worst too—in outrageous unkindness! Joyce one feels is strong enough to stand anything. Miss Stein will doubtless survive this humorous comparison with Anita Loos. But one winces at the cruelty—and indeed at the obvious irrelevance—of the attack upon Ezra Pound. Like other champions of a neglected orthodoxy Mr Lewis seems to permit, just here, certain black drops of personal spleen to poison his theological indignation. Why drag in Ezra Pound at all? The book's argument is weakened by this spiteful digression.

Perhaps the most subtle and penetrating portion of the work is that in which the author proves the real “unreality of Matter” to be better preserved by the static and plastic point of view which maintains the inanimate in its native purity, than by these Faustian wizards who make it swarm with an unseemly consciousness of its own. Such “Matter” is, Mr Lewis holds, much more a primal wonder when left to itself, in calm remoteness from the vagaries of the life-urge than when it is fused with human consciousness in what Russell calls a *neutral* state of existence. Just as the little girl does not want her doll to be anything but a doll, so Mr Lewis relucts at the thought of this magical pictorial non-human world being made to stir and shiver and throb with a life-pulse similar to our own.

“Surely,” he says, “the famous spatializing instinct produces a more ‘unreal world’ (from the exactest physical standards) than does the *temporalizing* chronological instinct of a Bergson or an

Alexander. On a still day consider the trees in a forest or in a park, or an immobile castle reflected in a glassy river. They are perfect illustrations of our static dream; and what in a sense could be more 'unreal' than they? That is the external, objective, physical, material world, (made by our 'spatializing' sense) to which we are referring. It is to that world that the hellenic sculpture (which is the *bête noire* of Spengler) belongs, and all the Pharaohs and Buddhas as well, or even more.

"That is *our* world of 'matter,' which we place against the einsteinian, bergsonian, or alexandrian world of Time and 'restless interpenetration.'"

There is a tone of fine-impressioned seriousness in this passage which ought to be placed on record against all accusations of levity and irresponsibility brought against our author.

With the main contention of Time and Western Man many readers one feels, will find themselves in startled and surprised sympathy. It is indeed no small thing to have envisaged, from such a bird's-eye height of detachment, the most sinister direction of the flowing bubbles of modern philosophy.

It is by a very shrewd intuition that Lewis associates this modern disparagement of the "static" in nature with a diminution of the value of personality. One by one, as he acutely notes, the most characteristic elements of the individual soul are stripped away. In spite of their superficial obscurity our author finds all these modern philosophers saturated with popular sensationalism.

"Spengler affects to be an anti-popular writer. On exactly the same principle as Nietzsche—though of course without the latter's genius or thoroughness—he affects to be a writer by no means 'for the crowd.'"

But Mr Lewis is not to be humbugged. Behind the catchwords of all these time-servers he smells out the democratic rat.

"The handing over of your life to the community," he remarks, "is like resigning yourself to living in *bits*. . . . We live a conscious and magnificent life of the 'mind' at the expense of this community. . . . But in sympathy with the political movements

today, the tendency of scientific (in which is included philosophic) thought is *to hand back* to this vast community of cells this stolen aristocratical monopoly of personality which we call the 'mind.' 'Consciousness,' it is said, is (contrary to what an egotistic mental aristocratism tells us) not at all necessary."

This particular sentence is not only a crucial statement of Mr Lewis' criticism of the "popular" in modern thought. It is also an unfortunately good example of the popular element in Mr Lewis' own style. Never has a philosopher gone to work so slashingly, so savagely, so facetiously, or with such a contempt for the minor decencies of metaphysical ritual! Paradoxically it might almost seem that the weakest portions of this remarkable book are themselves the best argument in support of its main theme. I refer to the association of metaphysics with politics. Here surely Mr Lewis himself throws up his hands and sinks into the "time-space" flux. For one of the chief differences between what we call Being and what we call Becoming lies in the fecundity of historic detail spawned so profusely by the latter. Political conditions come and go, while the conscious Ego confronting the Spectacle of Nature remains an eternal fact.

EVENING

BY ORRICK JOHNS

Just before she comes
Lifting her great gray gown,
A discord rattles and hums
From end to end of the town.

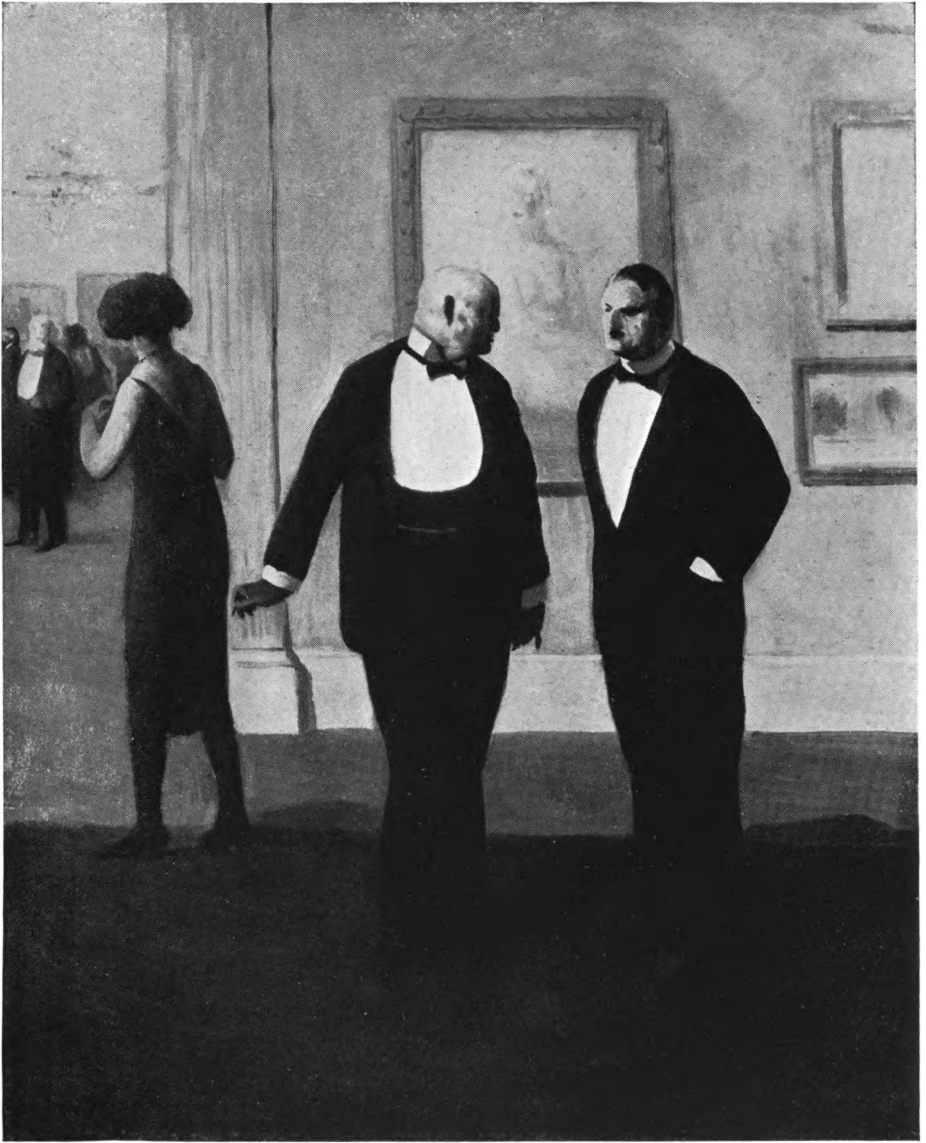
Louder the mason's maul,
Shriller the children's cries;
The stark mad animals all
Complain with heavenly eyes.

The harsh pain of the road
Makes watchers blench and start,
And a finished episode
Beats hubbub in the heart.

A frenzy wags the bells,
And birds uncertainly cry,
When the old gray wife compels
Her flock to fold the eye.

The door of sight and sound
She'll hurry on to close,
Leaving on all the ground
The thing that no one knows.

And spread the web at last
Farther than we can mark . . .
Till late ones hurrying past
Are bits of separate dark.



Courtesy of the Kraushaar Gallery

ART LOVERS. BY GUY PÈNE DU BOIS

IRISH LETTER

October, 1928

BY temperament hardly less than by force of circumstances your Irish Correspondent is disqualified from giving your readers any very satisfactory account of the proceedings at the Tailteann Games celebrations, the second since the institution of the new régime in Ireland. I am by nature a skulker, one whom nobody would dream of asking to take part in such festivities, and I suppose this exclusion (which I cannot complain of, since it is the choice of my soul) quickens to an unhealthy degree the disposition to pry beneath appearances; but to reassure myself I have only to remember my experience on various other public occasions: when, for instance, I have found myself defending a nation's homage to the Unknown Warrior against certain gallant participators in the Great War, who were inclined to sum up the whole thing as "bunkum." Shall I dare then to use the adjective which seems to me to be the secretly appropriate one for this Aonach Tailteann, in so far as it desires to celebrate the achievements of Ireland in literature during the last triennium? It is "pathetic"—pathetic in the innocent misapprehension of the significance of genius in a modern social community. It presupposes a community which rejoices in the appearance in its midst of genius, that is to say, of an incalculable human element which up to a certain point, no doubt, may be guided and applied to the enrichment and adornment of life, but is by its very nature dangerous to existing institutions: insomuch that we may almost say that any well-ordered state (witness Lacedaemon) is on the whole better without it. We may say certainly that in proportion to the decisiveness of its manifestation the existing order will have to adapt itself thereto, with the inevitable entailment of a good deal of worry and concern for many worthy folk. Yet a revival of the great triennial "Games" of ancient Ireland was a natural and happy idea, particularly in an age which gives at least as much attention to sport as any previous age; and a happy chance decreed that the interesting and romantic Gene Tunney should be a spectator of part of them and should distribute the awards for boxing. A great deal of business was done

at the ancient festivities besides the exhibitions of physical prowess; legislation was discussed and overhauled; distinguished strangers were invited to impart their wisdom; and it is even related that St Patrick, arriving while the games were in progress, took advantage of the opportunity to strike a decisive blow for Christianity.

There was authority therefore for extending the conception of athletics to the field of the mind; and even if Mr Bernard Shaw were not an Irishman, Ireland (so far as impersonated in the Tailteann committee) was quite within the tradition of the Festival in sending him an invitation to be present. It was however to receive the National Award in Imaginative Literature for Saint Joan, as the most distinguished work produced by an Irishman during the last three years, that Mr Shaw was invited to attend the celebrations. Future criticism will decide how far the cast of Shaw's mind is really Irish. Listening one night recently to a performance of *The Mikado*, the tone of it all at once reminded me of Shaw and set me thinking how Gilbertian after all is Shaw's mind, insomuch that the Shavian drama was thereupon conceived of by me (I do not claim to have been very original in this) as an extension of the Gilbert "idea," the comic effects in the latter being heightened or at all events intensified and solidified by the substitution of set speeches for the lyric gaiety and light *badinage* of the opera. The disconcerting turns and the topsy-turvy transvaluation of values in Shaw's wit are certainly Gilbertian. For all I know, Gilbert may have had an Irish grandmother: if so, a strong case might undoubtedly be made out for a distinctively Irish genesis for Shaw's achievement. On the whole, however, it seems to me more reasonable to remember that the Irishman, and in particular the Anglo-Irishman, is an adaptable creature, rapidly assuming the characteristics of those peoples amongst which his lot is cast, so that in New York he soon establishes himself as a king of finance, or amongst Englishmen as a master of armies or of statecraft, or (should circumstances have led him to the writing of plays) as a manipulator for his own purposes of the humours and oddities of English life, which have only to be pointed out to a good-natured nation to make it laugh and hand out its largesse. When the President of the Royal Hibernian Academy therefore, in announcing the award to the absent Shaw—for Shaw, I should have told, returned a rather uncivil answer to the invita-

tion—took occasion to point out that “the outstanding qualities in his plays are indubitably Irish qualities,” and that “his Irish wit, his Irish invective, his Irish sense of reality are the things which make his plays the masterpieces they are, which have caused them to be played the world over,” he was, I think, not only making questionable statements, but leaving out of account the real endowment with which Shaw’s native land may perhaps claim to have sent him forth into the world—his character. That character is indeed a great and memorable one: yet for the life of me I can see nothing Irish in the writing of Saint Joan any more than in the winning of Waterloo.

He was on surer ground when, addressing Senator Yeats, he said: “Though much poetry has been made in these later years by Irish writers, no other book than *The Tower*¹ was thought of when an award had to be made for the finest poetry written since last Aonach Tailteann. This award has been made to you for a book which, after forty years of literary creation, shows increasing rather than waning power.” If there is a distinguished writer in these islands or even in the world at present, it is certainly Yeats, a man of a character equal in its way to that of Shaw, one who, as Standish O’Grady once said to me, would not go out of his way for an emperor. His whole life, with its artistic and patriotic consecration, rises up upon me, who sat on the same bench with him at school, like a rebuking phantom. Yet I could not help wondering what Yeats, the realist Yeats with whom one would talk presently, really thought of it all. He is at present engaged in resisting an impersonation of the spirit of Ireland very different from the Literary Committee of Aonach Tailteann—the proposed censorship, to consist of a committee of five arbiters appointed by the Ministry of Justice to hear complaints of any writing “which tends to inculcate principles contrary to public morality.” It seems that one aim of the new measure is to prevent the spreading of knowledge about birth-control, and the State has a moral vision of its own in such matters, to which it is entitled. But what concerns literature is that a Minister of Justice should be entitled, as *The Manchester Guardian* says, to “put half the world’s classics in prison.” Literature in Ireland has before

¹ *The Tower*. By W. B. Yeats. 12mo. 110 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$2.25.

now come under the censure of the Church, but not till now has the civil authority contracted its brows so threateningly. Was I not right then in my intuitive perception of something "pathetic" underlying the assumption that a complete understanding, as between mother and son, prevails between a modern State and its poets?

The gold and silver medals in poetry were awarded respectively to Senator Gogarty and Mr Monk Gibbon. Senator Gogarty is another great character, the most genial and forthcoming personality in Dublin, who is spoken of as a future Governor-General, but there is nothing in the least "Irish" in his verse, in which he aims at a Roman rotundity of phrase, reminding one often not a little of Sir William Watson. I quote the last two stanzas of the title-poem of his volume, *Wild Apples*.

"It takes from the West Wind
The thrust of the main;
It makes from the tension
Of sky and of plain,
Of what clay enacted,
Of living alarm,
A vitalised symbol
Of earth and of storm,
Of Chaos contracted
To intricate form.

Unbreakable wrestler!
What sapling or herb
Has core of such sweetness
And fruit so acerb?
So grim a transmitter
Of life through mishap,
That one wonders whether
If that in the sap
Is sweet or is bitter,
Which makes it stand up."

"He might have rhymed," perhaps it will be said. As to Mr Monk Gibbon, it would be somewhat difficult, I feel, to convince readers of *THE DIAL* of his quality by quotation, but is there not a

union of moral seriousness with Blake-like simplicity in this little poem, *The Gods?*

“The gods are dead, they tell us now,
None walk the earth as they once did
Yet each may be a god who wills,
And none prevent him, none forbid.

A penny given to a child
Can turn a sky of grey to gold,
Two pennies given make his heart
Leap with the joy of wealth untold.

Now am I Mercury, if I wish,
Now am I Zeus, if I so choose,
Now can I bring Olympus down
To this next mortal lacking shoes.

He passes me, the chance is gone;
The god's winged feet o'erlook his need;
Olympus clouds again with mist.
What men proclaim is true indeed.”

JOHN EGLINTON

BOOK REVIEWS

FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

LIVY. Volumes I-IV. Books I-X. *With an English Translation by B. O. Foster. 16mo. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50 each volume.*

IT is useful to read as a comment upon these ten books of Livy the second book of Mommsen's History of Rome, especially the chapters on The Beginning of Rome, The Non-Burgesses and the Reformed Constitution, The Tribunate of the Plebs and the Decemvirate, The Subjugation of the Latins, the Struggle of the Italians Against Rome. Mommsen shows us the effects of what Livy describes—the effects of epoch-making wars waged against states twenty miles from Rome, of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggle constantly going on in the city, of the extraordinary measures taken and the extraordinary appointments made every few decades, of the leagues and alliances which Rome and Rome's enemies enter into. Mommsen maps what Livy describes for us.

Livy, naturally, had no conception of history in our modern sense of the term: he is not thinking of a society developing in various ways—in arts and philosophy, in political institutions and principles of law. He describes events only. He never makes a statement about Roman policy. We read him now, not as history, but as epic—the epic of the unfolding of Roman power.

And we cannot understand any modern history of Rome unless we are familiar with Livy. For Livy shows us what kind of character was behind all this war and policy. He is always providing incidents which illustrate this character. He even lets us see Roman character from the other side, as it appears to their opponents, when he lets the spokesman for the brave and honourable Samnite people say to the Roman emissary:

“Let the Roman People not blame the pledge given by the consuls, nor let us blame the honour of the Roman People. Will you never, when you have been beaten, lack excuses for not holding to your covenants? You gave hostages to Porsinna—and withdrew them by a trick. You ransomed your City from the Gauls with gold—and cut them down as they were receiving the gold. You pledged us peace, on condition that we gave you back your captured legions—and you nullify the peace. And always you contrive to give the fraud some colour of legality. Does the Roman People not approve the preservation of its legions by a disgraceful peace? Let it keep its peace, and give back the captured legions to the victor; that would be conduct worthy of its promise, its covenants, its fetial ceremonies. . . . Aye, go to war, since Spurius Postumius has just now jostled the envoy with his knee! So shall the gods believe that Postumius is a Samnite—not a Roman—citizen, and that a Roman envoy has been maltreated by a Samnite, and that you, in consequence of this, have justly made war on us! Does it not shame you to bring forth into the light of day these mockeries of religion, and, old men and consulars as you are, to devise such quibbles to evade your promise as were scarce worthy of children? Go, lictor, strike their fetters from the Romans; let no man hinder them from departing when they list.”

This is the reverse of all simplicity, shrewdness, piety, and far-sightedness which Livy is always illustrating—the character which permitted the nobles and farmers living in and around a little hill town to beat down every other power in Italy and then to take possession of the Mediterranean world. The four volumes published in the Loeb Library contain an unbroken narrative—Livy’s first ten books. The story begins with the founding of the City and ends with Rome’s final subjugation of the Latins, and with the defeat of the bravest of the Italian stocks, the Samnites, and the disruption of Etruria—“that great empire extending from sea to sea.” Meanwhile, Rome has fallen to the Celts who have sold their victory for gold, and within their own walls the Romans have heard said to them the dire words that they had often said, that they were often to say to others—*vae victis*.

There are no portraits in these books: these consuls, dictators, military tribunes, masters of the horse, have all the same features

and they all speak in the same style. They are representative of the Roman as Citizen. In their good and their evil fortune they are working out the destiny of the Children of Mars. They fight and they debate. Always they seem to be marching. And their humour and poetry come to them on the march. Always we are hearing about the ribald verses and the rude jests that the soldiers fling at their commanders as they march through the City in their triumph. In this masculine epic women have even less place than in the *Iliad*—Lucretia and Verginia, victims of men who have not the restraints of citizenship, are as shadowy as Briseis; have the pathos that the masculine European gives to women seen as the faithful wife or the cherished daughter. The women have a decorum, a devotion to the family which is the state in little, which are complementary to the men's decorum and devotion; they, too, speak as in the senate or the forum. There is the Verginia who on behalf of the Plebeian woman dedicates an altar to Modesty. "Verginia boasted, and with reason, that she had entered the temple of Patrician Modesty both as a patrician and a modest woman, as having been wedded to the one man to whom she had been given as a maiden, and was neither ashamed of her husband nor of his honours and his victories." She uses such words:

"I dedicate this altar to Plebeian Modesty; and I urge you, that even as the men of our state contend for the meed of valour, so that matrons may vie for that of modesty, that this altar may be said to be cherished—if it be possible—more reverently than that, and by more modest women."

Livy has a profound and noble conception of life—a conception which his Romans held: there is Genius and there is Fortune—the Genius of the individual, the Fortune of the state; Genius and Fortune are inherent in the man and the state, but for Genius, for Fortune, to manifest itself requires intelligence, power and will from the individual and from individuals. It is this conception of Genius and Fortune that gives such steadfastness to Roman conduct and such dignity to Roman utterances.

But like all people who have a sense of their own destiny, the Romans put on a good deal of solemn humbuggery; they must have seemed comic to certain peoples whom they came in contact with.

One hopes that the Celts of Brennus' time had a sense of humour. Three serious young men come down from Rome to ask them "what conceivable right they had to demand land of its occupants under threat of war, and what business Gauls had in Etruria." The Gauls had not been long in Italy, but probably long enough to have heard of the Romans as the most expansive people thereabouts—they had just taken Veii and were dividing up its lands. Then the lecturers on international law went into battle against the men who had received them as ambassadors. The Roman Senate and the Roman People refused to discipline their envoys: for that they had to buy back their City with a thousand pounds of gold.

There are memorable battle-pictures in Livy, but the picture that one must always remember is that of the Roman army trapped in the Caudine Forks and unable to fight or to retreat:

"At this they came to a halt, without any command, and a stupor came over the minds of all, and a strange kind of numbness over their bodies; and looking at one another—for every man supposed his neighbour more capable of thinking and planning than himself—they stood for a long time motionless and silent. Afterwards, when they saw the tents of the consuls going up and some of the men getting out entrenching tools, although they perceived that in their desperate plight, deprived of every hope, it would be ridiculous for them to entrench themselves, nevertheless, that they might not add a fault to their misfortunes, they fell to digging—each for himself with no encouragement or command for anyone—and fortified a camp close to the water; meanwhile not only did their enemies insolently scoff at them, but they jested themselves, with pathetic candour, at the futility of their works and the pains they took. The dejected consuls did not even call a council, for the situation admitted neither of discussion nor of help, but the lieutenants and tribunes assembled of their own accord, and the soldiers, turning to the headquarters tent, called on their generals for help, which the immortal gods could scarce have given them."

And then the scene after the legions had passed under the yoke:

"On emerging from the pass, although they seemed like men raised from the dead, who beheld for the first time the light of day, yet

the very light itself, which allowed them to see that dismal throng was gloomier than any death. . . . Yet the kindness of their allies and their friendly looks and words were so far from drawing the Romans into talk that they could not even be got to raise their eyes or look their friends and comforters in the face; so constrained were they by a kind of humiliation—over and above their grief—to avoid the speech and assemblages of men.”

Professor Foster's translation makes a fine narrative in English—fluent but with an arresting movement. The translation is announced as being in thirteen volumes; the next set issued will have Livy's account of the second Punic War. What is between—Pyrrhus' invasion of Italy and the first encounters with the Carthaginians—is amongst the world's lost books.

PADRAIC COLUM

IMPASSE AND IMAGERY

THE BOY IN THE SUN. *By Paul Rosenfeld. 12mo.*
266 pages. *The Macaulay Company. \$2.*

“**J**EW he is, being like Judaism, which was the father of Christianity, the dark and massive materialistic religion that engendered the ivory-white faith which was all spirit, the religion of burnt offerings and vows of vengeance to which in times of stress men and peoples return, letting the new faith die.”

This is not Rosenfeld, but an image from a recent article by Rebecca West.

No. In the modern world we neither rise up from Judaism nor return to it. We do something else. So does David. I remember Paul Rosenfeld, in 1922 I think it was, standing up nervously on the platform of The Wanamaker Store Auditorium one winter's afternoon and reading a paper in defence of E. E. Cummings' *The Enormous Room*, attacking the publishers of the book for their evident neglect to back it as they should. This is the same spirit that animates "Divvy" before the impasse which life presents to him.

When we Scotch and the rest say "people," we mean ourselves. When under stress we give up the lightly held precepts of Christianity which have nothing integral to do with us, we return not to Judaism, but to our native paganism. That is why we detest the Jew, to whom Christianity would be natural, and from whom it sprang. We hate him because of a racial instinct, because he confirms in us our own bastardy.

It's a good story, all about a little Jewish boy that grew up in New York. It starts in scenes of Old Testament violence, but comes out in the end on the banks of the Hudson River in April. As to the writing —? But who cares about the writing of a novel so long as the story moves and is interesting?

I think *The Boy in the Sun* contains about the best writing Rosenfeld has done to date. No doubt of it. And when he falls down I think this book discloses the cause. He is trying for an extremely

difficult colour differentiation and naturally, especially in English and in America, this is no cinch. I admire a man who aims for a difficult veracity of style. Nor will I acknowledge that I am influenced by the memory of The Wanamaker Auditorium and Rosenfeld's ceaseless impersonal activity in the New York field for what he believes fine.

The writing *is* good, when it is good. That is to say it is still beset with old faults of emotional daubing which makes it sometimes—to me—entirely undecipherable. I dislike intransitive verbs used transitively. I dislike "twilit." But then again the sentences are crisp, yet the imagery remains delicate, diaphanous, silky, and full of light. The evocation of the girl seen in the park, of Evelyn in the theatre box, could not be more precisely yet delicately true. There is no sentimentality, but a sensitive, excellently drawn image.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A RUSSIAN IN JAPAN

KORNI YAPONSKAVO SOLNTSA (Roots of the Japanese Sun). By Boris Pilniak. 186 pages. Leningrad: Priboy. 1r.50c.

NOTHING written about Japan since Lafcadio Hearn is so rich in interest as this small volume by a young Russian novelist whose work is not wholly unknown to the English-reading public. His fiction is good; but this, an authentic book of travel, is better. The writer confesses to a serious handicap: an ignorance of Japanese; this lack is more than compensated for by a vivid power of observation, keen analysis, and an enquiring mind capable of advantageously correlating the facts at hand. Above all, he possesses a sense of history, in this instance a double-edged gift, since it allows him to answer some vital questions concerning the most progressive of the Eastern races, yet urges him to the asking of other questions for which he has no answer. But the putting of relevant questions serves a function by no means to be despised. Pilniak frankly sees in Japan a mystery; he expounds the nature of the mystery in a series of pictures, episodes, encounters, and reinforces what he has seen and heard with his own mental and emotional reactions—valuable because, in spite of the confusion to which they have subjected the author (or, perhaps, because of it!) they do juxtapose with graphic lucidity the Western and Eastern aspects of things.

“Japan,” says Pilniak, “is our outstanding refutation of Spengler’s theory; for it is a land which has already existed a thousand years, a contemporary of Greece, and a niece of Assyria and Egypt.”

The mystery is this: how could the little nation manage to learn and adopt in so short a time all that Europe had to teach it in the way of mechanization and thought, yet keep its own ancient character and integrity? The mind of Japan—that is, the mind that was, before Commodore Peary, the American, and Admiral Putinin, the Russian, used their squadrons to force that country’s gates open to the world—has remained changeless and closed to the European. Externally, the changes have been little short of

cataclysmic; there has been a whole-hearted adoption of Western machinery; in such devices the Japanese are not a whit behind us. Yet there has been no perceptible change in Japanese psychology. While the Westerners live and build in affirmation of the future, the Japanese base all their actions on the past. "It is a land of corpses; corpses are in command here"—so that when the students of Tokyo University were given a questionnaire as to what they intended to do with their future, the immense majority declared that they were Socialists and wanted to bring children into the world *worthy of their ancestors*. Nevertheless, these "corpses" are unusually active and have achieved their present place in the world by sheer will-power. While keeping their counsel, they have deliberately set out to learn all that Europe and America have to teach them. There is not a little irony in the fact that the two nations most assiduously watched by them are the United States and Russia. "From America," writes Pilniak, "Japan wants to take her machines; from us, Russians, her spiritual culture." She is avidly consuming Russian books in translation; hardly a classic or contemporary work of note but has been translated into Japanese. The Communist author feels shamefaced before his brothers in Nippon, for he knows that not one of them would undertake a journey into Russia without having learned the language first.

What does Japan intend to do with her newly gained power? For notwithstanding Spengler, this agéd nation, far from being decrepit as she should be, is showing every indication of youth. She is, in fact, that extraordinary thing so rarely met with: youth—with the assimilated experience of age. (It is in the matter of this singular combination that Spengler breaks down.) But the riddle of Japan's destination is unanswered by Pilniak. He can only reiterate graphic instances to show that the riddle exists. But we would not have any of them away. They make the book, and we read on, for the most part oblivious of the ultimate problem that the author has so much at heart, and never solves.

More than one episode points to what is, perhaps, the supreme virtue of the Japanese: self-control. There is its attendant quality: courage. Jarrings from volcanoes, always in readiness, have through many generations trained the people to face danger in a mood of fatalistic calm. Native eye-witnesses have described to the author scenes from the terrible catastrophe in 1923.

“The *first movement* of the Japanese in the earthquake was *not to move* at all, but to look around, decide, *organize the nerves*. Those forty thousand who perished on one of the Tokyo squares perished thus: all around them were burning houses, they were being showered with flaming firebrands, they were being smothered by the flames. . . . There was no way of escape. When, after the conflagration, the survivors went to look for the dead, they found the blackened corpses lying in perfect order . . . under the corpses were found live children. The adults, *organizing* their last moments, had died without panic, almost without panic, and with their charred bodies had saved their children. . . .”

This is in keeping with the Japanese scorn of individual death. When the prisoners of war returned to their native land after the Russo-Japanese war they were subjected to contempt for “not having found time to drive a sword into their bowels”; even their own families refused to have anything to do with them.

Pilniak has a great deal to say of Japanese writers, at whose invitation he had come to Japan. The encounter with Titia-san is especially interesting. They had been drinking *saké* together and when the drink had made the company convivial one of the authors, acting as interpreter, interpreted for Titia-san:

“The father of Titia-san had been killed by a Russian at Mukden, during the Russo-Japanese war. Titia-san, then a boy, had made a vow to avenge his father by killing the first Russian he happened to meet. The first Russian he has met is yourself. He ought to kill you. But he, Titia-san, is a writer—and you are a writer. He, Titia-san, knows that the brotherhood of art is above blood. And so he suggests that you drink *saké* with him in brotherly fashion, according to the Japanese custom, by exchanging cups—in memory of the fact that he, Titia-san, has broken his vow. . . .”

In this connexion, an absorbing chapter deals with the literature and art of Japan, especially the theatre. We learn that the most revolutionary theatre of Japan is the theatre of Osanai-san, which would nowadays be considered reactionary in Russia, since the method pursued is that of Stanislavsky in the Moscow Art

Theatre. On the other hand, the whole tendency of the most revolutionary theatre in Russia—that of Meyerhold—is in the direction of the traditional theatre of Japan. Again, the inevitable historic irony. When East and West meet, they exchange virtues.

Pilniak has some amusing things to tell of his brief stay in China. He appeared on the platform to deliver a lecture, when a policeman politely told him that he might sing or dance but not speak. As a way out of his dilemma, a Chinese seriously suggested that he sing his lecture; but the author could scarcely see the matter in that light, and retired crestfallen.

JOHN CURNOS

MR ELIOT'S FAVOURITE

THE MOONSTONE. By *Wilkie Collins.* With an Introduction by *T. S. Eliot.* 18mo. 522 pages. *The World's Classics.* Oxford University Press, American Branch. 80 cents.

IN the opening sentence of his introduction, Mr Eliot says that "The Moonstone is the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels." As it is the first and was published in 1868, and as the detective novel is considered to have had no ancient form, the use of the word "modern" seems superfluous. Mr Eliot, however, is not a wasteful writer, and I suspect that the word was chosen to startle the reader into following out its implication: that *The Moonstone* is a greater detective novel than any of the popular favourites of the past thirty years, including *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the latest offerings of the Crime Club.

Almost all the rest of the introduction deals with the literary relationship between Collins and Dickens and with some of the less known works of the former. Toward the end Mr Eliot repeats his first remark and enlarges on it:

"We may even say that everything that is good and effective in the modern detective story can be found in *The Moonstone*. Modern detective writers have added the use of fingerprints and such other trifles, but they have not materially improved upon either the personality or the methods of Sergeant Cuff. Sergeant Cuff is the perfect detective. Our modern detectives are most often either efficient but featureless machines, forgotten the moment we lay the book down, or else they have too many features, like Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes is so heavily weighted with abilities, accomplishments, and peculiarities, that he becomes almost a static figure; he is described to us rather than revealed in his actions. Sergeant Cuff is a real and attractive personality, and he is brilliant without being infallible."

This is sound criticism and indicates the point at which contemporary detective novels diverge, to their own disadvantage, from *The Moonstone*. They fail to keep up the purely fictional side of their existence; they are not interesting reading apart from the solution of the mystery they propound. The early Conan Doyle stories seem to me exceptions; either because I have forgotten the answer in the short stories or because the stories are really good reading, I find myself returning to the first and second series with real zest; and am conscious of a great desire to read *The Hound of the Baskervilles* again. Holmes, himself, is a schoolboy's hero, just as Philo Vance is a hero for the half-intelligent; the method of each of these detectives is far superior to his character. But in most of the other detective stories one reads, the ingenuity of the writer has been so exhausted on intricacies of plot, that there are no characters and the writers confess their inability to create a credible figure by giving their narrators or detectives or principals oddities of speech, or little quirks of personality, or an exotic background, when their simple job is to make them human beings. Even Father Brown becomes occasionally a bag of Chestertonian ideas, although at his best he brings a rare thing into this type of fiction; that is, he discovers a crime because he is the man he is, working on morals and character, and the crime can usually be traced to character and ideas in the criminal. It is much better than elaborate motivation.

S. S. Van Dine has announced that a murder is essential to a detective novel, and *The Moonstone* is the perfect retort to be hurled at his pseudonymous head. For *The Moonstone* begins with the loss of a jewel. A young woman has every reason to believe that the man she loves has stolen it, yet she cannot tell him so; he, unconscious of her suspicion, tries to discover the thief and to return to her good graces. The whole thing revolves upon several axes, each a moral problem, the most highly organized being that of an unhappy servant-girl who shares her mistress's suspicion and acts in the contrary sense, to shield the man she also loves. It is a beautiful tangle and in approaching the *dénouement* one must not be disappointed to find it the inevitable. (I refrain from mentioning it, in case the readers of this review are coming to *The Moonstone*, as I did two years ago, with no knowledge of the solution. Re-reading it just now I found the entire thing holding my attention as insistently as before.) The solution comes near to being a

trick and one finds it unsatisfactory chiefly because it has been used, with less justification, a thousand times since. Considering the state of the science of psychology in Collins' time, it is the inevitable way out for this book.

The idea that nothing less than a murder will do to hold attention is another instance of the abdication of the detective-novel writer. In *The Moonstone* the diamond itself is made interesting by the prologue giving its bloody history and giving, as Mr Eliot says, the sense of fatality for the whole book. Two distinct characters, each treated with irony and with Dickensian humours, appear as rivals for the heroine's hand: again the story interest is good—not merely the love interest, but the solution of the question, Which one will she choose? *The Moonstone* is about four times as long as the average detective novel of to-day, and in that space Collins could develop character; but to say that our modern novelists are held down by space is absurd: *Vanity Fair* is surely three times as long as *The House of Mirth*. I suspect that for all their insistence to the contrary, even the best practitioners of the detective novel look down on it, in the sense that they do not think it necessary to supply it with the essentials of any other type of novel.

The current practice of the detective novel can be defended only on a single assumption: that it differs essentially from any other type of fiction. The short stories of Edgar Allan Poe did differ: they were the anatomy of detection, with only enough flesh and blood (the negro humour in *The Gold Bug*, e.g.) to carry them along. Ideally one ought to be able to write a detective story with characters A, B, C, and D, and, of course, X as the criminal; they could take place in abstractions of place and time, and only such things as affected the crime or its solution would be specifically described. Actually, we demand some sense of reality.

The Moonstone gives it to us. For me there is a surfeit of characterization. The story is told in a series of narratives in the first person, requiring the writer to develop the character of each narrator. The remarkable thing is that not only the style, but the sort of thing told, changes with each person—in that respect the method is a great success. But each narrator insists too much on his or her own peculiarities; the tract-scattering Miss Clack, probably as amusing in her time as a woman Prohibitionist would be in ours, is particularly overdone.

With that reservation, I agree entirely with Mr Eliot's high

opinion of *The Moonstone*, although I cannot say it is the best because I have not read some of the most famous claimants to that title. If the reader will turn from the new introduction to the one written by the author himself, he will find further justification for his interest. "In some of my former novels," says Collins, "the object proposed has been to trace the influence of circumstance upon character. In the present story I have reversed the process. The attempt made here is to trace the influence of character on circumstances. The conduct pursued, under a sudden emergency, by a young girl, supplies the foundation on which I have built this book."

This means, essentially, that a moral problem is the spring of action; and a practising novelist of considerable standing considered one of his novels, in which a detective appears in order to solve a mystery, no different from any other of his novels. Perhaps that is why *The Moonstone* remains so good. Certainly it is why a hundred or a thousand other writers have borrowed from it some of their most engaging features: Cuff is the father of all detectives who have hobbies, from Holmes to Philo Vance; Rosanna Spearman is the progenitor of thousands of servant-girls with dubious pasts; Franklin Blake is all *jeune premier*; the butler, Miss Clack, the lawyer, the Indian jugglers, the little boy called Gooseberry, and the pious Godfrey Ablewhite have all appeared endlessly in detective stories. Often they have been good; never better than they are in *The Moonstone*.¹

GILBERT SELDES

¹ I have made the point about obligatory murder elsewhere and have, since writing this review received a note from Willard Huntington Wright, who speaks with authority about S. S. Van Dine. "You are," he says, "perfectly right about murder being unnecessary for a short detective story. When Van Dine set down the rules he had a full-length novel in mind. . . . The fact is, Van Dine is trying, in his various criticisms, to draw a sharp line between the pure detective story and the mystery and adventure story." The effort is laudable. Mr Wright rejects *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which I had used as an example, on the ground that "there is a death, amounting to murder" in *The Hound*; but I do not see how he can get around *The Moonstone*. The problem for the detective to solve in *The Moonstone* is the disappearance of a jewel. The death at the end of the story is an incident in the process of detection. And *The Moonstone* is a full-length novel strictly in the canon of detective fiction.

BRIEFER MENTION

THE ROMANCE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, by Dmitri Merejkowski (16mo, 637 pages; The Modern Library: 95 cents) has taken its place among the monumental achievements of historical romance. "The soul of the artist must be like unto a mirror, which reflects all objects, all movements and all colors, remaining itself unmoved and clear." These words, attributed to Leonardo, seem to express the underlying secret of Merejkowski's power, enabling him to reflect an entire epoch within the frame of a novel. The present translation—by Bernard Guilbert Guerney—has been made from the Russian original, rather than from French versions.

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE, by Ambrose Bierce, with an introduction by George Sterling (16mo, 403 pages; Modern Library: 95 cents). The tales of soldiers and civilians set forth here well represent the massive and morose genius of Bierce. Perhaps not all of his best work is included, but certainly there is enough to exhibit distinctly the character of mind and temperament that produced it—the elaborate realism, the gruesome brilliant imagination, the bitter nonchalance. The sum is a power of effect not readily paralleled in literature.

THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF 1927, edited by Richard Eaton (12mo, 254 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50). Mr Eaton proves himself a most sagacious discriminator. His method of choice is as sound as his taste is shrewd; and both are exerted here to an admirable issue. There is indeed a quite especial interest in a comparison between the divergent racial "traits" as one reads these tales; and the Editor, we feel, has done well in selecting such stories as on the whole have a rural rather than a city atmosphere.

THE HAPPY MOUNTAIN, by Maristan Chapman (12mo, 313 pages; Viking Press: \$2.50) has, according to Carl Van Doren (quoted on the jacket) skill, charm, and significance. All three are corrupted by the author's failure to think out the aesthetic problem presented by a book dealing with mountaineers, who talk a strange language—essentially the problem of treating an exotic so that it does not seem exotic to the people involved. One feels the mountaineers saying "How Shakespearean I speak and how odd I am."

TWELVE MEN, by Theodore Dreiser (18mo, 360 pages; The Modern Library: 95 cents). It is with great satisfaction that lovers of Dreiser will welcome their favourite Twelve Men in this convenient and agreeable shape. This way of describing actual characters in the projected relief and with the vivid verisimilitude of fiction seems a literary form that might be exploited further. One feels, in the light of his later work, that this book is a tangled yarn of all the threads of Dreiser's loom, blending in its fabric the tender sentiment of Jenny Gerhardt with something of the stark realism of *An American Tragedy*.

JACK KELSO, a Dramatic Poem, by Edgar Lee Masters (10mo, 264 pages; Appleton: \$2.50). The author of *Spoon River Anthology* was, we feel, no less happily inspired when he selected this comprehensive subject than when he chose this sturdy and flexible form of rhymed verse. In our opinion this quaint and sardonic commentary upon American history is both more amusing and more revealing than the more pretentious "Epic" of Mr Benét which covers much of the same ground. The mordant sarcasm which prevails in this book is relieved here and there by some really poignant imaginative strokes.

ENGLISH VERSE, chosen and arranged by W. Peacock, Vol. I, *The Early Lyrics to Shakespeare* (18mo, 541 pages; Oxford University Press: 80 cents). In the preface to this first of five volumes to be issued as a companion work to the *Oxford Selections of English Prose*, the anthologist reminds us that "'the best is the best though a hundred judges have declared it so,'" and if one misses this or that—if Skelton's lines on Phyllyp Sparowe seem a shade better than those on the sparrow and the cat, and nothing is better than Henryson's tail of the lyoun and the mous, it is evident to the reader that "skilfull might gauē many sparkes of blisse." The irresistible attractiveness of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and intervening authors, could not be suggested, one feels, with more bouquet-like enticement than here.

MINSTRELSY OF MAINE, Folk-Songs and Ballads of the Woods and the Coast, collected by Fannie H. Eckstorm and Mary W. Smyth (10mo, 390 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50). The fruits evidently justify the labours of enthusiasm through more than a few years that must have gone into the collection and editing of these numerous folk-songs. Whether the reader accept or not the editor's view that poetry is "the way you feel about a thing," he is bound to be entertained and absorbed in being so close to the uncomplicated jubilation of these sailors and loggers as he gets in such songs as *The Little Brown Bulls*, *Canday-I-O*, *The Little Barber*, *The Wesley Shackers*, *The Banks of Newfoundland*. That this is possible is due not alone to the songs themselves, but to the setting of local reference afforded in many cases by the indefatigable researches of the editors and the co-operation of the numerous contributors. The book merits a place in any collection which includes such volumes as Sandburg's *American Songbag*, or Lomax's *Cowboy Songs*, or Louise Pound's *American Ballads and Songs*.

FIVE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COMEDIES, selected and edited by Allardyce Nicoll (18mo; *The World's Classics*, Oxford University Press, American Branch: 80 cents) presents five comedies of the time of Garrick and "may provide at least an outline background for the work of Goldsmith and Sheridan." Moments in each are amusing and in each a character, an episode, or an attitude indicates to us where some of the stock characters of comedy and melodrama, of our own time, stem from. But on the whole they are not very entertaining and only one, *Speed the Plough*, the comedy in which Mrs Grundy so magnificently fails to appear in person, is good reading throughout.

THE CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND MODERN LIFE (8vo, 213 pages; University of Colorado: \$2) contains addresses by Roscoe Pound, F. J. E. Woodbridge, Robert A. Millikan, Paul Shorey, Lorado Taft, and Francis J. McConnell, the occasion being the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the University of Colorado. The discourses bear rather miscellaneously on the general topic, Professor Millikan's asserting the adequacy of the scientific standpoint to modern problems, be they material or moral, while Professor Shorey's reiterates the necessity and value of the classics. Perhaps the least stereotyped addresses in this somewhat tepid series are Dean Pound's *The Social Order and Modern Life*, and Dean Woodbridge's *Philosophy and Modern Life*. Dean Pound gives a well furnished account of relativity and growth in the social order, while Dean Woodbridge submits that the contribution of philosophy to modern life, or any life, is its assistance to man in distinguishing and knowing his own mind.

REMBRANDT, A Romance of Divine Love and Art, by Sándor Bródy, translated from the Hungarian by Louis Rittenberg (12mo, 257 pages; Globus Press: \$2.50). Into this striking "Imaginary Portrait" Bródy has thrown so intense a magnetic power that its hot, feverish grossness is subsumed under its passionate tenderness. Mr Rittenberg has translated it so adroitly from the Hungarian that it is hard for the most scrupulous Rembrandt-lover to reluct at the book's nervous and shameless gusto. As the personalities revealed in the famous pictures slip out from behind their frames, and as the ecstatic painter inebriates himself with their life, and with the life of the inanimate things about them, one feels that, right or wrong in biographical detail, these naïvely impassioned pages do catch something of the vagabond frenzy of the great artist's vision.

THE LIFE AND PRIVATE HISTORY OF EMILY JANE BRONTE, by Romer Wilson (8vo, 281 pages; A. & C. Boni: \$4). Miss Romer Wilson expresses herself with individuality and force. Her enthusiasm for her subject compensates one for a certain immaturity and provincialism in her manner of writing, a lack of polish and philosophical detachment. Hers is a personal interpretation, and as such it does succeed in leaving in one's mind a vivid and moving impression of the singular and passionate girl whom the author informs us had "a man's soul in a female body."

GOETHE, The History of the Man, by Emil Ludwig (8vo, 646 pages; Putnam: \$5). Devotees of Goethe will read this lively condensation of the German "Life" with very mingled feelings. The translator's use of such expressions as "buck up" and "hot air" will increase the aesthetic discomfort already produced by an over-emphasis upon the love-affairs, by the singularly inappropriate dedication, by the over-compression of philosophic material, by the melodramatic repetition of the word "Daemonic"; all of which peculiarities, though doubtless intended as concessions to the English-speaking reader, do detract from the book's worth. Against this, however, must be placed certain illuminating revelations as to the basic inconsistencies of Goethe's character; a character which certainly emerges from these crowded pages in sharp and startling, if not in altogether attractive outlines.

THE PRAGMATIC REVOLT IN POLITICS, by W. Y. Elliott (8vo, 540 pages; Macmillan: \$3.75) presents what must appear a well taken thesis in political criticism; namely, that such modern panaceas as communism, syndicalism, fascism—all of them, in the author's view, the fruits or perversions of pragmatic philosophy—come very much short of meeting the needs of men in community, since such dogmas are concerned too extensively with the mechanics of social organization and too slightly, if at all, with those questions of "moral personality" which are vital to the durable social economy of human beings. It is important, the author contends, "to accept with good will the necessary subordination of our wants to community of purpose," but at the same time "to insist upon the freedom of individuals to weigh that purpose in every group. Only by the protection of the rights of free moral personality can the creative forces of the human spirit be loosed." Informed and wise as this point of view is, however, the lay reader is bound to be somewhat oppressed by the unemphatic, bemusing redundancy of the argument. The materials of a trenchant discourse could doubtless be selected from these 500 overworded pages, but as they stand they must seem addressed primarily to specialists.

A HISTORY OF PRINTING, Its Development Through Five Hundred Years, by John Clyde Oswald (8vo, 404 pages; Appleton: \$7.50). A book primarily intended for bibliophiles and virtuosos in the art of printing, this beautifully illustrated volume includes so many lively biographical details about the early printers that it has much interest for the layman. The extension of the art from its beginnings in Strasburg, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Cologne, to Venice and Paris is emphasized in significant facsimiles of format and ornament until the clearness of the Latin and Greek types of the Aldus Press becomes an astonishing revelation to the uninitiated. The vivid sketch of the personality of Aldus Manutius surpasses anything recorded of the other great printers, from Badius and Froben to Baskerville and Morris; and as one notes how much more readable is Aldus' Greek and Latin than Caxton's English, one closes this engaging book with added veneration for the incomparable Venetian.

THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION, by Sigmund Freud, translated by W. D. Robson-Scott, Number 15 of The International Psycho-Analytical Library, edited by Ernest Jones (8vo, 98 pages; Hogarth Press, 6s: Horace Liveright, \$2) considers the psychological importance of religious ideas in the preservation of cultures, and concludes that in the past they have been invaluable in reconciling the masses of men, both to the uncertainties of their physical destiny and to the necessary repression of individual instincts upon which every genuine civilization is premised. Now, however, in the opinion of the author, religious ideas are deprived of efficacy, since the advance of knowledge has shown them to be illusions—in fact a form of neurosis, to be eliminated only by proper education of the individual at the proper season. The first part of the essay is a concise and admirable account of the psychological conditions of civilization, but the rest is prolegomena and declarative notes rather than the consecutive, or persuasive, development of a thesis. Professor Freud has been fortunate in his translator.

THE THEATRE

IN the midst of the silly mechanisms of the early theatre season, *MACHINAL* confronts you suddenly with life. I do not mean the somewhat overvalued quality of dealing with life—the play does that with varying success in various scenes; but the play itself has vitality, it has energy and passion. It has to do with a woman who knows peace twice in her life: once when she commits adultery and once when she commits murder. The first is perfectly explained in the play, the second is a logical absurdity which the passion of the play somehow conceals.

The play is riddled with faults—of method, of intelligence, of production. It triumphs over them by the power of virtues which are, in all probability, the positive side of its lapses. In this brief note (I saw the play after the rest of this report was written and am hurrying in this addition) I cannot give details. But, for example, the method—from German expressionism—runs through American condensation of effect, touches realism, and ends in poetry; at times each of these is effective, at times not. The character of the woman is not fully realized and, as played by Miss Zita Johann, lacks variety—she becomes Miss Cornell in one scene extended to a play. The lecherous Babbitt's poetic impulse in love is neglected in order to make him repulsive. In most plays such a collection of defects would be ruinous; in *MACHINAL* they seem to be swept away by the tempest of feeling which Miss Treadwell has written into the lines, with exceptional dramatic sense, and by the rhythm given to the production by Mr Hopkins. The play ends with an electrocution, reported in a few brief sentences in the dark. Then slowly light floods the stage—light and colour, apparently without source or motion. The sense of torture is appeased, the sense of pity remains. And it carries the play to its true conclusion, since it brings peace. It is perhaps my prejudice to credit this supreme dramatic effect to Mr Robert Edmond Jones, who designed the settings with his perfect feeling for style and has built again and again the prison of four walls in which the action takes place, until the action is

in a prison, and he has pushed aside his walls to make place for darkness and for light.

Missing the opening of *THE FRONT PAGE*¹ by a day or two, I found myself with the great majority of those trying to get in and failing. It has had a great press, and if you merely want to think about the theatre, instead of going, the reception of this play will give you a subject. It is, even apart from the identity of the producer, the obvious successor to *BROADWAY*—and promises to have as long and satisfactory a life.

Missing that one, I was not compelled to make comparisons in the case of *GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS* which intended to be utterly different, a comedy of newspaper manners, and should either have come first or persuaded the reviewers to forget its predecessor. The best thing about this play is the genuine feeling for character it showed in several of the principal parts. The newspaper men were newspaper men as every cub reporter and every experienced city editor has known them: hard-boiled about other people's important affairs and sentimental about their own trivial ones, easily generous, picking up and discarding all sorts of women, drinking and swearing off, driven by their work and enjoying it and hating it. The actual plot was not so important, but it served to bring on Helen Flint who not only looked very pretty, but played to perfection the type of woman who is intellectually unable to foresee any ending to a conversation except a kiss. So long as she was drifting lightly from one man's arms to another, she held the plot together; but neither the moment when the newspaper man threw up his job as a press agent nor the moment when he chased the vamp out of town to save his own son from her, came entirely out of the characters involved, and the latter had almost nothing to do with the return of the newspaper man to his paper. The colour and the character were both good; but they did not create the plot in which they appeared.

I missed the whole first act of *RINGSIDE*, and three minutes after

¹ *The Front Page*. By Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Introduction by Jed Harris. 12mo. 189 pages. Covici, Friede. \$2.

the second act began I was entirely aware of everything that went before. This means that I am an experienced playgoer, or that the authors are remarkably skilful summarizers and indicators of the direction of the play, or that the first act was sheer waste of time. As that act is laid in the training quarters of the pugilist hero, I am willing to bet that a lot of inside stuff was offered, most of it amusing. The second act was devoted to a party in a roof bungalow; either for realism or for lack of ingenuity, this was the dullest party I have ever attended—that is to say, it was like most parties, only on the stage it lacked the sense of reality. In the midst of it the young boxer is vamped, bribed, and made sick with drink; his honest father rescues him at the last moment. So far **RINGSIDE** was not good.

And then it picked up, and in two sharp scenes became actively exciting. The first scene was excellent melodrama and the second was a good boxing match, with the roar of the loudspeaker all through it and a very good imitation of Graham MacNamee's incapacity to describe a fight coming over. **RINGSIDE**, if you're serious, will add nothing to the American drama; but the last forty minutes may give you an added pulse-beat.

GOIN' HOME is a strange play with something genuine working its way through theatricalities, making itself felt, and then being spoiled. It is the story of an American negro who was in the French Army, married a French girl, and stayed her appetite to be off to America by fantastic tales of his wealth at home. An American captain comes in. It is the negro's master, boyhood companion, and friend—but a Southerner with ideas of racial inequality. He dispels the grandiose illusions the negro has put into his wife's head and then seduces the wife. In the following brawl, a Senegalese, brother in arms of the negro, is about to kill the captain. The negro shoots—and kills the Senegalese. The rest of the play is unimportant.

By theatricality I mean, for example, the French girl's flirtation with the captain the moment she sees him. Obviously, later, she lures him because she is furious with her husband; but the point is dulled by the conventional "all French girls are bad" effect of the beginning. And the theme is spoiled at the end because the third act does not carry on the second. Most of this second act is given

over to a species of vaudeville carried on by American negro soldiers clustering round the great figure of the Senegalese; to me it seemed that they sang and shot craps and danced for their own enjoyment, the only defect in staging being that one dancer faced the audience in the theatre instead of the audience on the stage. This goes on with the captain and the wife off stage together, the cuckold husband knowing nothing of it and being torn by his love for his wife and his yearning to return to America, to be among the black men again, to know the black man's deep laughter. The Senegalese is the key-note of this laughter; it is racial, primitive, terrible, and free. As he falls dying he cries out, "Toi! Esclave!" It was rather unfortunate that this key line had to be spoken in French; but the obvious obligation of the dramatist was to carry it on to his ending. Instead the two men, white and black, try each to shield the other, taking the murder upon himself, and in the end both go free.

This is a prize play, far above the average. It seems to me that Ransom Rideout, the author, worked his theme out dramatically up to a point and then failed to think it out further. Nevertheless, he has indicated power and an indifference to mere slickness; both of which are desirable.

Mr Earl Carroll's *VANITIES*, as far as I am concerned, consist of Frisco and W. C. Fields. Frisco is exactly as he always was, a remarkable example of an entertainer who neither changes nor develops, yet remains among the best. Talent joined with character will sometimes work that way, and by character I mean the capacity to resist imitating others, of remaining incorruptibly one's self. Fields is far more versatile; he has always some surprise for you, and although he appears in some dull and dirty scenes, he himself is always doing a thought-out piece of work; in the good scenes he is most engaging and amusing. Two or three manoeuvres of the chorus and one or two elaborate "conceptions" come off well; the rest positively took me back to the days of my youth, to obscure and second-rate musical shows of 1910. The music I found terrible, the settings uninteresting, the mass display of bodies not particularly well done. Nevertheless, with two stars and a terrific go, the *VANITIES* manage to please vast audiences; and I was more surprised than shocked by the smoking-car jokes.

Concerning the movies: *THE PATRIOT* is as good as the best reports say it is. You easily forget the atrocious attempt to make it a vocal film and you do not forget Jannings or Lubitsch. The talking films so far have been pretty terrible, especially those which attempt drama. No matter what the producers say, you are seeing a movie and hearing a loudspeaker at the same time. Up to this time the directors have sacrificed the movie to the speaker. When they stop doing that, there may be more to say in favour of the novelty. The short subjects are to be listened to without pain and the synchronized news reel is superb. The non-vocal movies seen at the same time were, with the exception of *THE PATRIOT*, as bad as the vocal ones, but less of a strain.

GILBERT SELDES

COMMENT

A LITERARY period would not be a period but for personality which makes it what it is and unaccountable charm can be imparted to it by a single mind—as in the instance of Goldsmith. In his father's home, "an old, half-rustic mansion, . . . overlooking a low tract occasionally flooded by the River Inny," "we were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society": he says, "we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own." The portrait of Lysippus in *The Bee* is a kind of desperate miniature of Goldsmith, his father, and his Uncle Contarine: "His generosity is such that it prevents a demand, and saves the receiver the trouble and the confusion of a request. His liberality also does not oblige more by its greatness than by his inimitable grace in giving. Sometimes he even distributes his bounties to strangers, and has been known to do good offices to those who professed themselves his enemies." Inclined to regard money lightly—as Goldsmith was—to

. . . "press the bashful stranger to his food
And learn the luxury of doing good,"

it is not strange that gallant execution should become on occasion, burlesque, pitifulness or domestic debacle.

Though he quivered under insult, a masqueraded mock melancholy put plumes on desperation and whereas a paraded sense of melancholy is unpersuasive, dejection not induced in the hope of response has the opposite effect, as in the remarks, "When once a man addicts himself to the sciences, or commences author, if he be not of the church, his friends lament him as lost," and "I resemble one of those animals that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain." The humility of the apologia for *The Vicar of Wakefield* is the completeness of dignity: "There are an hundred faults in this thing, and an hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with

numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity. The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth; he is a priest, an husbandman, and the father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement, whom can such a character please?"

Frequently doubting his own product—not that he did not think the thing good, but that he did not think people would think it so—he was freely encomiastic with respect to others and says of Voltaire, "When he was warmed in discourse, . . . it was rapture to hear him. His meager visage seemed insensibly to gather beauty: every muscle in it had meaning," and in dedicating *Mistakes of a Night* to Doctor Johnson: "By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

Nor was respect mere formality. Willingness to sacrifice labour and "in deference to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way," to revise or restore, was not a recollecting that he too could write. To us Doctor Primrose is one of the diamond-set snuff-boxes of the curioso and the "long fight against the deuterogamy of the age" as well as other equally valuable irrelevant plausibilities have lost nothing with time.

Of eighteen of Goldsmith's essays now for the first time reprinted,¹ an especially pleasing one on South American Giants—was occasioned by a book published at Madrid, "a work, entitled *Gigantologia*, by P. Joseph Tarrubias," and the editor's necessity to create pages "for his own perusal" is as unapparent in it as in some of his other more famous unautographed writings. Approving of certain of the giants—a body consisting of about four hundred—he says, "the lowest soldier in the whole army was not under nine feet high; and the tallest was about eleven. Their features were regular, their limbs exactly proportioned; they had a sweetness and affability in their looks, and their speech was deep, clear, and

¹ *New Essays* by Oliver Goldsmith, Now First Collected and Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Ronald S. Crane. 12 mo. 147 pages. Chicago University Press. \$3.

sonorous. . . . They lived in a state of perfect equality among each other, and had people of ordinary stature to do the domestic offices of life."

The plays are plays not essays and the poems are "full of quality" as Professor Saintsbury says, "though not always of strictly poetical quality"; but in Goldsmith a miscellaneous tendency and a hopping, zigzag consistency are oddly expressive of his parti-coloured being. Reflecting upon history and climate and race and poverty, and ranting—on paper—against the "hostilities" of a Scotch minuet performed "with a formality that approaches to despondence," we know that he distrusted "all honest jog-trot men who go on smoothly and dully"; but he was not kind to folly and could "wish that he might find men, when employed upon trifles, conscious that they are but trifles." He may have regarded as ephemera, the somewhat monstrous character of the fairy with the train fifteen yards long supported by porcupines, and the blue cat who showed the prince that "his passion for the white mouse was entirely fictitious, and not the genuine complexion of his soul"; but the eclipse of the sinister is always in Goldsmith an inversion of injury. Now a hundred years later, when publishers whose "valuable stock can only bear a winter perusal" and a "muster-master-general, or review of reviews" would admit that he had not employed himself upon trifles, his proffered scepticism, "let folly and dullness join to brand me" seems rather absurd. Avoiding the church and its black vestments by accident as much as by prudent decision, he seems to have been able to "moderate rage" and to have occupied in the world without realizing that he was so doing, a Samaritan and a pastoral office.



MOTHER AND CHILD. BY WILLIAM ZORACH

THE DIAL

DECEMBER 1928

TOLSTOY

BY THOMAS MANN

Translated From the German by Hildegard Nagel

HE had the stature of the nineteenth century, this giant, who bore epic burdens, under which our quick-breathing and more fragile generation would sink. How great was this period, in all its sombreness, its materialism, its scientific inflexibility and asceticism; how great was that race of writers to which Tolstoy belonged, whose creations dominate the five decades before 1900. Does any cosmic insight that we may have, or are beginning to have, does our yet timid dream of a gladder and more confident humanity, justify us in underestimating, as is now our habit, that earlier time; since after all it would be difficult to deny that from the moral stand-point we have fallen far below its level? In striking contrast with it, our detachment and complacent undervaluing of thought and human dignity would not have been tolerated by the "fatalistic" nineteenth century; and while the war was raging, I often reflected that it would not have had the temerity to break out if in 1914 the sharp penetrating grey eyes of the old man of Yasnaya Polyana had still been upon us. A childish thought, perhaps. At any rate, history had ordained it; he was gone and left no one like him. The reins of Europe fell slack with no hand to guide them, and are without one to-day.

Tolstoy has said of *Childhood and Adolescence*, one of his early works: "Without false modesty . . . , it is something like the *Iliad*." It was literally true and only in a superficial way is

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the assertion yet more applicable to the giant-work of his maturity, *War and Peace*. The Homeric, the typically-epic, was perhaps more marked in Tolstoy than in any other man of genius. In his work is the heaving might and rhythmic uniformity of the sea, its pristine vigour, its native pungency, imperishable health, and deathless realism. For surely it is permissible to see and feel these things as one, health and realism—the world of plastic form, of instinct, of high kinship with nature on the one hand, contrasting with, as I once tried to suggest in a more comprehensive way, the world of hyper-susceptibility and mental aristocracy, Schiller's world of the ideal, Dostoevsky's apocalyptic world of shadows. Goethe and Tolstoy—when their names were first linked together in criticism, surprise and doubt were aroused; but recent psychological studies have enabled us to take such comparisons for granted. To elaborate the parallel beyond the generically-typical would be pedantic caprice. We need not dwell upon the too obvious and predetermined differences of mind, country, or period. As soon as we advert to culture—that formula which implies nature's groping after mind and the inevitable impulse of mind towards nature—we must abandon the too facile analogy. We ought to be honest enough to admit that to those who possess Goethe, Tolstoy's absurd, naïvely tragic reaching after culture must present the spectacle at once pathetic and sublime, of a child-like barbarian's noble but futile striving towards what is true and human.

Nevertheless, this very Titanic helplessness, recalling the swollen, straining muscles of one of Michael Angelo's tortured creations, lends tremendous moral force to him as an artist. As a story-teller he is without equal; his art, even when he no longer had use for it, except as a means of furthering a dubious and depressing kind of moralizing, affords to any receptive talent (there can be no other) unflinching strength, refreshment, and elemental joy. Not at all with a view to imitating, for who could imitate? He has no following which could accurately be termed a school. Tolstoy's influence, indeed, whether on the spirit or form of a work, makes itself felt in very different ways, and above all, in writings quite unrelated to his own. But even as he, an Antaeus, received fresh creative strength from each contact with earth, so

the world of his mighty art is to us, earth and nature—a reincarnation of itself. To reread him, to let that preternaturally sharp gaze of the lower animals cast its spell on us, the force of his imagery, and limpid clarity of style untinged with mysticism, again so reminiscent of Goethe, is to find release from every phase of artificiality and useless frivolity, a return to what in each of us is fundamentally wholesome.

Merezhkovski has called him the great prophet of the body, in contrast with Dostoevsky, the prophet of the mind. In fact, the soundness of Tolstoy's art consists in its corporeality. Where we have psychology, we have also pathology. Disease derives from the mind, health from the body. Dostoevsky has given us an analysis of *Anna Karenina*, full of insight and love, reminding us of Schiller's affectionate eulogy of *Wilhelm Meister*; but Tolstoy was naturally without comprehension of Dostoevsky. For a moment, at the time of Dostoevsky's death, Tolstoy imagined that "he had been very fond of this man," but he had never previously troubled himself about the author of the *Brothers Karamazoff* and remarks dropped in conversation might have been made by a dunce. "The man was sick himself," he said, "and made all things appear sick." Supposing this to be true, it is an unprofitable truth, as though it should be said of Nietzsche "No, no, from the sick can come only sickness"; which would be not only unworthy but the reverse of the truth. Tolstoy's judgements were those of a great man, arbitrary, objective, and uncompromisingly literal. One need not go back to his unfavourable comparison of Shakespeare, as immoral, with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But has he dealt more "justly" with his own work? Certainly not when he discarded his Titanic masterpieces as irrelevant and harmful beguilements. Earlier, indeed, while writing *Anna Karenina*, that very greatest novel of society, he threw the manuscript aside as rubbish, again and again; and had no higher regard for it later. This is hardly to be looked upon as mere morbid self-depreciation. He would not have tolerated such criticism from another. His standard of measurement was one he had found in himself. And such impatient disparagement of his own work is contradictorily an artist's acknowledgement of a self transcending his work. It may be a case of having to be more than

the thing one creates; of greatness having its origin in something still greater. Apocalyptic wonders such as Leonardo, Goethe, Tolstoy, support the supposition. But why had Tolstoy never the apologetic attitude to his prophesyings and sectarian doctrine, his ideas of moral improvement, that he has shown towards his artistic creations? Why has he never once held them up to ridicule? One is justified perhaps in this inference: since he is greater than his art, he would, naturally, be greater than his ideas.

Ah, yes—Tolstoy's opinions! Regarded as revelations, for that was their true character, autocratic pronouncements of what we call "personality" receiving authority from the workings of that natural magic which turned the manor-house in the Province of Tula into a shrine for distressed humanity, a world-centre radiating vitality and healing. Vitality and greatness, greatness and power, in what degree are they synonymous? It is the problem of the "great man"; we have groped for its solution throughout the ages and find it in the Chinese theory of practical democracy—in the proverb which so offends our ears: A great man is a public misfortune. European instinct has been and now is for an aesthetic justification of the phenomenon. However, in matters of leadership, education, and progress, there remains, to put it mildly, a doubt, whether the function or even the existence of a great man may, without straining the truth, be so much as brought into relation with these things, whether he may not be purely incidental, an explosion of force without moral significance; touching in his effort to give himself a moral interpretation—that effort made by the prophet of Yasnaya Polyana with such praiseworthy ineptitude, embarrassed as he was by the absurdity of his disciples . . . How blessed that life! Blessed in every phase of its tragedy and devout tragi-comedy as power rather than thought; for even the moral sensibility and aspiration of this portentous life teem with expressions of physical exuberance. The incentive? Horror of death in an organism whose thinking was only another manifestation of its immense vitality. We should be frank, without fear of belittling what is great. Even at the last, that famous withdrawal of the saint from home and household signifies as much at least as the social and religious impulse toward salvation, the instinctive flight of a dying animal.

But why should the so beautiful solemn words of Goethe haunt me—

*“Denkt er immer sich ins Rechte?
Ist er ewig schön und gross?”*

What modesty, what moral contagion lie in the endeavour to subdue inherent creative power—under no exterior compulsion—to “the search of truth alone” and to dedicate one’s vital momentum to the service of humanity and the spirit! Though Tolstoy’s genius may have miscarried a hundred times and his thought stumbled into childish, benighted, unbecoming digressions, his laborious anguish will always be “beautiful and great.” It had its source in the perception of a very profound truth. Tolstoy realized that a new era was at hand, an age which would not be satisfied with an art serving merely to enhance life, but which would put socially significant virtues—leadership, decisiveness, and clear thought—above individual genius; and value morality and intelligence more than irresponsible beauty; and he never sinned against his innate greatness, never claimed a “great man’s” licence to work confusion, atavism, and evil, but to the best of his understanding, in complete humility, laboured for that which is divinely reasonable.

I seem to be presenting him as a pattern. We are a little, at all events a circumscribed, Central European race compared with his, we writers of to-day.

Nothing can absolve us, and least of all fear of ridicule, or the reproaches and contempt of fools, should we fail to accept the challenge of our time and of our conscience, each among his own people, sincerely to “search out truth alone.”

FOUR POEMS

BY LOUIS ZUKOFSKY

I

tam cari capitis

Unlovely you called yourself
And at once I felt I was never lovely:
I, who had few truths to go to,
Found you doubting what I loved.

Now I make you lovely my own way,
Unmentioned were we certain
Of a greater, in small assurances
Others may find trivial!

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II

SONG THEME

to the last movement of Beethoven's Quartet in
C-sharp Minor

All my days—
And all my ways—
Met by hands—
And ringed with feet—
Into laurel-branch the hands
Are gone, into fertile soil the feet;

So these praised ones that are fallen off
Are a signal in the trees,
Are a beacon in the sun,—

Sun and death and stir, and death's unlit love,—
All their days,
And all their ways.

III

Someone said, 'earth, bowed with her death, we mourn
Ourselves, our own earth selves,'—yet for me crept
Rattling a small wind bitter, and I wept
But your own little form that might be torn.
And suddenly I could see your face borne
Like the moon on my sight, it had not slept
But looked, as once, at rest though waking, stepped
To the grave peace of death and not yet worn.

'Look at the moon,' you said: 'Those are no tears
Falling, unclasped through space, for what appears
Dead crater sheds no tears.' And your face from
Where it came vanished, so I was too soon
Oblivious among the wind, the moon
Clouding then, her high dissolution come.

IV

The silence of the good that you were wrought of,
Do I find it transformed by some strange leaven
From you to earth only my earth knows aught of,
And know it silent mound outlined on heaven,
Till all the life of you in our still room
Returns to me—your presence past the wall
Of death, the confines of your dark? So fall
Death's guerdon to me neither sun nor gloom;

But quiet—your silence, when you would stir
With me—its being, what you are and were.
It cannot change though it must change the mode—
Not with you living, but with you dead to darkle—
Yet is no less obliged thus to corrode
In earth with you—earth, shadow of your sparkle.

MR COSTYVE DUDITCH

BY JEAN TOOMER

IT was a helter-skelter early-spring day in Chicago. Draughts of wind swept through the huge corridor formed by the tall buildings which flanked Michigan Boulevard; and where the bridge crossed the Chicago River, air currents from the lake blew in, met with opposing gusts, and set up odd swirls which made it difficult for pedestrians to know their footing. One minute, they had to lean forward against the wind; the next, they had to brace themselves back against it. Faces were tense. Shirts and coats waved and beat and flapped. People clutched their hats.

Mr J. Breastbuck Coleeb was making headway northward up the avenue, approaching the four skyscrapers which stood at each corner of the bridge. On the near side, the London Life Building, and the new skyscraper called 333. And, on the far side, across the river, the Tribune tower, with its suggestions of Gothic architecture, and the white, unshapely mass of the Wrigley Building.

Coleeb was a man in the early forties, well trained in the natural sciences and a rather keen observer of human conduct. From the behaviour of the human species, more than from the behaviour of animals, birds, or insects, he derived much amusement. Squarely built, he gave the impression of being vigorous and rough-and-tumble. The cast of his features was alternately skeptical and humorous. As he drove forward, his jaws were clenched and looked as though he were biting hard on the stem of a pipe. The characteristic squint of his eyes was exaggerated in an effort to keep flying dirt from entering them.

He shot a glance upward at the high vault of grey-blue sky, and, as if from a sky vantage point, he looked down and saw himself, together with several hundred of his fellow creatures, being bullied by the winds. This spectacular concert of biped antics struck him humorously. And then he smiled satirically at the thought that he, a human intelligence, in this trivial circumstance, was giving sufficient evidence of man's helplessness in Nature.

He seemed to be hurrying; but this was more because of his

struggle with the wind currents than because of a feeling of urgency to be exactly on time for his appointment in the Wrigley Building at 10:00 A. M.

As he neared the bridge, he glanced up and across the river to note the clock on the Wrigley tower. Seeing that he was fifteen minutes early, he returned to scanning with interest the faces he passed by.

And then he chanced to catch a glimpse of something which gave him a shock of unexpected recollection. He noticed, on the farther side of the bridge, coming rapidly towards him, a velour hat of light green colour and peculiar shape, a bent head, and a smart morning suit. The sight made Coleeb instantly exclaim to himself:

“As I live! Costyve Duditch!” Then he added: “In his setting.”

The figure sped nearer, allowing Coleeb to see its characteristic short-legged gait, its grey spats, its standing collar. He had no doubt of it.

“Here he comes!” exclaimed Coleeb, opening his eyes wide as one does when viewing a racing auto draw near. He exaggerated his expression of amazement.

No sooner had the words been uttered, than Mr Costyve Duditch, he in fact, moving with a velocity which was extraordinary in the face of such uncertain winds, and among so many people—Mr Costyve Duditch was on and past him. Much as if he had in truth witnessed the approach and passing of a speedy mechanical object, Coleeb jerked himself around and viewed Costyve’s departure.

“There he goes!” Coleeb exclaimed, and his face broke into a good-humoured grin. “The rascal! Didn’t notice me. Wonder when he arrived in town. I must speak to the dear fellow.”

His decision to do so was hastened to action by the fact that passers-by along the bridge jostled him and met his stationary figure with unfriendly eyes. Standing there gazing at the rapidly departing figure of Costyve, he was impeding the pedestrian traffic. So, coming to his normal senses, senses which had been somewhat shocked out of balance by Costyve’s glancing impact, Coleeb started in hot pursuit of his old friend Duditch.

“Hey there! Costyve!” he called, when he had almost overtaken him.

Costyve stopped dead, with hunched shoulders. For a few

seconds he neither turned nor budged, but looked as though he were holding himself in blankness prior to some catastrophic onslaught. Then his face brightened and he wheeled around just in time to grasp the hand which otherwise would have clapped him on the back a trifle too vigorously.

"Costyve!" Coleeb exclaimed, as the two men shook hands and looked variously, but both with large smiles, each in the other's face.

"You rascal! You passed me on the bridge and didn't see me."

Costyve smiled with delighted apology, snapped his eyes, and rubbed one of them.

"No wonder," said Coleeb. "We'll need goggles to keep out the dirt, and gas masks to protect our lungs from carbon monoxide before long. When did you get to town?"

"Yesterday," Costyve confessed.

"And leaving to-night?" asked Coleeb, showing his familiarity with the fact that Costyve was continually coming and going from town to town, from country to country.

Costyve nodded in his peculiar way expressive of delighted apology. He seemed to be delighted with the world; apologetic for himself. Delighted with life; apologetic for his own contribution to it.

"Where have you been this time?"

"A short trip," answered Costyve. "To Spain—Toledo and the Balearic Islands."

"Well!" said Coleeb. "How was it?"

"Fantastic! Topping!" Costyve responded, enthusiastically.

"You must tell me about it. When am I going to see you? You leave to-night? Where were you last time?"

"Constantinople," Costyve answered.

"And before that?"

"Persia."

"And before that?"

"Peking," answered Costyve.

"By God!" Coleeb exclaimed, "you do get around, don't you?" And then he told him: "Everybody's been wondering about you."

Costyve brightened and said: "Conceive it!" which was his way of phrasing, "You don't say!" It was evident that it pleased

him very much to know that people remembered him and thought of him.

"Yes, indeed," said Coleeb. "We've been wondering where you were, and when you'd come back. Why don't you let people know when you are coming?"

At this question, Costyve immediately showed by a quick batting of his eyelids, and by the protective way in which he drew in his lips and chin, that he was embarrassed. Indeed, with his friends, Costyve wanted to evade the personal factor in his comings and goings. To travel, yes. To see all manner of things, yes, yes! But he was a little touchy on the subject that he, Duditch, personally, moved about so much. Hoping to avoid any mention of this, it was a trick of his to arrive in town unannounced; and then, when discovered by someone, he usually tried to give the impression that he had been there all along. But he had not been able to work this technique on Coleeb.

"It is such a bother," he answered, off-hand, but could not hide the fact that he was telling a fib and knew it.

Just then, someone bumped into him. Standing there on the crowded boulevard, the wonder was that it hadn't happened before. So Coleeb suggested that they move out of the way of the pedestrians and find shelter from the wind. They stood in the entrance of a near-by building.

"A bother for whom?" asked Coleeb, feeling that he wanted to have it out with Costyve, "for you or for your friends?"

"For both, I fear," answered Duditch, and fidgeted.

"What is it?" Coleeb asked, rather bluntly, and knowing that he had placed his old friend on uncomfortable ground. "You shy from what you fear may be their criticisms of your wanderings? You feel they think you are a sort of aimless globe-trotter, the proverbial rolling stone which gathers no moss?"

"Something like that," Costyve answered, with simple directness. For a short while he lowered his head.

"Well, what if they do?" asked Coleeb. "Who are they to sit in judgement on how valuable or worthless your comings and goings are? They'd have a difficult case proving that they're better off than you. To have a family; not to have a family. To have a recognized career; not to have one. And so on. Well, what's the

real difference? In one case, you do one set of things. In the other, you do another set of things. Either can be worthless. Either can be worthwhile. It all depends on what the given man makes of them. Or so it seems to me."

"That is very true," replied Costyve. "But —" and then, having heard his own position so well defended, he began arguing the case of the settled people against himself, trying to show that they were more productive, more solid; that they had a function in life, that they fulfilled an obligation to society and constituted the backbone of the world; whereas he was like a vagrant, useless appendage.

Costyve's feeling of inferiority to these settled people of whom he, Coleeb, was one, made Coleeb a bit uncomfortable. Not taking kindly to it, he interrupted Duditch's argument to ask:

"You like to travel, don't you?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Costyve, brightening. One could see that he truly did. And then he added: "It is a way of grooming one's person!" A significant smile lit his face.

"Well then," said Coleeb, "what do you care what people think of you? If the truth be told, half of them are envious of what, from their point of view, is your freedom. From a settled background they envy you as much as you, from a moving one, envy them. And those who don't envy you, are always glad to see you, and to know that you're in town. So from now on, I won't hear of any explanations or excuses for your not letting us know when you are coming. Do you understand me, my roving gentleman?"

Costyve said that he did, and felt too pleased to look chastened. Something about Coleeb warmed the cockles of his heart.

"By the way," asked Coleeb, "did you by any chance receive an invitation to Constance Hanover's tea this afternoon?"

"Yes, I did," replied Costyve. "I don't know how she knew. Nice of her, wasn't it? It gives one a warm feeling . . ."

"You don't deserve it," said Coleeb, shaking his head at him. "You just blow in, and blow out, and use cities much as we ordinary mortals use the rooms of our houses. Well, I won't take you to task any more this morning. But this afternoon . . ." and he levelled a finger at him. "I've an appointment at ten. And you seem to be off somewhere."

He put out his hand, grasped Costyve's, and said:

"About 4:30. Remember where her place is?"

Costyve nodded. "On Dearborn Street."

"You do remember your old town, don't you? Well, watch the traffic! I'll see you at 4:30. So long!"

"*Au revoir!*" said Costyve, and waved his arm as he was accustomed to doing so often at train and ship departures.

And the two men parted to go their separate ways until tea time.

As Coleeb walked against the wind to his appointment, he turned over in his mind what a queer fellow this Costyve was. Reserving serious observations and reflections for another time, he recalled with amusement the various odd stories told on Costyve. In particular, he recalled gossip as to how Duditch liked to be remembered by bell-boys, how he liked to be singled out and hailed in a crowd.

It was told, for instance, that if he were scurrying along anonymous in the throngs of Fifth Avenue, New York, or the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, and someone chanced to notice and recognize him, he was ready to repay this person with his life. The person need not stop and converse with him; he preferred that the person did not. It was enough that he was hailed. "Good morning," or, "How do you do, Mr Costyve Duditch!" He would smile brightly and feel a touch of self-importance. Ships greeting in the night . . . And Costyve, God bless him, would mount a crest and sail on.

It was further told that in pursuit of gratification for this strange trait, he had a way of going from city to city carefully selecting hotels with this wish in mind: that after due period of absence, the doormen, the clerks, the porters, and the bell and elevator boys would remember him, salute him by name, complain that they had not seen him for ages, and, in general, treat him as a visiting dignitary of great worth. His calculations were very shrewd. He never returned to a hotel a month after having stayed in it. For, considering the sized tips he gave everyone, it would have been no mark of remembrance for the entire staff to recall him after so short a lapse of time. No, he never returned to a place thus quickly. A year, two years, three years—and if, after an interval of four years they still saluted him, it was one of the high moments of his life. Thus, since he travelled much, he knew almost every hotel in the world, was known by every Hotel Bristol on the Continent, and,

unfortunately, sacrificed many a pleasant hour by the hearth-side in order to gratify this strange weakness.

Coleeb, picturing Duditch in the midst of these antics, did not fail to perceive the distorted wish for recognition which underlay them; and his sense of amusement was replaced by a feeling of pathos. He drew a deep breath, shook his head soberly; and then, having reached the Wrigley Building, entered it.

Costyve, feeling much set-up as a result of his encounter with Coleeb, sped along to fulfil his morning's plan. His day went off like clock-work.

He had a faculty for sleeping well. He slept soundly. Neither dreams nor conscience disturbed him. If he happened to hit the bed flat on his back—that way he slept. If curled on his side, if round on his belly—so he slept till early morning. No day came to find him other than refreshed and full of energy to get up.

Of mornings, his first trick was to thrust his toes from the sheets and twinkle them. Then, with a bright-eyed grin on his face, bouncing up, he would dash in and frisk under a cold shower. Shave. And then into street clothes.

He had many suits. Tweeds, and serges, and fabrics from all quarters of the earth. He also liked tailors to remember him. But whatever else he put on, these two items were indispensable and unchangeable: his spats, his grey spats, and a standing collar. They served to give him an air of distinction wherever he went, and he was strongly inclined to wear them in warm weather and in hot climates. And, also, to discerning eyes, they evoked the pathetic aura of a bachelor; perfectly dressed, but never in his life to possess either mistress, lover, or wife. Ah yes, 'twas said that Mr Costyve Duditch was a gelding.

However, in other respects, he stood in sufficient answer to those critics of America who say that we are a fatigued and enervated people. For instance, he was indefatigable, with spirits always up. True, now and again he had trouble with his kidneys; but, save for this trifling occasional ailment, he was in sound good health and had an enviable appetite. In fact, he could eat almost any kind of food and cooking with no concern for indigestion. Also, he was free to pick up and leave for remote corners of the earth with

never a care about getting fixed up by doctors and dentists before he left. Nor did he require that there be such persons where he went. Central Africa, Tibet, Alaska, the South Seas—it was all the same to him: no place held terror or discomfort. Hence he was free to enjoy the unique strangenesses and delights of each.

What would have happened to him had his spirits flagged; what would have been his outlook had he suddenly contracted gout, or severe rheumatism, or low blood pressure, or Bright's disease—ah well, he seemed immune from virulent bacteria, organic and psychological—let him be.

Now right after breakfast he always did something. Sometimes he had definite business to attend to. But whether he had or not, he invariably sallied forth regularly and promptly at 9:00 A. M., hailed a taxi, took a bus or a jinricksha, or bounced along the street, according to the place and mood, headed for the business district. No matter what part of the world he was in. For his purposes, Peking was just as good as Moscow, Moscow just as good as Paris, London, New York, or Chicago. All he wanted was to taste some kind of commercial atmosphere first thing in the morning. He had a need to feel in touch with the forms and rhythms of man's tangible necessities. Once in the midst of things, his fertile brain would not wait long before inventing something definite to do.

This morning, after leaving Coleeb, he steered towards the Loop, and paid a round of visits to men with whom he really had business connexions. He visited the offices of his real estate agent and of his stock broker. In both places he tarried just long enough to get a smell of the office atmosphere. His affairs, he found, were going quite well without his personal attention. So, after an exchange of greetings, and after receiving a number of tips which he promptly forgot, he quit his brokers and went to his bank to clip coupons. This done, his urgent business for the morning was finished. But there still remained an hour before lunch. To fill this, he conceived the notion of inspecting merchandise in various large department stores.

On entering Marshall Field's he should have found himself in a place of lofty ceilings, large white pillars, and, in general of rather grand proportions. But neither he nor any other of the buzzing throng of morning shoppers took notice of these proportions.

Women with eyes close to their noses pressed along the aisles and crowded about the counters, viewing and fingering stuffs of silk, cotton, leather, jewels. . . . Costyve himself darted and ducked through the women, giving the impression that he was in urgent search of some special something which was nowhere to be found. However, as he passed the cut-glass counter, a particularly fine bowl caught his attention and caused him to pause. The longer he gazed at it the more it won his admiration. So, at length, he asked the saleswoman to let him examine it.

He took the bowl in rather nervous fingers and began turning it round, viewing its designs and rather exquisite workmanship. He came to like it so well that his mind began searching to find someone to whom he could send it as a gift. And just then, by God, the bowl slipped from his hands and crashed on the floor, sending glittering splinters in all directions. Costyve, in consternation, literally jumped in the air. The saleswoman made hysterical sounds and gestures. And several people, including the floor-walker, gathered. Duditch, flushed and flustered, jumpy all over, fumbled for his bill-case. He stuttered in asking the price of the bowl, apologized, and, finally, amid much hubbub, the greater part of which he himself created, settled the matter by having the bowl placed on his charge account. This done, and feeling that all the eyes in the world were on him, all fingers shaking at him reprovingly, he hastened to leave the store.

And then, outside, on Wabash Avenue, with the entire Loop crushing and crashing about him, he had a sharp feeling that he must also leave Chicago immediately. The city suddenly seemed to be in the same condition as the bowl. Always when he broke something, which he was continually doing—either literally breaking something, or building up a scheme or a wish only to have it collapse on him—he felt like this: that he, the most clumsy person in the world, had shattered the finest things the world contained. And in this mood, he always headed towards a railroad station or a ship's pier. So now, he jumped into a taxi and was driven to the Santa Fe station, where he changed the time of his departure from 10:00 P. M. to 7:00 P. M. Had not Miss Hanover's tea prevented him, he would have left as soon as he could gather his bags.

For lunch, Costyve avoided his club, fearing he might run into

friends who would ask him why he hadn't let them know that he was coming to town. The restaurant selected happened to be a dismal affair, depressing; and save that the food stimulated him, he would have sunk into melancholy worse than any he had known in years.

After lunch he bucked himself up and returned to his apartment, there to engage himself till 4:30.

This apartment, a four-room suite located in the section of Chicago near the Drake Hotel, he kept on lease year in and year out. Its rent had been raised several times; he had paid the increase cheerfully. It was the one place in the world to which he could turn with a feeling of having a settled habitat. It was the one place which gave him a sense of having anchorage. He did not want to dwell in it constantly. He had no sentimental regrets about leaving it. But there were comfort and cheer in the knowledge that, furnished with certain of the objects which he cherished, it was there, his own, for him to return to whenever he wished.

One room was his sleeping-room. Another he kept for a possible guest. A third was a sitting-room, containing a baby grand piano, several comfortable chairs, and an odd assortment of objects such as pottery, weapons, articles of dress and ornament, a tiger skin, a number of ancient-looking manuscripts—things which, from time to time, he had brought home from various quarters of the earth. In addition to these, the room now was littered with Costyve's bags, suit-cases, coats, hats, and what not. It had a musty smell owing to its having been occupied so little.

The fourth room, a dark box-like affair which usually had to be lit by electricity, Costyve called his study. Here he kept, in glass-enclosed cases, his books. And here also he hid away in three different covers the notes which for years he had been making and which, some day, he hoped to work over and organize in three separate volumes. Already he had titles for these books of his.

One, dealing with travel as a factor in the shaping of a cultured person, was to be called: *The Influence of Travel on the Personality*. An alternate title for this book was: *How Travel Grooms the Person*.

A second book, descriptive of the love-affairs of great men, concerning which, if the book were ever published, Costyve would prove

himself a specialist, was to be called: *When Love was Great*. He also thought of calling this book: *Finesse in Love*. He could not quite decide whether he wished to emphasize the bold strength of great men's loves, or the subtlety of management which they displayed.

And the third, treating the creative processes as they are manifest in life and art, was to be titled: *There is No Life Without Creation*.

Now if, first thing in the morning, Costyve visited the business district, the second thing he did, right after lunch, was to apply himself to his literary work. This also he did irrespective of what part of the world he was in.

So now, returning to his apartment, he cleansed himself of Chicago's dirt, put on a gorgeous silk and gold-embroidered mandarin's cloak which he used as a house robe, went into his study, switched on the lights, and began adding to his given collection the notes he had taken for the past year. There was so much assorting and arranging to be done that, for a while, his activity amounted to no more than librarian's work. In time, however, amid much fussing and fuming, and repeated runnings to the bath-room for water, he managed to penetrate beneath the surface of his material dealing with the influence of travel on the personality. Opinions and points which had come to his mind during the talk with Coleeb found their way into his notes.

After writing a page which moderately satisfied him—and surprised him—he glanced at his watch and was shocked to see that it was already 4:45. He jumped up, put his notes carefully away, hustled into his street clothes, and rushed to Miss Hanover's.

Constance Hanover was a woman of class and refinement, tall, with flowing lines and an easy grace of movement. A charming hostess, she managed all affairs, social and other, exceedingly well, exerting no apparent effort to do so.

To this tea, an informal affair given for no special person, she had invited in addition to Coleeb and Costyve a number of friends and acquaintances whom she wished to see and chat with. Had she known in time that Costyve was going to be in town, she most certainly would have given it for him especially. As it was, she

planned to so manipulate things that he would become a sort of unannounced lion of the occasion. This she aimed to do not only because she found Costyve interesting and amusing, but also because his pathetic side appealed very strongly to her and made her want to help and advance him in any way she could.

The room in which she was going to pour tea showed taste in decoration, with an eye for ease and comfort. Its walls were done in soft-toned silver grey; and on its walnut floor there was a modern French rug in grey and rose. On either side of an open hearth, in which a wood fire was crackling, stood a wing- and an arm-chair. And across from the hearth, against the opposite wall, a lounge. On a low table everything was in readiness for pouring either tea or coffee. The china and silverware, of old-fashioned design, had been in her family for years. It was recognized by everyone that this room and Miss Hanover belonged together.

Around 4:30 her friends began coming. They drove up in town-cars, taxis—and one or two walked. Two society women, stunningly dressed, and both interested also in the fine arts. A young painter who, in addition to his small canvases, was doing murals for hotels and having quite a success with them. A professor from the University. A critic of literature. A charming young poet who had just finished a long poem in the modern idiom and was undecided whether he ought to be proud or ashamed of it. An actress who was playing the leading part in a rather serious drama which several weeks before had come to Chicago from New York. A French diplomat and his wife. A timorous-looking woman, a friend of Miss Hanover's college days. She had been asked to pour tea. And Coleeb.

They were shown in by a manservant, and, after the usual greetings, they were told by Miss Hanover that Mr Costyve Duditch, just returned from Toledo, Spain, was in town and would be to tea. Without exception, those who already knew him were surprised, delighted, and even eager to see him. While the few others let it be seen how eager they too were. And thus it was that by the time he arrived he found a chatting gathering which was quite willing to lionize him.

Dressed for the afternoon, as if he were in London rather than in Chicago, Costyve made his tardy appearance, delighted and

apologetic. His entrance was greeted by a round of murmurs and exclamations such as one would expect to hear on the return of a prodigal; and he had hardly had time to meet the people who were strangers to him before on every side they were asking that he tell them of his latest travels. However, Miss Hanover saved him from breathless confusion by suggesting that he be allowed to have his first cup of tea in comfort, and that thereafter all who wished could ply him with questions to their heart's content.

The wing-chair near the hearth was vacated for him, and Costyve ensconced himself in it, looked very bright and pleased, comfy, sipped his tea, and incidentally took over the office of keeping the fire burning. Ever so often he would lean over, stir the embers with a poker, and, with a quick jerky movement, throw on another piece of wood.

The minute his first cup was put aside, he was asked so many questions, he had difficulty keeping track of them. But, beaming all over—feeling secure and released by the fact that travel, and not he personally, was the subject of discussion—he grew very talkative, now and again threw wood on the fire, and answered, contrived to answer most of them.

He told them about places, things, and cities in all quarters of the world: in England, Scotland, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Persia, India, and China. The roads, the hotels, the food, the language, the kind of money, in each. It is to his credit that he succeeded in adding to the mere information he gave, some of his ideas as to the value of travel as an aid, an indispensable aid, in grooming the person. Fortunately, everyone took kindly to these notions; and thus they let him feel that he had a place and function in the world. Indeed they gave him such a sense of wholeness that both the cut-glass bowl and the entire city of Chicago were temporarily mended: he began to regret that he was leaving so soon. Here in this company, in his own town, the purpose and end of his wanderings seemed about to receive not only recognition but fulfilment.

But it was not until he began telling of Toledo and the El Grecos that he really swung into his stride. In describing the city, in pointing out how one never caught the true spirit and meaning of El Greco's genius until one had seen his art in the midst of the very conditions, physical and spiritual, which had given it birth and form, he

was able to expand, and, by the use of major examples, to demonstrate that a truly cultured personality could never be formed unless one did travel widely and thus tap the currents of civilization at their sources.

The young painter particularly was interested in what Costyve had to say about El Greco. And so, in a way, was Coleeb. For he, Coleeb, with a good friend of his, had once spent an interesting hour before the El Grecos in the museum in Boston. Mentioning this to Costyve, and asking him if he had ever seen them, Coleeb was not surprised to learn that Duditch was familiar with them and with most things in Boston also.

While Costyve talked on, Coleeb lapsed into silence, slouched in his corner of the lounge, squinted, and began attentively to observe Duditch's behaviour.

The first thing he noticed was that Costyve's tone of voice had little or no relation to, no connexion with, the various subjects he talked about. Whatever the subject, whether it were the price of a railroad ticket across Siberia, or a Hindu temple; whatever the theme, whether it were gossip about people or serious discussion of art and life, his tone contained an odd pathetic pleading apologetic persuasive quality mingled with a note which suggested that he was delighted with something, perhaps with life, and as pleased with himself as he dared be. This tone of voice appeared to go on by itself, yes, expressing some reality, maybe expressing the fundamental tone of Costyve's temperament; but it rarely if ever changed to suit the various topics of conversation. And so, on first hearing, it seemed to be strangely unrelated not only to the subjects, but to Costyve himself. It gave the impression of being disembodied. A voice, sounding on the face of the earth, pleading and delighted, pleading for no one, delighted with no tangible thing.

Queerly impressed by this observation, Coleeb then turned to note what he could of Costyve's mental behaviour. It was not long before he saw that here too, as in his bodily movements, Duditch appeared to be continually coming and going. His face alternated between three distinct expressions. One, a bright-eyed, eager, fertile expression. By this you could know, some seconds before its arrival, that an idea was coming to him. Then, once the idea had come and had been vocalized, sometimes with an odd confusion of

words, sometimes with a surprising aptness and clarity, you could tell that it was going by the vacant look which swiftly descended on him. And, third, when quite gone, you would know this by the curious silent anticipatory way he would stare at you—an expression suggesting that though his own mind which only a minute before had been full was now blank, he expected either himself or you to say something of importance immediately.

To these noticed traits, Coleeb added what he knew of Costyve's emotional life: the fact that Duditch was continually building houses of cards only to have them collapse on him, the fact that his growing emotional interests were marked by outbursts of enthusiasm and by an ever increasing fever of activity, and that his waning interest was characterized by a sort of pathetic disillusion and by a semi-frustrated eagerness to find some new attachment to take its place—Coleeb added these known facts to his current perceptions and thus obtained a fairly complete outline of how Costyve acted.

Meanwhile, Costyve himself, still the centre of the company, had left Toledo and El Greco in favour of a seldom visited island off the coast of Greece. And it was at this point that the timorous-looking woman, Miss Hanover's college friend, asked him a question which allowed Costyve to reveal himself in a new light. In fact, in answering it he not only showed forth an aspect of himself unknown even to his close friends, but said something which caused the abrupt termination of the tea.

"But, Mr Duditch," he was asked by a quivering feminine voice, "suppose you were to die in some far-off outlandish place. What ever would happen to your body?"

This fearful mention of death threw a vaguely nervous cloud over the gathering and disturbed most of the guests with the exception of Costyve. He, on the contrary, appeared quite at ease, as if he were fully prepared to face what for others was an alarming aspect of reality. Looking in a matter-of-fact way at his timid questioner, he replied:

"It would be disposed of according to the custom of the place."

"Not even sent home?" she asked, visibly withdrawing from the opposite possibility. All were concerned to hear his answer.

"Home?" he asked. "Do you mean by home, here, Chicago?"

"Yes," she said, trembling. "To your relatives and friends here."

"But my dear lady," Costyve replied. "To a man who has made the world his home—tut, tut—I have not forgotten Chicago—but, beneath the pavement it is all earth, is it not? It is earth here, in New York, in Constantinople, in Mecca, in Bombay, or in some spot without name. Would not the same changes occur in my dead organism whatever the place? For sure, they would. So you see. I have no doubt but what some fine morning a strange person using a foreign tongue will enter my room, cast one frightened glance at my body lying there, and say, 'He's dead'."

Having said this, with more dramatic impressiveness than was his wont, Costyve paused; and the idea of death was about to leave him. But it remained with the others so vividly that each one identified with the picture which Duditch had conjured, and saw himself or herself dead stretched out in a strange room. Even their own usually familiar rooms would be strange if they were dead in them. They felt this with a quick catch of breath.

"Mr Duditch!" several exclaimed, and looked at him to say that he had mentioned an impolite and terrifying thing.

It was Costyve's turn to look surprised and dismayed. He could not imagine what he had done to deserve this sudden reversal.

"He's dead" rang ominously in their ears. The longer they heard it the more aghast they became. The image struck deeper and deeper into them.

"I'm dead," an impossible thing which some invisible force made them grapple with and realize to be true. Shock on their faces, each one tried to view himself and did look at the others. True, every single person there would have it said about him, sooner or later: "He's dead," or "She's dead."

Being not at all like the ancient Egyptians who used to have mummies brought into their feasts, the present gathering took strenuous exception to such ideas and feelings at an afternoon tea.

Abruptly, one after the other, they arose to tell Miss Hanover how nice her tea had been, gingerly shake Costyve's trembling hand, and leave. In no time at all, Coleeb, Costyve, and of course Miss Hanover were the sole ones remaining. Poor Duditch knew he had broken something, but could not tell what. He was tense, fidgety, and miserable, and made the situation awkward for the other two.

Coleeb regarded him, trying to determine whether his expressed attitude towards death were merely due to lack of imagination or

to a well considered unwillingness to place more value on his body than its worth. If this latter, then it was a sign of more intelligence and sense of reality than he was usually credited with. Coleeb could not decide which.

Miss Hanover tried to smoothe the thing over; but in doing so she somehow gave Costyve the impression that beneath her kind words she really saw how ridiculous and helpless he was, and pitied him. This made him feel worse than if she had put him out of her house and slammed the door on him. He could not bear to have any one pity him. He made several futile gestures in denial of what he took to be her inner attitude; and then, before either she or Coleeb knew what was happening, Costyve darted towards the hall, left his hat behind, and rushed out the door into the street.

Flying down the avenue, his world smashed to bits about him, he was aware of no wish save to see no human being on earth, of no need save to leave Chicago as fast as a train could carry him.

He never could remember how he reached his apartment, got his things together, and arrived at the station.

Once there, he called to his service a staff of porters and had them shoulder more bags, suit-cases, and odds and ends than the law allows, himself, like a little general, at the head of them. Several bystanders laughed at the sight of him. But to an observing eye Costyve's departure was a matter of pathos no less than of comicality. For, rushing and active with fuss and to-do, surrounded by things and people though he was, his spirit hugged itself in loneliness and felt goaded by a thousand shattered hopes.

Ah well, it was a matter for this night only. For, on awaking in the morning to find himself speeding over some southwest section of the American wilderness, he would bounce from berth, bowl up the aisle, and out-beam all the men in the shaving-room.

A SONG TO CALIFORNIA

BY CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN

Hear me!

I have had alkali on my boots;
O hear my song—
I who have had poppies on my eyes,
California.

I have wandered
About your brown hills and your blue mountains,
Down into your ripe green valleys
And along your infinite roads!

Dias dorados!

Your golden days I have utilized
In my vagrant wandering, pursuing your music
As a child, meandering casually,
Pursues romance in a museum.

O thunder and stars!
I have lain through many a long night
By a waterhole, listening. I have heard
The rhythmic drums of marching cattle
In your hills under the moon.

I have stood hip-deep in your cotton,
And shoulder-high your alfalfa has grown
About me in the San Joaquin Valley.
I have harvested sugar prunes
In the Santa Clara orchards,
Stricken with their beauty
Even as Hercules must have been
When he plucked the Hesperian apples!

A SONG TO CALIFORNIA

I have sewed sacks on a harvester when your grain
Was a flood of gold in the shutes.
On the roads with a shovel and pick,
On the canals with a sickle and pike,
On the ranches, I have sweat and strained
To become part of you!

Gold—gold—gold! Everywhere, gold!
El dorado!

On your rivers, at the weirs and the dams,
I have witnessed the salmon, leaping the ladders,
Daring the gauntlet of spears,
In water knee-deep, to win to the headwaters
To spawn. I have seen the water silver
With their pilgrimage, a pageant of glory!

I have run like the wind across your plain,
Chasing the tumbleweed, shouting whoops,
Wild with vigour, crazy with fever!
I have bathed in the surges that wash upon your beaches.
I have drownd in the sun, under the blue sky,
On the white sand.

Your palms have spread their shade for me,
Your redwoods, your pines, your spruce,
Your aspens, your eucalyptus, your cottonwoods!
You have flavoured the air I breathed, with them
And with the orange-blossoms, the cherry-blossoms,
The prune-blossoms, the apple-blossoms,
Of your orchard gardens!
You knew me then, California!

I have discovered your lakes,
Fragments of sky in the vales of your mountains,
Fringed with the margins of forests,
Sapphire blue at noon
As your heavens!

I have heard the rumble of fountains,
Plumed gushers of oil, speaking your might
With a roar like your rivers'!
I have danced to a chorus of turbines
Humming a new music,
Chanting new songs of Sierra!

Mistress of the West,
You would sift more alkali on my old boots!
You would place fresh poppies on my eyes!
You would give me your brown hills and your blue mountains,
Your ripe green valleys and your infinite roads!

Dias dorados!

O dream of golden days!
No mortal can ask more than you have given, California.
You have given me yourself, California!

THE MUSIC OF THE DEGENERATE

BY MAXIM GORKI

Translated From the Russian by Marie Budberg

IT is night.

Yet—it seems somewhat unsuitable—the word night—confronted by this wonderful sky of Southern Italy, this atmosphere impregnated with blue light and with the aromatic warmth of a kindly soil. The light seems to pour not from the sun, reflected by the golden rays of the moon, but from that indefatigably prolific soil, laboriously, masterfully tilled by human hands. The silver-tinted olive-leaves, the stony foundations of the mountains breathe noiseless light; these walls protect from land-slips, defining on the rocks, vast plains sown with corn, planted with beans, potatoes, and cabbage—laid out with vines, and orange and lemon groves. How much wise, tenacious labour has been lavished here!—The orange and yellow fruit also shines through the transparent, silvery mist, adding to the earth a queer likeness to the sky blossoming with stars. One is led to think that the earth has been carefully ornamented by its labourers for a great feast and that after resting to-night, to-morrow, at sunset, they will rejoice and make merry.

The silence is immutable. Everything on earth is so still, it would seem to have been chiselled by the hand of a great artist, cast in bronze and blue silver. The perfection of peace and beauty inspires one with solemn thoughts of the inexhaustible power of human labour, labour that creates all the miracles of our world; communicates to one the certitude that with time this triumphant force will compel even the soil of the extreme North to work for man twelve months of the year, will break it in, as it does animals. Joyfully and as the French say, reverently one meditates upon man, the miracle-worker, upon the splendid future which he is preparing for his sons.

Memory evokes the figures and faces of workers in the field of science: Professor Vaviloff, strolling about Abyssinia, seeking the dissemination centres of nourishing graminaceous plants with a view to spreading in his country such of them as do not fear drought; one recalls D. Prianishnikov's story of beds of acid of

potassium at the source of the Kama; all the men whom one has come to know rise before one: the great man J. Pavloff, Rutherford in his laboratory in Montreal in 1906; dozens of Russians, founders of science, stand forth in memory and, bringing back all one has read, contribute to the concept of the wonderfully prolific, ever increasingly active work of the world's scientists. We live in an epoch when the distance from the maddest vagaries to the most matter-of-fact realities is being diminished with incredible speed.

Recently one of our territorial investigators, Andrej Bokhareff from Kozloff reminded me in a letter, of two such miracle-workers, Luther Burbank, the American "self-made man," and our man of genius, Ivan Michurin. I take the liberty of publishing an extract from his letter, hoping that Bokhareff could have no objection.

The Letter:

"Luther Burbank discovered, as is known, a number of mysteries in the domain of intersective miscegenation of fruit-bearing plants, and managed to produce species of plants not only marvellous but monstrous in their luxuriance, adaptability, taste, immunity to illnesses and plant enemies, thus enriching the entire continent of America. To mention his eatable, thornless cactuses and the nuts, the stone-hard shells of which he transformed into a membrane thin as a leaf, suffices to suggest the picture of this giant of fructification.

There is in the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics—in the district of Tambov, on the meagre soil of eternal snow-drifts, hemmed in by the foliage of wild willows, poplars, and maples, the smaller in proportion, but even more marvellous truck-garden of the hybridizer, Ivan Michurin.

Luther Burbank worked for subtropic California with its favourable climate; Michurin, for the stern climate of Central Russia.

Luther Burbank produced many new species of fruit-bearing plants intended for the consumption of the rich. Michurin has produced more than a hundred species of fruit-bearing trees, among which are pears that ripen just before Christmas (in cellars and cases) and are preservable in prime condition until April. This alone means riches to the workers. Then in the stern atmosphere of Tambov, Michurin has managed to grow luxuriant apricot-trees, grapes (four kinds), almond-trees, nuts, mulberry-trees, rice, quinces, et cetera—all for the workers, for our country, for the inexperienced peasant-orchard-grower with his limited knowledge.

Luther Burbank carefully tended his nurslings. Michurin bred

his in Spartan conditions, that the species might withstand any environment and produce the necessary economic result. When he started his work, Luther Burbank was poor, but after his scientific successes, he revelled in the luxuriousness of American culture. Owing to the sad condition of Russian life formerly, Michurin existed in poverty close to misery. During his long life of struggle, of anxieties, failures and disappointments, defeats and victories, he attained results that will enrich not only Central Russia, but the whole temperate zone. In a word Michurin transplants the south to the north.

Luther Burbank and Ivan Michurin symbolize the opposite poles of gardening, but in their general aspect are very much alike.

Both began their work in early youth, both were poor, both became great philosophers, artists, and creators. Both made great discoveries in the domain of plant-growing. To Michurin's lot has fallen the great discovery of adaptation in methods of fruit-growing, by the aid of which man will probably in the immediate future produce not only new types, but also new species of fruit-bearing plants, more fully corresponding to the demands of life and better adapted to the inevitable changes in climatic conditions.

Michurin's work was known in America as much as eighteen years before the war, his types being widely cultivated there; and the well-known botanist of the Washington Agricultural Institute, Professor Meyer, visited him at his home throughout a period of years. In 1924 Michurin's work received wide recognition in Germany. He is honorary member of the Naturalists' Association of the Commissariat for Public Instruction, et cetera, et cetera.

Michurin is a veteran. He is seventy-two, but still goes on creating, drawing away one by one, the veils which conceal the mysteries of plants."

The stillness of this night, permitting the mind to rest from the various if paltry grievances of the day's work, seems to whisper to the soul a solemn music of the universal labour of great and small, a magnificent song of a new history—a song boldly raised by the working people of my country.

Then, all of a sudden, in the sensitive stillness resounds the dry knocking of an idiotic hammer—one, two, three, ten, twenty strokes and after them—as a splash of mud in clear transparent water, there come with a crash, a wild whistle, screeches, rumbling, wailing, howling, the snorting of a metal pig, the cry of a

donkey, the amorous quacking of a monstrous frog. All this insulting chaos of mad sounds is submitted to an imperceptible rhythm and after listening for one, two minutes to those wails, one begins unwillingly to imagine that this is an orchestra of maniacs, stricken with sexual mania and directed by a man-stallion who brandishes a huge genetic member.

That is the radio—one of the greatest discoveries of science, one of the mysteries wrested by it from nature, hypocritically silent. It is the radio in a neighbouring hotel, bringing consolation to a world grown gross, the world of birds of prey—transporting to them on air the tune of a new fox-trot executed by a negro-orchestra. It is the music of grossness. To its rhythm in all the magnificent “cabarets” of a cultured continent the degenerate, with cynical fluctuations of the hips, pollute, simulate, the fecundation of woman by man.

From time immemorial the poets of all nations, all epochs, have lavished their creative power in ennobling this act, adorning it, making it worthy of man that in this he should not be on a plane with the goat, bull, or boar. Hundreds, thousands of beautiful poems have been composed in praise of love—an emotion which has ever been potent in stimulating the creative powers of men and women. Through the force of love man has become a being far more social than the cleverest of animals. Poetry expressing a matter-of-fact, healthy, active romanticism in sex relationship has had great educative and social importance for humanity.

Love and hunger govern the world, said Schiller. Love, as the basis of culture, hunger as that of civilization. Then came an over-grown vampire, a parasite living on the labour of others, a semi-man with the motto: “After me the deluge,” and with his thick feet he tramples all that has been created by the finest nervous tissue of great artists, the illuminators of the working classes.

He, the gross, does not need woman as a friend and human being; she is for him a mere tool of pleasure, unless she is as much a bird of prey as he is himself. As a mother she is of no use to him, for although he is fond of power, children are an impediment to him. Power, too, seems necessary to him only for fox-trotting and the latter has become a necessity because a man grown porcine is already a poor male. Love for him is—depravity, and not, as it was, mere appetite. In the world of the gross, homosexual love acquires an epidemic character. The evolution of grossness is—degeneration.

It is the evolution from the charm of a minuet and the passionate vitality of a waltz, to the cynicism of a fox-trot with the convulsions of the Charleston; from Mozart and Beethoven to the jazz of the negroes who undoubtedly laugh in their sleeves seeing how their white masters evolve towards a savagery which the negroes of America are leaving behind them more and more rapidly. "Culture is declining," cry those who would like to see prevail over the working-man, the prestige of grossness. The proletariat threatens to do away with culture! Its constituents cry and lie, for they cannot remain blind to the fact that it is the universal herd of the bestial which is trampling culture; they cannot fail to understand that the proletariat is the only force capable of saving culture, of fathoming and widening it.

The monstrous bass throws out English words; a wild horn wails piercingly, reminding one of the cries of a raving camel; a drum drones; a nasty little pipe sizzles, tearing at one's ears; the saxophone emits its quacking nasal sound. Swaying, fleshy hips, thousands of heavy feet, tread and shuffle.

The music of the degenerate ends finally with a deafening thud, as though a case of pottery had been flung from the skies to the earth. Again limpid stillness reigns around me and my thoughts return home; the peasant Vassily Kucheriavenko writes to me from there: "Before, in our village we used to have one school for three hundred houses; now we have three, a co-operative society, three red 'corners,' a club, a library, a reading-room, various groups; we have a wall-newspaper, we subscribe to countless reviews, papers, books. In the evenings—from white-haired old men to red pioneers—the clubs are crammed with all kinds of people. Lately an old woman of seventy-two died; before her death she used to say she would have loved to join the union of young communists had she not been so old. Why had it all begun so late, she said! She begged to be buried in the Soviet manner, with the flag. She went to all the meetings, walking many versts, and was like a girl.—Recently in an American review, *Asia*, there was an article about all this, with photographs."

She is a curious person, that old grandmother. Of course: "One grandam will not make culture," as the proverb says, but how many do I know of such, let us say, amusing cases of rejuvenation of the ancient peasant, all pointing to one conclusion: the Russian nation is growing young.

How fine it is to be working and living in our time!

THE LETTER

BY SERG ZAJAITSKY

Translated From the Russian by Marie Budberg

ON COMING home from my office, I found a note pinned to the door of my room:

“I should like very much to see you. Could you call at my house; the address is Anastassiinsky pereulok, 9.

Yours, Baranoff.”

I knew of no Baranoff.

“Look,” I said to my neighbour, “perhaps this note from Baranoff is intended for you?”

“From Kosloff, you mean?”

He did not know Baranoff either.

Of course Baranoff might have mistaken the house, the flat, the street.

Goodness only knows what else he might have mistaken, Baranoff.

Pushkin once said that all Russians were lazy and not inquisitive. But then I am only half-Russian, my mother was a Pole: therefore I am lazy, but inquisitive.

The mysterious Baranoff lived in a small, one-storied house. I was about to knock, when the door suddenly opened of its own accord and a woman in a thick leopard fur passed, glancing at me with eyes that seemed wonderfully familiar.

“The citizen Baranoff is at home?” I asked.

She nodded merely and walked away—head bent—wrapping the spotted fur tight about her. Her gait, too, was familiar.

Finding myself in a dark entrance filled with a strong smell of cabbage, I said loudly:

“Citizen Baranoff.”

Hurried steps could be heard and an indisputably familiar man appeared on the threshold. But who was he?

"How splendid of you to come!" he exclaimed. "I was so afraid our pleasant connexion wasn't going to be renewed. It's sad in the happiest days of one's life when somebody turns a cold shoulder and avoids one."

"Is it possible that you could think that!" I returned, shaking hands with him and wondering all the time where the dickens I had met him.

The room was small but tidy; wardrobes screened from view two disparate beds.

"To begin with," he said, "I am now married."

"You don't mean it! To whom?" I cried, managing to control my laughter.

"To her!"

"Ah!"

"To Sonia! To Sofia Alexandrovna!"

As under a flash-light my past suddenly stood out before me. I recalled the winter days of peaceful times, sleighing, purple flowers, and a girl with the eyes that had just glanced at me from the leopard fur. I succeeded in placing Baranoff, as well. Already, at that time, he was supposed to be engaged to her, but for some reason or other the marriage was continually being postponed. I even remembered the girl's nurse who used to repeat the Russian proverb: "The bridegroom to-day is wily and shrewd, you talk of a crown and he of a casket!"

"You know," cried Baranoff, jumping up every little while and sitting down again, "all these years I have lived as everyone else did. I wandered about Russia, was ill with typhoid . . . then . . . shall I tell you the whole story?"

"Of course!"

"I had been in love with Sonia ever since 1911. . . . All that promenading in by-streets, balls and theatres, you know. I loved her terribly. Picture it! Me, a student of chemistry, going to a fortune-teller! Jealousy, that's what it was. I was jealous of everyone. Of you, as well. You were a fine-looking boy at that time, you know."

"Of me . . . !"

"I was, I tell you, madly so! Finally, I proposed to her. She refused, but almost fainted on the spot . . . then came the war, the revolution—the first, the second—Then we Muscovites were scattered all over the earth. Time enough, one might have thought,

to learn reason, but I didn't. Travelling about in the cattle-van I would lie and dream of her. Where was she! How find her? Well, one night I was walking along in the rain, wet snow was falling—when all of a sudden I saw a woman sticking a piece of paper to the wall. At that moment a motor-car passed and lit up the whole street. She looked round—it was Sonetchka! Imagine my emotion! She did not see me. The lantern-light had dazzled her. When the car went by, she had disappeared. I walked up to the wall, struck my lighter, and read:

To sell: a samovar, a cupboard, a mahogany desk (antique).

And it was precisely at that desk that our decisive colloquy had taken place. A beautiful desk. She lived (the address was mentioned) quite near. I must admit that the poverty of her attire had struck me. I did not go myself, fool that I was, from a sense of hurt pride, you know . . . after the refusal . . . (here Baranoff lowered his voice). My neighbour, who speculates in antiques, asks my advice from time to time, as from someone who has seen better days. Well—I advised him to buy the desk. One had to support her in some way, you see. . . . In the evening as I came home, I saw it on a sleigh by the front-door, the same desk! My heart beat wildly. I was very much upset. The speculator was delighted. On the way three men wanted him to sell it to them and a former prince expressed admiration for it. He called me to have a look at it. I told him I would come later. . . . I didn't feel quite up to it, you know . . . Ladies of doubtful reputation used to frequent the shop, and to see that desk, there. . . . All of a sudden he knocked at my door: 'Look at what I found in the desk,' he said. I looked and recognized her handwriting . . . Read it . . . Here it is . . . I wheedled it from him as a reward for recommending a good piece of furniture. Read it!"

I read:

"I don't know that I have the courage to send this letter. I love you, but when I see you, all I say seems wrong. Yesterday I said 'no' to you. Don't believe it . . . Don't misjudge me.

S."

Baranoff was trembling from head to foot with emotion.

"You can imagine what a state I was in! It meant, you see, that the little fool had refused me merely out of girlish shyness, and I, idiot that I was, instead of getting her gradually accustomed to the idea—had taken offence and broken everything off! Well—it all

had to be set right I thought, . . . I went to the address given . . . and as you see (he laughed happily) I did set it right . . .”

“I met Sofia Alexandrovna at the door just now and must confess I didn’t recognize her!”

“Changed, isn’t she? How otherwise! What she has had to go through, poor child! She remembers you . . . I wonder she’s not back yet.”

He seemed to enjoy troubling about his wife.

“Would you like,” he asked suddenly, “to have a look at the desk? My neighbour is at home now. You’ll awaken old memories!”

To please him, I agreed.

But at the instant we were knocking at the neighbour’s, the bell rang at the front-door.

A stout little man opened his door, and Baranoff ran to let his wife in, shouting back:

“Introduce yourselves, please; this is Gromoff.”

“You’re fond of old things?” asked Gromoff, leading me to the desk. “They’re irresistible, aren’t they? Look—how finely they used to work the veneer, the rascals—Nowadays a carpenter could sweat and sweat, ten times over, and not achieve that effect with the polish. And the number of drawers! I cleared all the rubbish out of them to-day.”

I started. On one of the envelopes I saw my name written: Alexei Pavlovich Trofimoff.

“Where did this envelope come from?”

“There was a letter inside . . . I gave it to Mr Baranoff . . . A love-letter of some kind. Look at this vase over here! Real Chinese!”

I pushed the envelope into my pocket, saying:

“Permit me to take this as a memento of our acquaintance!”

“Come and have some tea,” said Baranoff.—“Sonia has come back. We’ve got some glucose. Will you come, too?”

“No,” answered Gromoff. “I’m busy.”

“Always busy.”

“How shouldn’t I be? One must provide for a rainy day.”

Sonetchka greeted me graciously. I observed her with curiosity, but did not notice the slightest trace of confusion on her face. It was pleasant to sit at table with happy people and bring back a happy past.

That day I took a dislike to my room.

"Bliss hath been so near . . ."

A few days later I went to see them again. The same thing over again—tea and bliss. And no signs of regret in her, none.

The fool! Why, oh why had she not sent the letter off, then and there!

"By the way," said Baranoff, "my neighbour said you had taken the envelope of that letter . . ."

"Yes, I was going to give it to you, but forgot all about it . . ."

"Where is it?"

"I lost it."

"How annoying. Hadn't he read the name on it, the idiot?"

"There were a lot of papers inside."

"All the better, if he didn't. I didn't tell him the story. It's not for a head like his."

It seemed to me that Sonetchka blushed ever so slightly. I looked into her eyes, thinking to awaken a romantic complicity between us. But she merely tilted her nose up and threw a glance of such self-satisfied adoration at her husband, at the glucose, at the samovar—that I was submerged in envy.

"Too bad the envelope is missing!"

"Here is a blank one! If you wish to convince yourself once more of your happiness—ask Sofia Alexandrovna to address it."

"Why not? Sonetchka, address it, will you?" And he laughed contentedly, while Sonetchka with a resolute and disapproving glance at me, wrote:

"To Ivan Petrovitch Baranoff."

He gave her a resounding kiss. She moved away, blushing, not because the kiss was distasteful to her, but because she resented my presence. If only I would go! And they could have it all to themselves! Anger rose in my heart.

When we had said good-bye and he was preparing to shut the door behind me, I suddenly exclaimed:

"Ah! There it is! I have found it!"

I took the envelope out of my pocket, pushed it into his hand, and walked away without looking back.

I never saw them again.

PROLOGUE TO BALLOON: A COMEDY

BY PADRAIC COLUM

A Square in Megalapolis. It is towards night-fall. Back, right, is a towering Hotel. Right is a large brass Telescope on stand. The owner of the Telescope is standing by it. He is thoughtful-looking, detached; between thirty-five and forty.

A group of four newspaper men enter left.

TELESCOPE OWNER: Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

FIRST REPORTER (*evidently in training*): Say, wouldn't that be a good headline?

SECOND REPORTER: I didn't get it.

FIRST REPORTER: "Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas."

It would look pretty on a page—what?

THIRD REPORTER (*ponderously instructive*): Descriptive—yes.

But only descriptive. Remember that you should always get a verb into the headline. "Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!"—it lacks something. Now what does it lack? A verb. "Extinct Volcanoes threaten Empty Seas." That means something.

FIRST REPORTER: Sure. I get you.

THIRD REPORTER (*still ponderous*): The verb—it's the king-pin in the headline.

FIRST REPORTER: Who is he anyway? The Professor?

SECOND REPORTER: Caspar is his name. He lets you look at the Moon through the Telescope. A silver's the charge. He's been round here quite a while.

FIRST REPORTER: What about getting a story from him?

THIRD REPORTER: What kind of a story do you mean?

FIRST REPORTER: "Obscure Telescope-operator tells of his Vigils."

SECOND REPORTER: Forget it. The day for that sort of thing is gone by.

FOURTH REPORTER: I'm doing Enquiring Reporter to-night. He's good for my question.

(The Reporters talk together. A string of people, men and old women, come from back.)

CASPAR (*addressing these people*): Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

(They halt near him.)

SECOND REPORTER: They're scrub-women and downstairs-workers out of the Hotel.

FIRST REPORTER: Out of the Hotel Daedalus?

SECOND REPORTER: That's where they come from.

CASPAR: Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas! Here you are! For one silver you can see the enormous mountains. You can see the volcanoes with craters that are absolutely stupendous—miles and miles across. And then the seas! Absolutely empty. No atmosphere, you see. No more remarkable spectacle can be offered.

SCRUB-WOMAN: Is this a good time to look through it, Mister?

CASPAR: It is a very good time. The atmosphere is clear. No clouds, as you can see.

SCRUB-WOMAN: I often thought I'd look through it. What will I see, Mister?

CASPAR: The Mountains, the Seas, the Volcanoes of the Moon.

(He adjusts the Telescope for her. The Scrub-woman looks through. The other men and women watch her making the observation.)

SECOND REPORTER: Get your question answered and then we'll beat it.

ONE OF THE OTHER HOTEL HELP: (*to Caspar*): Couldn't you do something for the workers, Brother?

CASPAR: I? How could I?

ONE OF THE HELP: Hand them out something—a few words or a leaflet.

CASPAR: What would I do that for?

ONE OF THE HELP: Just to promote the cause. I don't ask you to hand out anything to the rich irresponsibles. But any of the workers that come to you. . .

CASPAR: I'm not a worker. I have only my Telescope.

ONE OF THE HELP: So that's the kind you are. Won't do anything for us? I see exactly the kind you are.

THE SCRUB-WOMAN (*having finished her observation*): I'll look

to-morrow again, sir. It did me good to see what you told me about.

CASPAR: Mountans, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

ONE OF THE HELP: I'll say it should be suppressed. All this science of astronomy is just to make people look away from the world. It's no wonder it's being subsidized by the rich irresponsibles. The whole thing will have to be swept away. Remember what I've told you—you'll be swept away.

CASPAR: Listen. I'm not interfering with anything.

ONE OF THE HELP: You're a reactionary—that's all that's to that.

FOURTH REPORTER: I'll get two to answer my question here—Telescope-operator and Scrub-woman.

(The Reporters cross to the people around the Telescope.)

FOURTH REPORTER *(to Scrub-woman)*: I represent the Midnight Gazette.

MEN AND WOMEN: Midnight Gazette!

FOURTH REPORTER: I've to get four people to answer a question for me. I'll put it to two of you people here.

A MAN: Will it be in your paper that you asked one of us?

FOURTH REPORTER: It will be in after midnight. *(To Scrub-woman.)* I'll ask you to answer first.

SCRUB-WOMAN *(intently)*: Yes, Mister.

FOURTH REPORTER: What do you think of the freedom of the City being given to Cohen Muldoon, the Prize-fighter?

ANOTHER SCRUB-WOMAN: Say, his suite is on the corridor that I work along.

A MAN: She has been telling us that all day.

WOMAN: It is on the corridor I work along.

FOURTH REPORTER: Have you ever seen Cohen Muldoon, the Prize-fighter?

WOMAN: No, Mister. I've never seen him.

FOURTH REPORTER *(to first Scrub-woman)*: Well, that's the question.

FIRST SCRUB-WOMAN: Does he get that suite free?

THIRD REPORTER *(ponderously)*: It doesn't mean that he gets anything free. It's only an honour. But should a prize-fighter get an honour like that from the city—that's the question.

A MAN *(prompting the Scrub-woman)*: It's like electing him to something.

SCRUB-WOMAN (*thoughtfully*): I'd say it was all right.

FOURTH REPORTER: I'll put down what you've said. Scrub-woman in Hotel Daedalus says that public does well in honouring prize-fighter, he, in several ways, representing populace or at least popular feelings.

SCRUB-WOMAN (*gratified*): Yes, Mister. Will I see that in the paper?

FOURTH REPORTER: Yes. Midnight Gazette. Any time after midnight.

CASPAR (*stepping out of the group*): You print questions in your paper, don't you?

REPORTER: Yes, we do.

CASPAR: I'd like you to print a question that I have in my mind.
(*Reporter gets ready to write.*)

CASPAR: Is a man born a hero, or does he become a hero by doing heroic things?

FOURTH REPORTER: I don't get that.

CASPAR: In other words—what is it to be a hero?

FOURTH REPORTER: I still don't get your question.

CASPAR: It's like this: Take the case of the man they have given the freedom of the city to—Cohen Muldoon. Take him as an example of what I mean. He didn't fight because he's a fighter—he's a fighter because he has fought.

FOURTH REPORTER: And what do you want to ask?

CASPAR: What is it to be a hero? Is a man born a hero—or anything remarkable? Or does he become a hero—or anything remarkable—by doing heroic or remarkable things? Take my case . . .

SECOND REPORTER: Oh, he's getting ready to talk about himself.

FIRST REPORTER: There may be a story in it. "Obscure telescope-operator tells of unnoted bravery!" How would that do for a headline? Say, Mister . . .

CASPAR: Yes . . .

FIRST REPORTER: What about it?

CASPAR: What about what?

FIRST REPORTER: Your unnoted bravery. Ever stopped a hold-up hereabouts?

CASPAR: No . . . I can't say that I have.

FIRST REPORTER: Well, what deed of bravery were you talking about then?

CASPAR: I wasn't talking about deeds of bravery I have done. Listen! It's like this . . .

SECOND REPORTER: Can you give us anything on Cohen Muldoon?

CASPAR: No. I mean I don't know him. Take him as an example of what I mean . . .

THIRD REPORTER: No. There's nothing in it. You couldn't put it over.

CASPAR: What I mean is that one can't do anything if the opportunity isn't offered. The bravest and most resolute man might stand on this pavement for years, and if nothing happened here, why he could do nothing to show his courage and resolution. But if something did happen he could do something. And this is what I mean: By just doing it he would become something. A man becomes a hero by doing heroic things. A man becomes remarkable by doing remarkable things.

FOURTH REPORTER: Your picture wouldn't look much.

SECOND REPORTER: Your name wouldn't look anything in a headline.

FIRST REPORTER: Obscure Telescope-owner, we won't have you on the first page in the morning.

CASPAR: You're not going to print my question, then?

FOURTH REPORTER: No. It would only mix people up.

(Reporters go off. Hotel Help go off in other direction.)

SCRUB-WOMAN: It did me good to look through the Telescope and see the mountains and all you told me about. I was nearly forgetting about the sore thumb I have while I was thinking about what I saw. I'll come and look to-morrow.

CASPAR: I'll be here.

SCRUB-WOMAN: Good-night.

CASPAR: Good-night, good-night.

(The Scrub-woman goes off with the others.)

CASPAR (*alone*): Will I never see my name on the front pages? "Caspar in first plane over South Pole." "Caspar stands on bottom of the Sargasso Sea." Another night! And will this night, too, go by without any opportunity coming to me?

(Redvyn the architect of the Hotel Daedalus and Miss Leila Romerantz, the Motion-picture actress, enter. Redvyn is still

young but looks a man who has great achievements back of him. Miss Romerantz is young and supremely beautiful.)

REDVYN: I say it's only a stunt—a publicity stunt. And why do you want to do it? To have the front page of the newspaper in the morning. But you are not the sort of a Cinema-star that needs that—you're one of the great artists of the films. And, besides, you have more publicity than Napoleon and Balzac together ever had. There are thousands and thousands of representations of you in all places all over the world. I have seen them in villages that are in forests and up rivers and on the edge of deserts. Even the philosophers write about you. One said the other day . . .

ROMERANTZ: What did he say? I may have missed it.

REDVYN: He said that he didn't care if all the pictures that represent womanhood in all the galleries of the world were destroyed if your picture on the screen remained. He talked of your rendering the grace and pride and integrity of youth. And you want to go up in a Balloon to-night!

ROMERANTZ: And I want you to accompany me, Redvyn.

REDVYN: In a Balloon? And drop down by parachute?

ROMERANTZ: You have done more dangerous things than that.

REDVYN: I don't see any danger in it. I'm not going with you this time.

ROMERANTZ: Oh, why not, Redvyn? Don't you like the building I am going up from?

REDVYN: As a matter of fact, I don't, Leila.

ROMERANTZ: Don't what, Redvyn?

REDVYN: I don't like the Hotel Daedalus, as a matter of fact.

ROMERANTZ: But you built the Hotel Daedalus! It's your greatest achievement, Redvyn.

REDVYN: All right. Look at it! And look at the buildings around that are precisely like it. Look at them, I say!

ROMERANTZ: What are you going to tell me about them, O great architect?

REDVYN: Look at them! Can any one be happy in them? Oh, of course, people can dance in the Hotel Daedalus, and have music in the Hotel Daedalus, and have excitement of every kind in the Hotel Daedalus. But can any one be happy in it? Or in any of the buildings around?

ROMERANTZ: I should have thought so—yes.

REDVYN: You wouldn't know, Leila. For, after all, you, too, are one of the Children of Daedalus.

ROMERANTZ: One of the Children of Daedalus! I don't understand you, Redvyn. Who was Daedalus that your Hotel was named for? Tell me! I love to hear you tell things.

REDVYN: He is in Greek Mythology.

ROMERANTZ: I thought so. But place him for me.

REDVYN: He built the palaces for the Kings of Crete. He invented wings for people to fly with. He is the father of all who build great structures and compound the elements, and make plans for the subjugation of the earth.

ROMERANTZ: And the Children of Daedalus?

REDVYN: They are very different from the men and women who had places in the world, and who had memories of places and of other times, and who could be happy in their memories. The Children of Daedalus have nothing they would remember.

ROMERANTZ: And am I one of the Children of Daedalus, Redvyn?

REDVYN: Essentially you are one of the Children of Daedalus, Leila.

ROMERANTZ: And you, Redvyn?

REDVYN: I have built for them, but perhaps I am not really of them.

ROMERANTZ: Ah, but this does not explain at all why you are not making the ascent with me.

REDVYN: Well, I am going to check every impulse in me to go with the Children of Daedalus.

ROMERANTZ: And I, Redvyn? How am I going to fit into this new scheme of life of yours?

REDVYN: Let us go away.

ROMERANTZ: Away where, Redvyn?

REDVYN: To some straggling village—to some place utterly remote from all this. (*He makes a gesture indicating the skyscrapers.*)

CASPAR (*beside his telescope*): Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

ROMERANTZ: And what would we do?

REDVYN: Live! Live! Grow to be wise, grow to be joyful!

ROMERANTZ: It is very strange you should talk like this, Redvyn.

As for growing wise—isn't the great Library over there?

REDVYN: Yes. The great Library is just where we're looking.

ROMERANTZ: And as for being joyful—I'm joyful when I swim in the mornings in the pool in the Hotel Daedalus. Everything is in your Hotel Daedalus, Redvyn.

REDVYN: Everything, I suppose, that the Children of Daedalus want. You won't go away from this?

ROMERANTZ: Oh, I'd love to.

REDVYN: No, you wouldn't. You belong to this place. I know it.

ROMERANTZ: I have to go to the studios to-morrow. There's a great picture coming on. I'm the central character in it, but I'm directing it, too. Can't you see that I am building, too? I am doing something that's making woman ready to enter the civilization that the great engineers and builders, and men like you, Redvyn, are making ready for the human race.

CASPAR: Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

ROMERANTZ: I know what it is, Redvyn.

REDVYN: You know what what is, Leila?

ROMERANTZ: I know what's affecting you—it's a complex!

REDVYN: A complex—nothing.

ROMERANTZ: A complex that makes you hate what you have been doing. I don't know what the complex is called, but I know there's such a one. There's such a good psychoanalyst has an office in the Hotel Daedalus.

REDVYN: In the Hotel Daedalus?

ROMERANTZ: Everything is in your Hotel Daedalus.

REDVYN: Everything is in the Hotel Daedalus—everything I don't want—everything I don't want to hear about. I'll not go into it.

ROMERANTZ: Oh, but you must.

REDVYN: I won't. I'll stand here and look at these buildings and try and find out if human beings can have any happiness in them.

ROMERANTZ: Come in later. There's plenty of time. If you won't make the ascent with me, Redvyn, I'll make it alone. I won't have any one else go with me.

REDVYN: All right, Leila. I'll stay here. Perhaps I'll be here to see you come down.

ROMERANTZ: Oh, no. Come into the Hotel before I go up. Good-night, Redvyn. You'll see me later.

(Miss Romerantz goes towards Hotel.)

CASPAR: Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas!

REDVYN *(turning to him)*: What did you say?

CASPAR: Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas! On the Moon, sir!

REDVYN: What you said chimed in with something I was thinking of. Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, Empty Seas! *(He looks round as if expecting to see them in Megalapolis.)*

CASPAR: Would you like to look through the Telescope? A silver! That is all, sir. *(He takes the money Redvyn gives him.)*

REDVYN *(looking through Telescope)*: How dreadfully near they are—these Mountains, Extinct Volcanoes, and Empty Seas!

CASPAR: Not many people think of them as being near, sir.

REDVYN: You, I imagine, have quite a good time here.

CASPAR: In what way, sir?

REDVYN: You have no distractions, and you have an impressive offering for people.

CASPAR: I have something to look at.

REDVYN: Yes. Very impressive.

CASPAR: I mean the Hotel there.

REDVYN: The Hotel? The Hotel Daedalus, do you mean?

CASPAR: Yes. That great Hotel. *(They both turn and look at it.)*

REDVYN: You watch the people going in, I suppose?

CASPAR: It is not that so much. . . . Look there!

REDVYN: The Elevator shaft?

CASPAR: The Elevator is rising. Look! Up, up, and up, it goes!

Who are in the car, do you suppose? Women with soft-furred wraps around them, their faces delicately rouged . . .

REDVYN: Yes. They are in it.

CASPAR: A renowned opera-singer. A diplomat. A famous general. A young girl with pearls around her throat and at her breast a bunch of white violets.

REDVYN: Ah, yes. Quite so.

CASPAR: Oh, sir, the whole of the world is in the Hotel Daedalus! I watch it, sir, that world! The Elevator stops. Someone gets off to go into a salon where brilliant lustres hang from the ceiling . . .

REDVYN: The Elevator is rising again.

CASPAR: Where do you suppose it stops now?

REDVYN: I happen to know. At the Porphyry Ball-Room.

CASPAR: The Porphyry Ball-Room! I shall remember that. Up, up, up, it goes.

REDVYN: It stops now at the Hall of Palms. And now it rises again.

CASPAR: Where now does it stop?

REDVYN: At the floor of the private suites.

CASPAR: And now it rises, in a beautiful perpendicular, straight up to the Roof Garden.

REDVYN: Do you watch it descend?

CASPAR: Why, no. It just descends.

REDVYN: And so, watching the Elevator shaft, you do not think upon the Mountains, the Extinct Volcanoes, and the Empty Seas, the sight of which you offer to passers-by?

CASPAR: Sometimes I hear the music that comes down from the Roof Garden.

REDVYN: I should like to make you an offer. I should like to stay here for a while. By myself. I should like to look at the Mountains, the Extinct Volcanoes, the Empty Seas, and look from them to the buildings around. Suppose I bought your Telescope?

CASPAR: I don't understand you, sir.

REDVYN: There is no necessity to explain it. I'll buy your Telescope.

CASPAR: But then, sir, I should have nothing to do around here.

REDVYN: You could take a look at the Hotel Daedalus from the other side. (*He hands Caspar notes for five hundred silvers.*)

CASPAR: This is terribly unexpected. I don't know what to do with myself now.

REDVYN: Oh, go into the Hotel.

CASPAR: Go into the Hotel! Go into the Hotel Daedalus! I could not pass the Commissionaire at the door. I could not face the waiters. But I have five hundred silvers. I could go in! A man becomes a hero by doing heroic things. But I wonder if that is true!

REDVYN: I say . . .

CASPAR: Yes?

REDVYN: Do you know what we are doing? I am trying to enter your world.

CASPAR: And I, sir?

REDVYN: You are about to enter my world. Or what I thought was my world.

CASPAR: The Hotel Daedalus.

REDVYN: The Hotel Daedalus.

CASPAR (*with resolution*): Yes, I am going into it—into the Hotel Daedalus.

(He walks towards the Hotel as Redvyn stands at Telescope. There is a more brilliant flash of lights from the Hotel.)

The Scene Closes.

CACTUS

BY PAUL GURK

Translated From the German by Amy Wesselhoeft von Erdberg

I seethe behind these prickly spines,
My skin grown tough in glaring light,
My finger, thorn. . . .
No bird lights here for food.

Dumb as the stones about me I have hid
Behind a monster's mask
While torture, rage,
Gripped my contorted limbs.

Fed from no other source than mine own green
That drew scant moisture from the niggard rifts,
I fling ecstatic fire-blooms, flame on flame. . . .
I need a desert for such flowers as these.



Courtesy of the Galerie Billiet, Paris

A WOMAN. BY MARCEL GIMOND

MONTAIGNE'S INTENTION

BY JOHN EGLINTON

PLUTARCH founded his biographic method on the observation that nations, in their passage from youth to age, are represented at each stage by men of action, who, in the case of nations more or less contemporary, may be instructively compared. The same parallelism in the men of thought of two such nations is still more striking, and for a Plutarch of the mind, Montaigne and Shakespeare seem to fall together inevitably as the intimate spokesmen of their respective peoples at the point of maturity. One of them is, no doubt, the greatest of poets; the other, less than anything a poet; yet to both of them experience presents the same data, there are the same curiosities, admirations, standards, the same abysmal doubt and the same belief in life. Shakespeare was a princely guest at the banquet of life, whose presence gave words to everybody and left all the world regretting that it would never again have such another guest; Montaigne's entertainment, on the other hand, was a somewhat insistent vein of monologue, interlarded with endless anecdotes out of antiquity, and with revelations of his privacy which caused the company now and then to look down at their plates. Yet these two incomparables had this in common, that in that age of the discovery of the round earth, they had accomplished the circuit of the sphere of human individuality. Superficially, there is the curious distinction between them, that whereas one of them babbles of himself from page to page, the other, though not in the characteristic British manner, observes all too strictly the rule of reticence about himself personally. Yet what do we know better than the mind and soul of Shakespeare? Montaigne, for his part, tells us so much about himself that he sets us to further questioning.

What, in particular, was really at the back of his mind when he resolved to make us acquainted not merely with his character and circumstances, the facts of his curious upbringing, his affection for his father and the four years of his exalted friendship with

Etienne de La Boétie, his taste in books, his impressions of men and affairs, his views on education, his quizzical judgement of the religious reformers and his general Pyrrhonism; but with the meats he liked, the glasses of wine he drank, his digestion and the physiology pertaining thereto, his hours of sleeping and waking, his concupiscences and marital intimacies, the dolours of his painful malady, his lassitudes, laziness, and bad memory—in short, with every detail that could lodge in the mind of his reader the image of Michel de Montaigne, so far as he was known to himself; and to his last hour he was adding new and ever more candid observations. That at some moment a definite design of self-revelation was conceived by him is evident from the manner in which he went over his earlier writings, bringing in by hook or by crook passages about himself. Other men who have yielded to the instinct for self-revelation—St Augustine, Benvenuto Cellini, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Rousseau, Mark Pattison, Tolstoy—have done so with a conviction of something extraordinary either in themselves or in their story; but Montaigne, though there were passages in his life for which he claimed a unique character, appears to have believed himself typical of ordinary human nature. And this brings us perhaps as near as we can come to the main purpose of his *Essays*. Somehow or other he had discovered that he had a natural gift for self-portraiture, and that it amused others as it certainly amused himself; and no doubt the deep fellow knew that his most ingenious reader would look for the thread on which all these revelations were hung and equally with the author would be puzzled to discover whether the true Montaigne was in his virtues or his vices, his brain or his stomach. No doubt also he realized as he went on that without much trouble to himself he had defined a new philosophic attitude, as serviceable an antidote to the ills of his time as could be thought of, as he knew when he wrote: “This idea [the Pyrrhonian doubt] is more surely understood by interrogation: *Que Sçay-je?* which I bear as my motto with the emblem of a pair of scales.”

It would probably be an anachronism to attribute to Montaigne a purely artistic impulse. A purpose of some kind he surely had, beyond the only purpose he himself acknowledged, that of beguiling tedium: “I never set my hand to it unless driven by an idleness

that has become unbearable, and nowhere but at home." Probably it would be more accurate to say that a purpose developed itself as he went on, quickening all the seriousness of his nature. We must however take leave to doubt whether this purpose was exactly that attributed to him by Mr John M. Robertson, who contributes an Introduction to Mr E. J. Trechmann's admirable new translation.¹ According to Mr Robertson, Montaigne, a man not merely of a genius transcending that of his age but of a sensitiveness to human suffering which endowed him with some of the attributes of a redeemer, entertained the sense of a lofty mission, and with a view to arresting the ravages of bigotry and intolerance which tormented his contemporaries, conceived the design of infecting men with his own salutary doubt. He was to slay the belief in truth with truth itself, and by making a kind of sacrificial exhibition of himself to show how little fitted is man to achieve spiritual certitude. And Mr Robertson is able to show that if Montaigne really sought to put an end to those evils which he certainly abhorred, he could not have chosen a more effective way of doing so. People who attended to his audacious loquacity were never quite the same again. It is probable that Henri IV, who visited him twice at his castle and desired his presence at court, was a kind of disciple. His influence reached out presently into neighbouring nations, and infected Shakespeare and Bacon. He made the problem of thought different for Descartes and the field of salvation different for Pascal. His mere style—a product of intense and self-conscious application—is a perennial tonic and disinfectant from humbug; beside it, most of the styles in which we poor latter-day penmen try to look a little bigger than we are, appear somewhat shamefaced.

It was a good while before the Church judged it advisable to censure this profoundly influential and certainly anti-Christian thinker: not in fact until well on in the following century, when the Essays were placed on the Index, on the ground, it is said, of his crediting animals with reason. A curiously minute point, one cannot help feeling, on which to condemn the author of so

¹ The Essays of Montaigne. Translated by E. J. Trechmann. With an Introduction by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson. Two volumes. 12mo. 561 and 614 pages. Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$3.

many questionable pages! It would seem to suggest that the Church had found in this belittler of all the efforts of the human mind to achieve spiritual certitude a not unprofitable servant; and a treatise like the Apology for Raimond Sebond, in which this particular heresy occurs, might be regarded as an edifying meditation. Montaigne indeed, so far from being the impartial arbiter between the rival religions which Mr Robertson would make him out to be, was all for outward conformity in religious matters, and he had very little patience with the Reformers. He was himself, no doubt, of the religion which a friend describes as still the best religion a man can profess, that of a "bad Catholic". Good-natured and humane as he was, it may be doubted whether true tolerance was a principle which he felt strongly disposed to inculcate. For the principle of tolerance is not merely that one man has as good a right to his opinion as another: it is based on a belief in truth, and on an acceptance of the fact that each man's perception of truth is affected by that of others, and that it is right that this should be so. This tolerance does not preclude intolerance itself, considered as a mental attitude, for is not intolerance a human instinct which we must reckon with? Perhaps after all it is minds like that of Montaigne, without the glow for truth, and for which one belief is as good as another, that so offend the common aspiration for spiritual certitude, that in certain ages, with the general approval of men, the maintenance of the structural beliefs of the ordinary human mind is handed over to authority, civil and spiritual.

Montaigne speaks often enough of his "purpose", and perhaps would be surprised to find that it is now in debate. "In common with the Huguenots, who condemn our auricular and private confession, I confess in public, simply and scrupulously. St. Augustine, Origen and Hippocrates published the errors of their belief; I besides, those of my morals. I am hungering to make myself known; and I care not to how many, provided I do so truly; or, to speak more correctly, I hunger for nothing, but I have a deadly fear of being thought other than I am by those who come to know me by name." A passion for self-communication took hold of him, so that when he woke up in the morning it was to think of something he had not yet told. "I speak the truth, not enough to sat-

isfy myself, but as much as I dare to speak. And I become a little more daring as I grow older". One asks, not what Montaigne intended, but what was the significance of this new instinct which has turned modern literature into a vast confessional. We call him anti-Christian, for he is no believer in a *vita nuova*, the light that dawns upon the sentiment of self-abhorrence. Yet while we deny to him the general design imputed to him by Mr Robertson, we cannot withhold from him, in spite of his own disavowal, our acknowledgement of his immense fundamental seriousness. His self-awareness, the unflinching veracity of his self-examination may be looked upon as a new extension of the functions of conscience, which relaxes not its vigilance from the moment at which we open our eyes upon ourselves in the morning; while we labour, eat, amuse ourselves; to the moment when, relinquishing one by one our contacts with the outer world, we return to the irresponsibility of sleep. We are no longer saints, because we fail to discover in ourselves a single disinterested motive; we no longer pray, for we too deeply suspect ourselves. Certain appearances in the past may have deceived us somewhat, but since Montaigne and Shakespeare instituted the modern inquisition into human nature, we are not likely to be deceived again.

However, we do not believe that human nature does not contain resources undreamed of in Montaigne's philosophy, nor would it have been amiss if he had sometimes felt a little ashamed of himself. Without some capacity for repentance the outfit of our poor human nature is not quite complete. We, who cannot help believing in the progressiveness of human nature, must find his view of a static and uniform personality somewhat of a curiosity. He turned inwards upon himself from a world filled with the beginnings of things of which he had no comprehension. The golden age was for him in the past: golden now because it has shed all the dross of actuality, and survives in the records of the noble men of antiquity.

It is an argument against those who assert that we can only read Montaigne in the original that Shakespeare and his contemporaries understood him well enough through Florio; and Emerson, who read him to such good purpose, depended I suppose on Cotton and Hazlitt. Yet Cotton—not to speak of his frequent inaccuracy—

interposes a quaintness of his own between us and the sufficiently quaint original; and it is not too much to say that Mr Trechmann, with his resolution to defy Dr Bowdler, and with the immense superiority of the modern translations he has chosen of the multitudinous quotations, has opened up Montaigne for the first time in all his intimacy to English readers. He has discharged a really important, perhaps a momentous literary service.

DRIVEN

BY PAUL SMITH

If some fierce shock would clear my mind
 Of consciousness of what I am—
 A creature clinging to the sham
 Protective shell of human kind—

I think I could be satisfied
 To feel the moment's beauty pass,
 To see the ripples in the grass
 To watch the slow ascending tide.

I know a storm-bent tree where I
 Might lie for hours, unsurfeited,
 Hearing the wind move overhead,
 Watching the leaves against the sky.

But being what I am, I stay
 At work upon my monument—
 My days are few and quickly spent.



A DRAWING. BY A. WALKOWITZ



A DRAWING. BY A. WALKOWITZ



A DRAWING. BY A. WALKOWITZ

PARIS LETTER

November, 1928

DURING 1928 the two last volumes of Proust have appeared. The work is now finished in the unusual sense of being complete. *La Recherche du Temps Perdu* becomes triumphally *Le Temps Retrouvé*. His task accomplished, Proust died as do the plants, after having borne their fruit; or rather like those magicians, who are struck down as they pronounce the last of the incantations which put them on a level with the gods. This new Faust had discovered the superhuman secret of eluding the march of time and the lie of apparent reality; having through his artistic creation penetrated into the extra-temporal, he there forfeited his life.

Le Temps Retrouvé is indispensable to any one seeking the key to Proust's work. A great German critic, Ernst Robert Curtius, was able to do without it, but he is the only one. Pondering with love and respect over the first six volumes, sifting them with the nicest discrimination, he successfully abstracted the essence of the work and forecast its outline without awaiting its conclusion. Read his *Essay on Marcel Proust*, in which so many mistaken judgements of other critics, incomplete, and by that fact disparaging, are refuted and set right. To us, who in Proust loved the man and exalted the writer to the rank of the greatest, what a satisfaction and joy to find him at last perfectly understood!

Curtius devotes much space to stressing the spirituality of Proust's work. That immateriality pervaded his whole being. Always wrapped in a heavy otter-skin, which, inconsistently, he did not quit until about to go out, submerged in a deep fauteuil from which issued his never-to-be-forgotten phantom's voice, satiric yet kindly, his whole being seemed concentrated in his eyes, extraordinarily large, cavernous, and brilliant. He would talk at great length without seeming to listen to our objections or our replies; but presently as he talked a reference revealed that he had heard all and understood to the point of carrying our idea far beyond what we would have dared express. Even over the telephone his divination of our most secret *arrière-pensées* filled us with admiration and

despair. He seemed at once too delicate a being to endure the truth and too omniscient to overlook it. Commerce with him, always delightful, was never without hazard; for the slightest nuance rent his soul and brought long letters of affectionate and pained reproach, letters precisely like his conversation, and similarly mingled with irony, amusing anecdotes, and profound deductions. It has been said many times that he made the night his day. At nightfall he would mingle with human beings; restricted in the domain of action, but enormous when one considers what he brought back from his brief exchanges with mankind. Proust had become so accustomed to this transposition of night and day—even to the point of extending it to the lives of other people—that on one occasion during the war, on being summoned to appear at two o'clock before an Examining Board, he arrived there with entire candour at two in the morning. Another time, wishing to show a Rembrandt to a friend, he appeared at the doors of the Louvre at midnight. Incredible as it may seem, he was allowed to enter; for the all-powerful charm of that strange being penetrated the most mediocre and soul-less of men.

He was able to obtain for others anything he desired. I remember meeting him one evening in 1916 at the Larue restaurant and presenting him to my companion, who found favour in his eyes. He wanted to offer her the diversion of music in the deserted restaurant—whose personnel were, as everywhere, devoted to him—and proposed, in spite of war regulations, to bring the Poulet Quartet there and then. Off he went into the night to assemble his musicians. We finally became tired waiting, and sceptical of his success, had returned to the hotel, when he presently reappeared, having torn from their beds the first violin, the second violin, and the viola; the violoncellist alone failed him, and with some reason—he had pneumonia.

In spite of his infirmity Proust quailed before no fatigue, no danger. We were chatting one evening in the Ritz, when suddenly the window-panes burst with a terrific crash into a thousand pieces; two German bombs had fallen within ten yards of the hotel. "Charming," said Proust, annoyed at the interruption, and hardly raising his eyes, continued his sentence amid the detonations. His body—scarcely of the earth, arrayed in black and white like a Manet dandy, seemed proof against mere physical attack. But within himself lurked the only menace: Time leading on to death—his only happiness, artistic creation.

Time—in its popular conception—that unyielding Time measurable as is Space, barren and abstract like it, within which we are accustomed to chronologize our artificial and lifeless recollections—is no more than a meaningless void, which Proust traverses at a bound, to make contact with the real Time, actual duration and spiritual reality, of which through ten volumes he relates the marvels and the imperfections. Here are unfolded without regard to time classification, those experiences and aberrations of mankind—which no one has more profoundly analysed—exposed in their essential untruth and unregenerate relativity: love, friendship, ambition, snobism, social intercourse, conflicts of individuals and peoples.

This true Time Proust makes infinitely fluid, now arresting and now precipitating its flow; at the same moment we are in 1914, in 1918, and twenty years before or after. The artist affects ubiquity in Time the better to encircle that enemy; certain characters (Gilberte) have no more substance than a line-drawing and are only present to measure the rise or the decline of a family; others expand in this fourth dimension of Proust's, and "as if mounted upon living stilts, tower up and up."

Time, Time is the principal personage in the work. Proust first in the history of literatures introduces this essential factor of mutations and destinies, turning upon it the blazing flood-light of his genius. Up to now human intellect had created unvarying types of men and super-men, homogeneous, ever uniform from birth to death. Ulysses was astute, Othello jealous, Don Quixote generous, Tartuffe a hypocrite. Balzac has painted a vast fresco but an immobile one. The age of the film, however, has superseded that of the panorama. Proust's work is above all things dynamic: Time has entered into it; these men, these women, this world of people he compounds and pours into his own moulds, fusing together, breaking apart, destroying, altering until unrecognizable, and transforming into their opposites. Compare the Charlus of the beginning with Charlus of the end, the Saint-Loup, Rachel's lover, with Saint-Loup emerging from the disreputable abode of Jupien, the successive manifestations of snobism on the part of the Duchess of Guermantes and of Legrandin. I do not mean that before Proust no one had described a great lord falling into the lowest depths, nor an obscure adventurer rising to the highest peak of honour; but no one had proposed as theme the action of Time nor had developed this theme with such profundity, truth-

fulness, and profusion. Read in the second volume of *Le Temps Retrouvé* the astonishing description of a ball which the author attends after twenty years of voluntary seclusion, and where he encounters former acquaintances, so changed that he at first thinks them disguised and considers that he has come upon a *bal de têtes*. From the truism that men grow old with the passing of days, he evolves reflections of a bitter and terrifying beauty; and he concludes with this sentence of prime importance: "I shall not fail to mark my work with the seal of that Time whose image obsesses me with such power, and I shall describe men—even though it make them monstrous creatures—as occupying in Time a place much more important than that so restricted one reserved to them in Space; a place prolonged eternally, since like giants submerged in the years, they live simultaneously through epochs so far separate one from the other."

This Time which is the object of his meditations, which he dreads and whose thrusts he parries, numbed by the fear of succumbing to them before his task is accomplished, Proust nevertheless overcame through the miracle of his artistic creation. The force which set loose in him this creation was the spontaneous reappearance of the past (so different from the studied act of memory which registers only barren events stripped of their emotional richness). The past is our Rheingold, the treasure hidden in the depths of our being. "Genius," said Baudelaire, quoted by Curtius, "is only childhood recalled at will." These powerful recollections of childhood and youth, the least of which shatters the false edifice we have built up and re-creates the true world around us, are the paradise lost which the artist must regain. The reader will excuse the long citations which follow; they are necessary. The author in them asks himself why, at different moments in his life apparently insignificant sensations (of an uneven pavement, the taste of a madeleine, the tinkling of a spoon against a plate) had suddenly aroused in him an incomprehensible felicity, which rendered death of no account and removed overwhelming doubts, even to the point of reassuring him completely as to the reality of literary gifts which he had begun to mistrust.

"The entrancing image hovered dimly at the threshold of my vision, as if to say, 'Seize me before my outline fades if thou canst, and essay to resolve the enigma of felicity which I propound.' I was imperiously drawn to search the causes of that rapture, of the

indubitable assurance with which it imposed itself. But that cause I divined, as I compared one with the other, these diverse blessed experiences having this in common, that I lived them at once in the present and in a moment far distant—the tinkling of the spoon on the plate possessing the power of merging the past with the present. In reality the being which experienced in me that impression existed only when, at the coalescence of present and past it would find itself in the only realm where it could exist and enjoy the essence of reality, that is to say beyond the bounds of Time. That being alone had the power of restoring the past to me, the lost past before which the straining of my memory and of my intellect forever failed.” . . . “It finds in the essence of things its sole subsistence, its sole delight. It languishes in the contemplation of the present in which the senses cannot provide that essence, in the retrospect of a past from which the life has been drained, and in the prospect of a future built up by the will from fragments of the present and of the past, these too bereft of reality, retaining from such fragments only that which corresponds to the will’s utilitarian and narrowly human purpose. But let a sound, an odour, once heard or breathed, return again, existing now in the present and in the past, real without being of the moment, ideal yet not abstract, and immediately the permanent and habitually hidden essence of things is released and our true self (which often had seemed long dead but was ready to spring to life) awakes and flourishes upon the celestial food afforded it. One moment set free from the rule of Time has re-created the man in us, himself released from Time’s grasp in order to perceive it. And one can comprehend that such a man be untroubled in his joy—even though the simple taste of a madeleine does not seem to hold logically in itself the cause of that joy—and that the word death no longer has meaning for him: existing beyond Time what could he fear from the future?” . . . “But even this vision of eternity was transient. The only means of experiencing further these impressions was to attempt to comprehend them more completely where they were found, that is to say within myself. I recalled that obscure impressions had sometimes attracted my thought in the same manner as had these reminiscences, but hid within themselves, not former experience but a new verity which . . . I essayed to adduce by the same sort of effort exerted in an essay of memory—as if our most sublime reflections were like melodies which would return to our consciousness without our having ever heard them before. I recalled that I used to fix

earnestly in my mind some image which had thrust itself on my attention, a cloud, a triangle, a flower, feeling that there was perhaps beneath these signs a thought which they represented, just as hieroglyphics represented more than the material objects they reproduced. Certainly the interpretation of these signs was difficult but by that alone might a measure of truth be apprehended. The truths that the intelligence receives directly from every-day experience, retain a something less profound, less necessary than those which life has communicated to us in spite of our resistance. Hence the necessity of interpreting sensations as signs of so many laws or ideas, essaying to call forth from the penumbra that which I had experienced and to convert it into its spiritual equivalent. And this—was it anything less than a work of art?"

Released from the domination of Time—since he could escape it by involuntary recollection and live simultaneously in the past and the present—Proust attains within himself the only extra-temporal and divine reality, and makes contact with Being. In this sense he vanquished death, and we can say that his creative joy is a religious one.

And yet Mauriac has said that God is not found in Proust's work. It would be more just to say that Christ and the Christian morality are not found there. Curtius has already remarked that the will plays no part in Proust as contrasted with Balzac's work in which it is always present, that his characters do not act of themselves, do not need to act, since they are already rich and complete, or else do evil, vulgarly and maliciously—people like Verdurin, for example, or Bloch, or Charlus. We might add this: what is absent in Proust is the Moral Will. Not one of his characters consults his conscience, nor attempts to prevail against his instincts, to reform, to strive towards an ideal.

In fact, nothing is more foreign to puritanism than the work of Proust, and in this respect we can marvel that it has been received with such enthusiasm by the great Protestant peoples, who as a general thing require of literature moral lessons. They are therefore to be felicitated that in Proust's case truth has been preferred, and the high artistic purpose so sublimely expressed in the death of Bergotte, of whom Proust, alas, was shortly to be the heroic counterpart when writing the last pages of his book a few moments before his death.

PAUL MORAND

BOOK REVIEWS

CARAVAN TWO

THE SECOND AMERICAN CARAVAN. Edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, and Paul Rosenfeld. 8vo. 872 pages. The Macaulay Company. \$5.

THE bulk, range, and variety of this second year-book, in my hands for review with only a few days for reading it and thinking about it, compel a frankness outside the range of criticism. Because the book is important and one wants to review it promptly, one cannot do justice—to the writers, the editors, and to those who may be guided by this report.

I have, therefore, chosen to disregard almost all of the better-known writers represented here, assuming that readers of *THE DIAL* are acquainted with the virtues of H. D., Waldo Frank, Edna Bryner, Conrad Aiken, Wallace Gould, Sherwood Anderson, Hart Crane, John Gould Fletcher, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, and perhaps a dozen more. In the years between 1920 and the first issue of the *American Caravan* these artists have appeared frequently enough in *THE DIAL*. I have never felt them to be in any sense “a *DIAL* group” (although I have heard that such a group existed) and I know that another list of writers equally familiar to *DIAL* readers would reveal aesthetic tendencies not followed by some, or all, of those I have named. Yet the *Caravan*, in part, is a year-book decidedly sympathetic to *THE DIAL*’s standards. And if I omit consideration of these fine and significant artists I do injustice to the *Caravan* as a readable, interesting, and important book. Their contributions seem to me by far the more interesting; the work of new and lesser known men is nowhere near theirs in thought and feeling and mastery of expression.

But I think that this enforced exclusion does not work a great injustice to the *Caravan* as an idea. For the editors say that it is “a continued witness of the health of our literature, an earnest of a growing solidarity among American artists, and an emblem of a

new understanding between a group of significant writers and a body of readers who reject the standardized, the derivative, and the anemic literature still widely accepted. In its catholic bringing together of many writers and forms and varieties of spiritual experience The Second American Caravan furthers the expression of a 'large, lusty, loving' America."

This, I think, specifically alludes to the relation between new writers and old. Merely to bring together the people I have mentioned above would be to create an anthology. To set new writers into juxtaposition with old, new forms with old, creates this solidarity which the Caravan calls for.

In one sense, solidarity exists. When I reviewed the first Caravan I suspected that a number of American writers, although invited as all American writers are, to contribute, had not done so because they felt that the editors of the Caravan would not be hospitable to their work. And I thought that the range of the first issue, although not great, would suffice to dispel that idea and that writers not particularly sympathetic with the aesthetic religion of the editors would accept the statement that "the American Caravan does not conform to any preconceived pattern . . . the editors are as hospitable . . . to the American of vast corporate organizations as . . . to that of the solitary studio." I was mistaken. The new Caravan still lies within narrow limits. The poetry shows variations of technique and of temper, and constitutes the most interesting part of the book; the prose, which makes up the bulk, might all have been written by two or three people under the influence of two or three others. (I remind you that I am writing particularly of the less known contributors.)

It happens that the major influence wearies me. I cannot give it a personal name because I feel sure that it does not stem from Dreiser so much as from the aesthetes of the Dreiserian mode. It is easily distinguishable. It chooses drab and unimportant things for subject and following a perverted aesthetic theory says nothing interesting about them. It makes a virtue of a dull and repetitious style and asserts that life is dull by making an artistic report of life even duller. It is "strong" because it avoids current sentimentalism, but it is developing a sentimentality of its own, largely about the obligatory meaninglessness of life and the worthlessness of art. These (and any other) theories are relatively unimportant

in a man of profound feeling and great creative energy; whatever I feel about the ideas of Ernest Hemingway and E. E. Cummings, for example, makes me think that they are artists in spite of themselves. But writers of feeble powers cannot afford to accept the ideas or the style of others.

John Herrmann's *Engagement*, taking up nearly a hundred pages of the second *Caravan*, is in part derivative, in part wilful, and altogether spoiled. Episodes are introduced and then carefully turned away from the narrative, as if the author said, "I could have used this for purposes of plot, but I didn't, just to show you that plot is not important." Heaven knows it isn't except when it carries on character or develops a theme; but thumbing one's nose at it is worse than unimportant; it is deadly to interest. Morley Callaghan's story, *An Autumn Penitent*, has a more definite skeleton, but seems also to favour the idea of representing chaos by being chaotic. Another section of the prose is devoted not to the objective rendering of details in the lives of inexpressive people, but to variations of the interior monologue. It arrives sometimes at intensity, sometimes at weariness. The way in which most of these writers avoid dialogue is extraordinary and illuminating. When Mr Callaghan's characters are created, they talk; in most of the other pieces, nothing so direct, nothing requiring so specific an effort at creation is attempted. The characters do not detach themselves for a moment from the background of prose, they can neither gesture nor speak. Mr Rascoe's *Gustibus* speaks to himself at considerable length, to be sure; what he says is lewd and entertaining; but he says it in the too familiar tones of Mr Bloom. The two pages of conversation to which Josephine Herbst leads us after some eight pages of effort to make her characters far less interesting than they probably were at their conception, is the sort of thing appropriately noted down behind the backs of bus-riders and theatre-lobby conversationalists. And so with far too many others.

The sense of small lives has been presented in various ways: humorously by Mr Lardner, for instance; glamorously by Mr Fitzgerald; poignantly by Chekhov; epically and dully by Dreiser, epically and with true or false intensity by Arnold Bennett. The Paris school of American writers savagely insists that it shall be presented in one way only—stupidly. I suspect that nine of ten among these writers do not know small lives at all and would be

better occupied writing about the small lives of literary people whom, at least, they have observed. By this time what they say of carpenters and ditch-diggers fails to convince me in the slightest.

And I confess to wishing that a few American writers would school themselves with Benda (or perhaps with Wyndham Lewis) and with Aristotle, would purify their emotions by the simple process of making them their own, and would find a little place for structure, for the old despised brainwork of creative activity.

And now let me say that half a dozen of the older writers are not only as interesting as ever; they seem to be growing in power. They, and not the newcomers, are the hope of the Caravan; and what I would like to see is a Caravan with them and with something of the side of America the Caravan has not yet touched: its lightness, its folly, its splendour, spurious and real. I need not nominate my special pets: where are Thomas Beer and Dos Passos and Mencken (or the best of his followers)? The Caravan solicits material without prejudice; but if the editors want to do their job they will have to learn what every magazine editor learns: you cannot be satisfied with what comes in as the result of a general appeal for contributions. You have to know what you want and go and get it.

I hesitate to add a word about criticism. Last year I meditated a bit on the absence of critical work from the Caravan and was rapped over the knuckles for it with a "thank the Lord the critics are no longer influential." The two critical pieces in this number are both remarkable; but more remarkable to me is the absence of any critical survey of the very movement in American literature which the Caravan represents. It is a work not to be done in reviews of the book; and (becoming constructive) I suggest to the editors that for the next Caravan they find a critic to discuss the aesthetics of the first two.

GILBERT SELDES

UNDERWORLDLING

DOSTOEVSKY. *The Man and His Work.* By Julius Meier-Graefe. Translated from the German by Herbert H. Marks. 8vo. 406 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$5.

THAT Mr Meier-Graefe should give us a vividly impressionistic and sympathetic literary portrait of Dostoevsky was only to be expected. He has, as his study of Van Gogh made clear, a natural sympathy with the "rebel" artist, the breaker of moulds, the explorer of chaos. And he loses no time, in this turbulent and excited eulogy of the great Russian poet, in putting this view of his hero sharply before us. He follows, in this regard, the lead of Hermann Hesse, whose *Blick ins Chaos*, a few years ago, endeavoured to crystallize the current Dostoevsky cult and to bring it into relation with the perhaps too-much-talked-about "post-war" chaos—social, ethical, aesthetic, and religious. "Dostoevsky"—says Mr Meier-Graefe—"neither considered literature in any way the reflex of an inner harmony, nor sought to bestow harmony by means of it. . . . The aim of his creation was unrest from which others fled. And he knew what he was doing. To none of the great visionaries has the task been clearer. . . . To no one has it come more naturally to turn the spirit of unrest to account in literature, unambiguously and without any element of vagueness." And again, ". . . he employed existing methods more profoundly than had hitherto been done, in order to attain a more forceful characterization of the developing human type . . . he possessed the faculty of 'having a presentiment of the future man,' possessed it to a degree bordering on the mystical . . ."

This strikes the key of Mr Meier-Graefe's book; and to the extent with which we sympathize with this view of Dostoevsky we can read it with profit and pleasure. The long analyses of the successive novels—copious, ejaculatory, symbolical, and presented with a good deal of the hysterical speed of the novels themselves—are excellent. To read them is in a sense to read the novels again,

and with an enhanced understanding. Mr Meier-Graefe is not blind to the many and grave technical flaws which mar even the greatest of them. He apologizes for the fact that they border, often too closely, on "journalism": he connects this acknowledged weakness—and its concomitants of claptrap melodrama, coincidence, sensationalism, vulgarity—with Dostoevsky's unwillingness to seek "harmony" through literature or to regard it as a "reflex" of harmony. Literature—he suggests—was not for Dostoevsky an aesthetic affair: it was a form of mystical communion; an effort to understand; an exploration of consciousness. Everything else could go by the board. The aesthete, and aesthetic judgement, was to be outlawed: divination was to be the thing. And if in consequence there was to be a breakdown of literature as "art"—as Mr Meier-Graefe seems to think likely—so much the better for mankind and so much the worse for our present conception of "art."

We need not, of course, take too seriously this prognostication as to the future of literature. We are free to suspect, if we like, that in this regard Mr Meier-Graefe errs as Mr Hesse did before him: on the far side of idolatry. Dostoevsky was a genius of the first order, one of those rare people who actually do extend the sphere of man's consciousness at a given moment, who serve as its advancing fringe, and who in that sense become "seers." But need this prevent our attempt at an understanding, in cold psychological terms, of the dynamics behind this phenomenon? To be downright, we cannot avoid scrutinizing the fact that Dostoevsky was an epileptic, with all that this must imply. Epileptics, as we can discover from any medical treatise, are predisposed to an excessive sensibility, and to the kind of excessively bright consciousness which such a sensibility will almost inevitably determine. They are terribly and feverishly aware. They are raw souls. But they are also profoundly unstable—they are inclined to substitute feeling for thought, and to be absolutely at the mercy of what it is that they happen to feel for the moment. Dostoevsky is an almost classical example of exactly this. If we go through his letters with any care, we find him to be an emotional weathercock. What he thinks to-day he will deny to-morrow. What one day he worships or praises, he will execrate the next. He has not, apparently, the least understanding of why it

is, at a given moment, that he feels or thinks a given thing. That he feels profoundly, *realizes* with an intensity almost unmatched, makes no difference. We can grant this virtue, grant the magnificent poetic genius; but we must be on our guard against accepting too whole-heartedly the notion that Dostoevsky was a great prophet, one who was deliberately leading human nature out of the wilderness.

Mr Meier-Graefe is in this respect to be mistrusted. He pays far too little attention to his hero's utter unreliability: he would have it that Dostoevsky always "knew what he was doing." In a sense, Dostoevsky always remained an "underworldling" of the sort which he made so extraordinarily real and terrifying in *Letters From the Underworld*: a creature alternately paralysed and galvanized by an unanalysed sense of guilt. "I am a sick man—I am a vile man," Dostoevsky began this book; and if with this abject humility went also the usual concomitant (in the epileptic) of mystic exaltation or satanic pride, it is nevertheless true that these alternations constituted a decidedly abnormal mental condition from which all his life he was never to escape.

CONRAD AIKEN

MR MORE'S DEMONOLOGY

THE DEMON OF THE ABSOLUTE. New Shelburne Essays, Volume I. By Paul Elmer More. 12mo. 183 pages. Princeton University Press. \$2.50.

ONE might wish, in view of the particular moment of Mr More's appearance in the more active salients of American criticism, that it were somewhat less dispersed with respect to his stated purposes. In his preface he declares an intention to confront with his own practice the much iterated charge that the older critics are too cloistered and aloof in their critical vocations, that their criticism is "irrelevant." Suiting this determination he sets down first his vigorous *Demon of the Absolute*, an essay surely which is nothing if not apt to the moment; and next, *Modern Currents in American Literature*, which if less forcible than its predecessor, is no less contemporary, and certainly is not without its own trenchancies of disposal. On the other hand rather more than the latter half of the volume is occupied with substantial but scarcely contemporaneous pieces on Vaughn, Trollope, Poe, and Borrow, and also a short translation from the *Mahâbhârata*.

In more than one sense probably it need not be a concern to Mr More or to Shelburnians to prove that he is relevant. To reflect on the substantial sum of plain-dealing which, in the first Shelburne essays, directly or implicitly touches various currently received notions, is scarcely to be persuaded that Mr More is irrelevant. Specific pronouncements on all twentieth-century concerns might not always be available in his uttered thought, but will it do to say that the outlines of them are not to be found there? Mr More does, however, take note of the charge that he is "obstinately" aloof. He takes note of it not merely in a prefatory declaration but by sending forth two essays in contemporary criticism one of which at least seems equal in armament and power of fire to any of his prior launchings. There is a definiteness in such actions which perhaps justifies the expectation that he will have more to say of our current character and being in subsequent volumes. Certainly it justifies the wish that he had said more in his present one.

It is primarily to the initial essay, *The Demon of the Absolute*,

that the reader must turn to find Mr More's contemplation of what the twentieth century thinks and is, an essay in many ways which finds us where we live. Mr More is no non-combatant critic, and his attack upon the Demon, "the Deluder who can take many forms, but who for us appears as the idol of Nature set high on the throne of omnipotence," is one of those excursions into the camp and country of the enemy which ought for their very courage and enterprise to win admiration, certainly to render obsolete the epithet "irrelevant."

"You can see the Demon," says Mr More, "at work in politics whenever men begin to contend for some final unchecked authority in the state, whether it be lodged in a monarch or in all the people. It has wrought havoc in religion by presenting to faith the alternative between an absolute omnipotent God or no God at all, and between an infallible church or undisciplined individualism. But nowhere has it produced more stupid contrariety than among the critics of art and literature."

This is not mincing words. Yet Mr More's still further aggressive by involution of tactics, must seem to some readers as not of the best counsel. The situation surely is not quite as it was in the days when, as he tells us, Mr More was compared by his adversaries to the poisoners of Socrates. He has withstood siege, and the contest is again in open country. Yet still he resorts to what must seem mainly defensive practices. It is a little strange that in so vigilant a piece as *The Demon of the Absolute* only the latter two sections are pure attack, are Mr More's unmistakable demonology. The three preceding are mainly, if not wholly defence, a defence such as Mr More has made before, of standards and tradition.

It is a spirited defence, but suggests question with regard to a defect at least of emphasis in the general attitude which it implies. Are standards and tradition sufficiently defended simply by defending them, by discoursing merely of the necessity of standards and tradition? One readily enough agrees with Mr More, who here agrees with his adversaries, that a chief office of the critic is to assist in creating a general body of ideas in which the artist—and, one might add, the artist's audience—could live and grow. And no American critics, surely, have been better able than Mr More and Mr Babbitt to insist, or have better insisted, on

the importance of the far view in those who would create or live in such a body of ideas. They have both resolutely maintained our need to hew to the line of the best recorded thought of men.

Yet one must demur if it is their opinion, as they sometimes seem to imply, that simple adherence to the traditions of the best is alone the necessary qualification of the critic or the adequate condition of intellectual and spiritual completion. They have done immensely well, no doubt, to examine and measure in the light the great traditions, and not seldom to reject many of the notions we currently have held most high. But this does not change the fact that there can be emergent and valid novelty, that there are discoveries which will ultimately be assimilated by tradition, not as yet perhaps in immediately apparent harmony with it. Such passages seem to require in the critic something besides adherence, however fine and deep, to the traditions of the best.

With the critic, and indeed with everyone, as Mr More here and elsewhere holds, the protective humility of common sense is of course a desideratum, and so is original feeling. But more than these because perhaps including these, imagination is imperative, the imagination to live out of one's time, admittedly, but equally the imagination to live in it. The critic is not the keeper of a museum, but the active reconciler of old and new, for if the old lives, it lives in living minds. The spirits of the great and the fine are quintessential, and to know them one must give them at least some being in oneself.

Inevitably there must seem a deep-reaching mutuality between the parts of any such feat, a mutuality requiring imagination for its guarantee, not inventive imagination indeed, but the no less vital sort involved in being able to establish the spirit of tradition in one's contemporary context. If in such a clothing of ghosts with flesh the new is only the formed body and not the forming spirit, one has still to recollect that body is essential to spirit in an animate world. Mr More very profitably suggests that the enduring things are old because they are good, not good because they are old, but if one ask the obvious question, "good for what?" then the obvious answer, "good for life," points perhaps at the need for that capacity to make distinctions on which Mr More and Mr Babbitt have often insisted. Literature and art are after all an aid to life, not life an aid to literature and art.

He can lose his own meaning who exaggerates respect for the old at the expense of his life in himself. Whoever does not receive the classic into his imagination—and imagination is nourished in the first instance only by a sufficient commerce with one's own world—will perhaps not know the classic.

Possibly this is all obvious or all implicit in the position of Mr More and the older criticism in general, or perhaps on the other hand it will be said that in our romantic-naturalistic expansiveness we already have too much imagination, and really need a check upon it, as Mr More so tellingly insists that we need a check on our over-running demons of rationalism. Assent to either of these opinions, however, would be difficult. If all this were obvious in the positions of the exponents of judgement and the advocates of tradition, ought we to fall so often as we do into the sterile emptiness of pseudo-classicism? To such a misadventure the official custodians of the classic seem particularly liable, and what is it if not a failure in imagination? To read the traditions of the best *au pied de la lettre*, is not this to become deep-versed in books and shallow in oneself? Are we to be especially surprised that youth revolts from such tuitions, youth which in a sense is the time of the imagination, when that great fountain of renewal is first coming into free play? As to the claim that we have already had too much imagination, one is even less disposed to allow it. What we have had may very well be too little of the inner veto of which Mr Babbitt has so much spoken, but certainly not too much imagination, unless one takes imagination in the sense of mere expansionism, which is not a just reading of the word.

One does not suppose Mr More lacking in imagination. It is because he is not lacking in it and yet is also a pre-eminent exponent of judgement that his decided advent into the more current sessions of criticism is welcome. It is because he is not lacking in it that readers who assent to his reassertion of the traditions of the best, who can sympathize with his indignation at the neglect of those traditions, who can applaud his peremptory overhauling of modern demons in the midst of their depredations, may yet wish to object to being left, at the end of it all, with imaginations still unsatisfied. One can very well wish to avoid the mechanistic inane, and at the same time not be anxious to sink into the dusty void of the pseudo-classical.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

ENGLISH PROSE STYLE

ENGLISH PROSE STYLE. *By Herbert Read. Demy*
8vo. 227 pages. London: G. Bell and Sons. 9s.

TO defend the present by attacking the past, or the past by attacking the present, neither way is Mr Herbert Read's way of enjoying English prose. He is not a partisan of tradition, not a partisan of up-to-dateness, not any kind of sectary. No conventional deference to this time or to that dictates his likings, nor any conventional revolt. He belongs in this respect among the newer, the more modern moderns.

Every century, to the taste of this young English scholar, has its great writers. The seventeenth: Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations* "is throughout written in a sweetly modulated rhythm which has no parallel in English prose." The eighteenth: Swift's narrative style "is the norm to which we must return again and again." The nineteenth: "Clear explanations, acute distinctions, the invention of descriptive phrases, perfect definitions—these are but the minor characteristics of such a style" as Sir Henry Maine's in his *Ancient Law*, "a book in which the quality of an expository style is seen in its perfection." The twentieth: A passage quoted from Vanzetti's speech in Judge Webster Thayer's court "has all the elements of great prose. . . . The rhythm mounts in a tempo as triumphant as the mood it expresses; the simplicity and pathos of the words do the rest."

Mr Read is several-sided. In a few sentences, and always as if an alien from an earlier epoch had strayed into the book, he is an old-fashioned teacher of rhetoric, as when he tells us that the first words of an essay "should be either familiar or arresting, and the last should be emphatic." Seldom, far too seldom—not being in this book "concerned with the criticism of literature"—he permits himself to criticize, and whenever he does so one wishes he would do it oftener. Nobody has done, for example, in a few lines more damaging justice to Walter Pater. Nobody else has traced so analytically to its causes Mr T. S. Eliot's eminence as a writer of critical prose. And when Mr Read says that the "meaning" which Henry James most cared to express "was concerned with life at its finest creative point—the point where moral judg-

ments are formed," he gives us, unless we accept his assertion too glibly, something to think about.

Mr Read is least satisfactory where I suppose him to have been most interested and to have tried hardest, namely as a theorist. He is haunted by a distinction between poetry and prose—"the real distinction," he calls it—which is anything but clear: "Poetry is creative expression: Prose is constructive expression." He repeats this in many forms without persuading me that such a distinction will work. If this "real distinction" would have us call *To the Lighthouse* "constructive expression" and *The Rape of the Lock* "creative expression," it will—as Mr Read says of "the common definition of the paragraph"—"be found of very little application to" what we actually "find in literature." No, the only working distinction between poetry and prose is, among other men's, Wordsworth's, whom I quote without his qualifying words: "The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre." A prose writer is never afraid of writing poetry. But he has often to be on his guard against metre. He achieves some of his most interesting sentence structures merely by trying to silence the metre he notices in what he has written. By always varying the number of unstressed syllables between our stressed syllables, by declining to repeat any one arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables so near the place of its last occurrence that we notice the repetition, so, and only so, can we be certain that what we are writing is prose. No other distinction between prose and poetry—except possibly this, that although poetry is not poetry unless it is good, prose no matter how bad is still prose unless it is metre—is of the slightest use to a writer when he is writing.

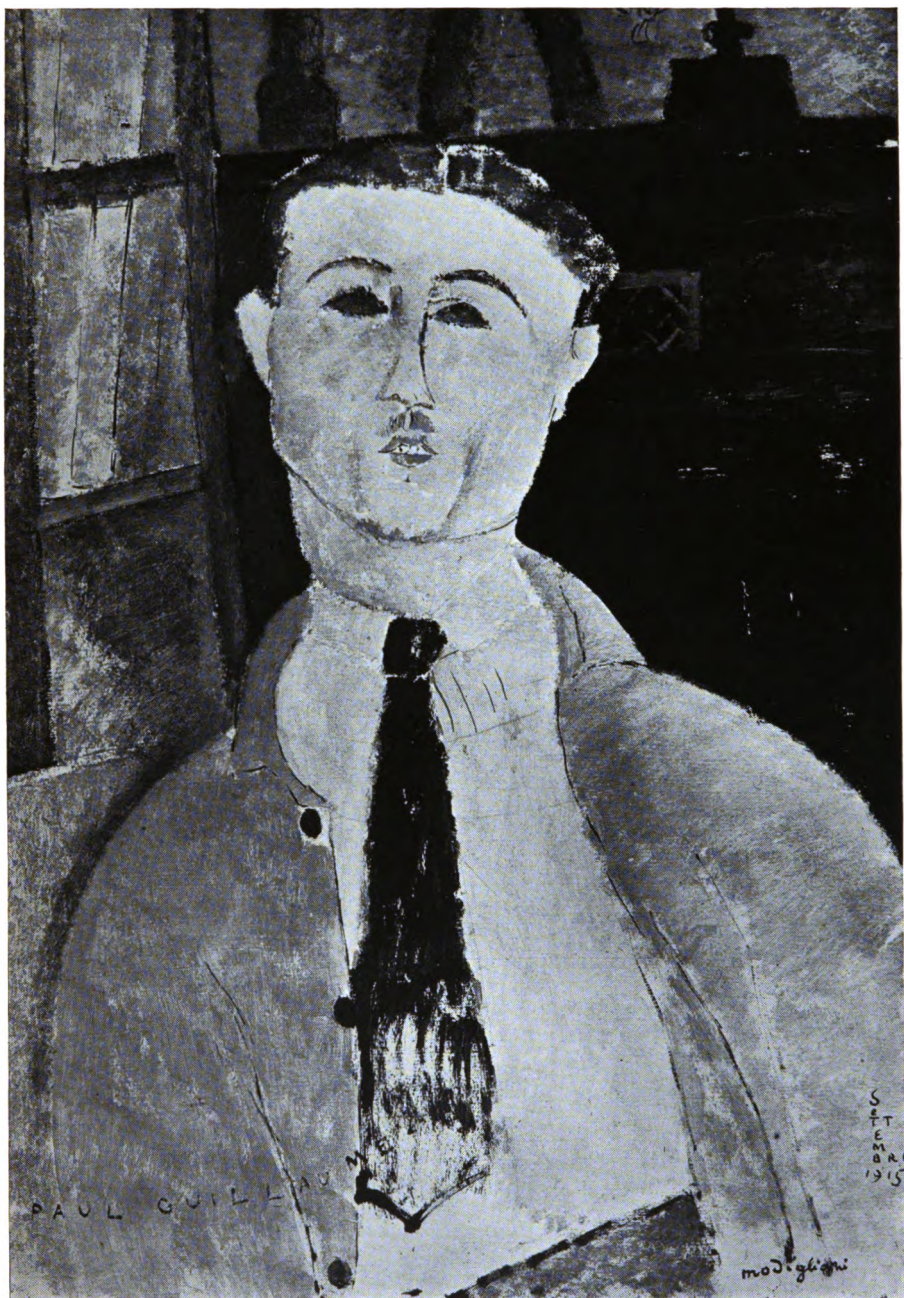
A brave, rather confused theorist, an admirable literary critic, Mr Read is also an anthologist, and a very good one. How can anybody so young—he is young enough to think Miss Austen's style "recondite" and "quaint"—have had time to read so widely? If we confine ourselves to the quotations he makes—varied and long enough to show us how excellent English prose can be when it is homely, or exquisite, or exactingly severe, when here it flows without any impediment, or is all glorious there with imagination—we cannot help wishing that Mr Read would create or construct an anthology. It would be, I am sure, such a book of prose as we should all carry about with us.

PHILIP LITTELL

MODERN ART

THE chief question on my mind when sailing for France last summer was that of Miro. Was he worth bothering about? No other name, during the winter, had come across the seas with such insistence, and nothing came across with the name—no pictures. If he really were worth bothering about it would be necessary, it seemed, to make another of those fatiguing trips to Paris in order to do it there. A traversée “was clearly indicated,” as the fortune-tellers say, and so, being essentially dutiful, I went.

I did not meet the young man though. M Miro had himself felt the inclination to travel and had hied himself to his native Spain. I very seldom meet the artists. I prefer not to. They sometimes are so personally fascinating that they prejudice you in favour of their works and that complicates things. Two of M Miro's works, on the other hand prejudiced me in favour of *him*. No matter what he might be like—and I heard he was odd—the two pictures had answered my question and I knew that the artist was worthy of bother. They were at the new gallery, Pierre's, on the rue de Seine. They were not for sale. (Instantly I had decided that either or both pictures would do admirably for the New York Luxembourg, a mythical institution for which, in my mind's eye, I am always making purchases.) But they were not for sale. They were to adorn M Pierre's private collection, or the artist's own private collection, I forget which. That is the latest thing in Paris! The dealers have become collectors. All the desirable objects of art are not for sale. It is certainly the case, and with a vengeance, at M Paul Guillaume's. M Guillaume looks positively offended if you ask a price. It almost seems to be superfluous, under the new system, to have a gallery. I have a vague notion, for instance, that there were pictures at M Paul Guillaume's gallery on the rue de la Boëtie but recollect perfectly all the masterpieces of the private collection and can even tell you their positions on the walls if you insist upon it. I remember *them* very precisely. One of the members of New York's advance-guard was calling upon Guillaume while I was there, and agreed with me in thinking the collection excellently representative of the push and urge of



PAUL GUILLAUME. BY AMADEO MODIGLIANI

current feeling and that it would be a handsome act upon the part of somebody to acquire the whole thing for New York. When one or other of us voiced this opinion to M Guillaume he smiled at us incredulously and unhumorously. The pictures, it seemed, were not for sale. Nevertheless some people do seem to know how to get things away from French dealers, even under the new system. I myself have great faith in the efficacy of prayer. I pray, for instance, for the two big Miro's to come to the Gallery of Living Art, or at least to some New York collection, and preferably a public one. For the three big Miro's, I should say, for there is another one, *The Dog Barking at the Moon*, which I have only seen in photo but which I am now persuaded is also swell. Before going down the crooked little rue de Seine to Pierre's I asked one of the younger French modernists of my acquaintance if he agreed that Miro were great and I got a dubious and unconvinced shrug of the shoulders by way of reply. After a moment of reflection, however, my friend twinkled his eyes and said, "Well, I must admit that there is something great about that *Dog Barking at the Moon*."

M Pierre, when showing me a big Miro canvas which divided itself practically into two bold tones of red and was called *A Landscape*, said—seeing that I was impressed and would probably stand for it—"It has the feeling of Rousseau's *Egyptienne*." I did stand for it. I really thought so too. This landscape has the same mysterious spooky quality that made the Henri Rousseau evocation so thrilling. Later I was shown another large canvas that had been touched in with the same spectral brushes. There was something that looked like a dog, too, in this composition and that helped me to realize how effective the *Dog Barking at the Moon* must be. "Very like a whale," I suppose you'll be saying if you are sceptical of all this. M Miro, in truth, does very little for the dog that appears so frequently to him in dreams. The new art, you understand, is simple. It is almost like a Caran d'Ache dog, or like one of those stylized toy animals that advanced parents now give to their children. But all the same, the symbol has the power of something genuinely imagined and is painted as though to the order of Don Quixote himself. Accepting definitely three such pictures as these mentioned is something, and so I now feel committed to M Miro,

Another allegiance I am about to strike, I think, is with M Le Corbusier, the architect, whose house at Garches, for the Michael Stein family will affect all my ideas for houses henceforth. There are lots of things about it that I question, and which I will question if I ever meet M Le Corbusier—he too is one of the artists a critic can meet—but a first glance at the mansion is sufficient to give an impression of something that has come to stay and that is widely to be imitated. A lady I met at the salon of decorative arts came up to me with a beaming face, saying, “You don’t have to argue with me about this,” waving a hand vaguely at the Ruhlmann furniture and the Bourgeois interiors, “I may not understand it, but I love it.” I feel the same way about the Stein house. It looks, it is true, like a refined factory, with its sheets of windows running in horizontal bands across the façade, but there is something about it so persuasively neat and fitted for use that all the older houses in the neighbourhood suddenly look composed of nine-tenths fol-de-rol.

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

WE FOUND ourselves looking forward to this new season with quickened expectations; for we were convinced that orchestral or operatic music is the flowering of the metropolis, the defence of concentration in both wealth (the patron) and specialized endeavour (the artist). We had proposed to make up for insufficiencies of knowledge and power by zeal in praising. With the first admonitory unison of the Coriolanus overture under Mengelberg's baton, we would vote the season solemnly inaugurated.

In dark and fetid places, there are the gnarled in body and mangled in mind. But the concert hall shall be the denial of these vices, shall prove that this same state of affairs has its pride and asseveration. Music, we had decided, would be the song above catastrophe—something like the court of a great Lewis before the patter of rain has become the trampling of many feet. How long could it last? No answer! Perhaps it would grow firmer, and spread even to those dark and fetid regions. The vast enterprise of music. That art which has charms to make the soothed breast savage, and which tends as naturally towards the grandiloquent as literature tends towards laundry lists.

There are, in many different-priced cafés, groups who hold to the ineffectualness of art. Through asking too long that art cure toothache, they have come to believe in the superiority of dentists. I also know a man who, on having written a bad book review, was convinced that all criticism is absurd. But before psychology is finished, I know that it will prove by measurement the great utility, not only of the people's art, but also of art in its most remote and difficult phases. Surely it is a fact in nature that we can maintain a certain level only by going constantly beyond it. It is because some men are metaphysicians that others are able to write their names. A complex social organization is maintained by a state of mind, and that state of mind is constructed out of art. Artists, even though their biographies are carefully recorded in history, are nameless in their effects. Perceiving their influence only at those rare times when they have written political or theo-

logical polemic, many hastily conclude that art must specifically tackle contemporary problems. That a Shaw or a Wells is superior to a Baudelaire. Yet Shaw and Wells are only possible as the vulgarization of subtler Shaws and Wellses. They are not sources. Baudelaire is a source.

So much as sociological preface to our present season. The words are meant to explain why one might dare look upon these closet battlefields with the desire to learn. In the aesthetic as a category, there is implicit a wholesome scepticism towards the practical. Not the least service of art lies in its ability to make action more difficult. And one particular brand of art may, by its specific message, still further strengthen this questioning attitude. What, it may be asked, was ever discovered without certainty of the most rabid and unbalanced sort? And what, it may be answered, was ever preserved without the agency of sleepless distrust?

We were, then, eager for the season to begin. Fiddlers, blowers of horns, conductor, even the audience, were weighted with much symbolic meaning. We boarded the train of a Thursday, resolved that the opening unison of the Coriolanus overture, under Mengelberg's baton, would solemnly inaugurate the season.

It did not. We found ourselves wondering whether the opening unison of the Schumann symphony, as led by Monteux, would have served the purpose better. And as the Coriolanus lacked the note of admonition which we had expected, and had gained freshness neither through an unsymphonic summer nor through the insight of the conductor, so the Mozart Divertimento which followed it showed no excessive diligence, was not searching in its delicacy. Perhaps there was more Mozart in the main theme of Strauss's Eulenspiegel, for Mengelberg apparently interprets this element of music best when it arises out of something else: not when he is in it, but when he suddenly comes upon it. And the Schubert symphony in C-major, which we have been told need not seem long, seemed long. We left the concert hall as one rebuked.

In Mengelberg's next concert, he gave the Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony, the ideological parallel to Beethoven's Fifth. I have long been humbled by my inability to get any sustained sense of fate out of either. But I am emboldened a little on recalling that

musicians construct their literal programmes somewhat in this wise: "The first movement shows the march of doom and man's dread in his contemplation of it. The second conveys his personal broodings over the bondage of human destiny. In the third we have a light dance episode, a gay and coquettish . . . et cetera." In other words, there is no symphonic music in which purely technical considerations do not constantly tend to blot out the primary message. And as auditors we may consider such programmes to be hardly more than suggestions for playing, instructions more comprehensive than "adagio" or "pizzicato," but of the same order. Accordingly, we may listen, not in awe, but as sybarites, recognizing that there are certain blares like challenges, but being more affected when, in the descending runs, intricately repeated, there is the lure of texture.¹ . . . This symphony had been preceded by Emerson Whithorne's *Fata Morgana*, such music as should be heard behind a tent, since it could not, without such placing, provide its own mystery.

Our third concert, under the direction of Walter Damrosch, contained a "Five Cities Program." We should willingly have sacrificed the geographical diversity to hear more of the Vaughan Williams London Symphony than the cunning scheme allowed room for. The quiet gloom of the two movements given, seemed so much more careful than the similar moods of Respighi's *Fountains of Rome* which followed. Both Rome and London, we learn, have pensive clocks, which chime softly against a symphonic night-fall, and with each stroke envelop us in a deeper and graver darkness. But not so New York, claims Mr Carpenter in his *Sky-*

¹ Recently, having occasion to examine a Shakespearean concordance, I noted in particular the hundreds of passages in which the word "hour" occurs. I was impressed to observe that in all but a very few instances, the word had the same connotations, being used in contexts which suggested the ominous or threatening. Such examination of key words might, I thought in passing, be a way of settling questions of disputed authorship. For I also recalled that some analyst of Wagner had found identical combinations of notes used for identical purposes, though these notes sometimes appeared consecutively as melody and at other times simultaneously as harmony. Perhaps all great artists whose work is pronouncedly a matter of their medium will display such self-consistency in the use of symbols. The audience, however, parallels the artist's system but approximately. They find "beauty" in the region between alienation and identity with the artist's symbols.

scrapers. These skyscrapers, indeed, are in the very process of construction—as the composer shows in bustling, somewhat noisy rhythms, with bits of melody as catchy as slogans. Thus, the vivaciousness and inconveniences of the city are also those of the music. The Charpentier Paris (Aria from Louise) is Murger. The closing Strauss waltz (for Vienna) was a reminder which we did not need.

The Beethoven Symphony Orchestra, for all its serious handicaps, is evidently to provide New York with much spirited music. Perhaps considering the strategic importance of his first concert, Mr Georges Zaslavsky had schooled his orchestra to more than responsiveness, to positive obedience. The exceptional variety of the Elgar "Enigma" Variations was earnestly recorded. The fourth Brahms symphony, particularly in the first two movements, seemed inadequate. The andante of this work, in which the wind instruments figure with such prominence, can be given in such a way that each transfer of leadership from one timbre to another seems like a deliberate move, like a discovery in the handing on of the theme. The Nordic Symphony by Howard Hanson, which had its New York première at this performance, contained the rugged honesty proper to a nordic symphony, with perhaps more berserker rage than even this subject demanded. . . . The programme ended with Petrouschka, which one may now hear as a child, so that we ventured particularly to enjoy the progress of the bear.

KENNETH BURKE

THE THEATRE

TH**ERE** are always two possible reasons for finding a theatrical season, or any part of it, uninteresting. One, the productions; two, the observer. I confess in the first instance, therefore, that I haven't, in the past month, been under any great temptation to go to the theatre, expected little, and found it. On the other hand, I found this, in Mr St John Ervine's review of **HOLD EVERYTHING**:

“There was a puerile joke in the play about the Prince of Wales's falling off horses. It was invented, I imagine, by some one who probably could not get onto a horse. If the ‘humorists’ who make this ‘joke’ about once in every ten minutes had a tenth of the Prince's pluck they would be entitled to be as funny as that.”

I do not understand the last sentence, but I get the idea; so the month has not been a total loss.

Another newspaper event has been the discovery that Goethe is dull. The Theatre Guild produced **FAUST** and got a bad press, but some of the critics blamed the Guild for the version of the play it chose and some decided that Goethe is one of the over-rated stuffed-shirts of literature. My only interest is in finding out whether this is one of the Guild's honourable failures or merely an attempt to put over a successful show which failed. “The Guild,” says a recent official announcement, “has always endeavored to produce plays of the kind which could not ordinarily be produced in the commercial theatre.” This cannot mean that none of the Guild's productions could not: Shaw (except Methuselah), Molnar, Sidney Howard, are far too skilful and practical playwrights to require special production and special audiences. And the rare Guild failures financially have seemed to me (again with exceptions) ill chosen and not particularly happy in production; some of the failures at the Provincetown and under Mr Hopkins seem to me to have more *panache* than the Guild's successes, and although the Guild can hardly have any resounding failures now, when it

has trained and reared a faithful and intelligent audience, for itself and for others, it ought to be proud of its comparative failures, from time to time, and not regret them. To produce plays destined to failure is a silly business which the Guild has wisely avoided; but to produce great plays, even at the risk of failure, remains the mark of a true lover of the theatre.

Molnar's *OLYMPIA* got a tepid press, Mr Ervine wondering how the author of *LILIOM* (which, he informed us, failed nearly every where except in New York, so I trust the Guild will omit that name from its list of honourable productions right away) got his reputation, especially as from his plays one suspects that the author had never met a man or woman of fine sensibilities. The dramatic turn upon which Molnar depends so much is not so good in *OLYMPIA* as in some of the other plays: the resurrection of *Liliom*, the actual appearance of the phantom rival in *THE TALE OF THE WOLF*, and the supremely skilful second act curtains in *THE PLAY'S THE THING* are expedients of the first order of dramaturgy —of the science of projecting an idea by dramatic methods. In *OLYMPIA*, a princess, deeply in love with a commoner, is bidden dismiss him and told to do it so that it kills without leaving the victim to suffer. She takes the obvious means of humiliating him for his impudent aspirations and in the turmoil of her own love, her language becomes hysterical and low. He goes; and presently the princess and her mother receive a visit from the local police informing them that the commoner is not the captain of hussars he pretends to be, but a notorious swindler. (You must remember, to understand what follows, that all this takes place in the shadow of the frigid court of Vienna, before the war.) To avoid scandal, it is necessary that the swindler be recalled and bribed. Obviously, the only bribe he will take is the Princess. He is, with the connivance of the mother and the eagerness of the Princess, bribed.

That constitutes the first turn. The second is the unblushing return of the scalawag, announcing (with proof) that he is, indeed, a captain of hussars, and that he made up the whole story by which the head of the police was hoodwinked into assisting his rather cheap game. And then, having wrung from the Princess a declaration of love, he announces that she will never see him again. It is pretty thin going at the end.

The absurdity of the play was not well handled by the producer and director. As it stood, it ranged over most of the dramatic fields, rather like the catalogue of Polonius; there was no musical key to which all the parts were related. The players had time and scope enough to be sometimes good, sometimes bad; but lacked superior direction to be consistent. Miss Crews and Mr Korff played farce and comedy, respectively, most of the time; but the passagework between moods was bad.

Two musicals. **HOLD EVERYTHING** uses this year's favourite plot about the pugilist and, I read in the papers, "kids it." If that is kidding, give me straight serious discussion of the morals of game-fixing. The portions of the entertainment devoted to the plot developed such a sentimentality about sporting events as to call for Mr John Tunis's immediate debunking. But the other parts, barring the music, were excellent. Especially the dancing which is active, varied, fresh, and entertaining. The humour is in the hands of Victor Moore, the hesitant, round-faced, gentle pudgy fellow who has been creating the same character for many seasons, always with a definitely ingratiating simplicity, and in those of Bert Lahr, an old vaudeville favourite who knocked 'em cold. His method is that of a grotesque and his good moments are so good that the bad ones, the over-acting, the terribly obvious mechanism of some of his fun, is passed over. Mr Lahr abandons himself to fun, with distorted grimaces, alarming changes of tone, and strange loss of control of his muscles. The last touch which makes a comic genius, he lacks.

THREE CHEERS, in music, plot, dances, and most of the fun takes you back to the Follies of 1910 (unless that happened to be an exceptionally good vintage). Then out steps Will Rogers and reads from his part the description of the acrobatic stunts Mr Fred Stone would have done had he not been prevented by an accident from appearing. And Mr Rogers goes in to his own routine, more amusing it seemed to me than it has been for several seasons. Perhaps the political campaign inspires Mr Rogers; the shafts of his wit speed brightly; even when he laboriously tries to even the balance by making one or two jokes against the Democrats, he is good; and when his heart is in it, as in his discussions of prohibition, he is at his best.

Among other events in the theatre is the closing of *PLEASURE MAN*, Miss Mae West's little play about female impersonators, introverts, and high morals. The resemblance of this play to *THE DRAG*, which never was allowed to come to New York, is marked; and the prosecution was inevitable. It is a pity that the question of censorship, which is serious, should be brought up in connexion with a play which is not. A particularly detailed and sympathetic report of the play made to me by an admirer of the author, leaves me wondering about the technical justification of its suppression. And convinced that the general problem needs to be re-studied, with considerable attention to the psychology of crowds and very little to Miss West.

GILBERT SELDES

BRIEFER MENTION

THE HOUSE WITH THE ECHO, by T. F. Powys (16mo, 235 pages; Viking Press: \$2). One hazards the guess that Mr Powys' favourite form of biography is the epitaph. The brevity of it must be grateful to him—and the finality. And the grim humour—not always unconscious—which finds expression on headstones must delight him. Certainly these brief tales by him partake of the same attributes, and it is not by mere chance that so many of them are concerned with burial rites and the sudden tragedies of mortality. Glowingly he writes of Tadnol Churchyard—"Nowhere else the air blew so feelingly, and no tree's shade in summer was so heavy with love as the great yew's, and no moss flowered so finely in February as the moss that grew upon the churchyard wall." There are more than a score of lean and sinewy stories in this volume—the harvest of an eloquent economy.

THE RING FENCE, by Eden Phillpotts (12mo, 388 pages; Macmillan: \$2) is another of those plodding, close-to-the-soil romances which Mr Phillpotts yields annually with the fruitful regularity of a well-tended orchard. As usual, the conflict is worked out in terms of land and love, with the latter winning out by a comfortable margin in the end. The story is sprayed with the rustic philosophy which Mr Phillpotts has found so successful in counteracting the blight of monotony. This author's short excursions in fiction do not differ greatly from his long journeys, and **IT HAPPENED LIKE THAT**, a collection of fifteen tales (12mo, 287 pages; Macmillan: \$2.25) discloses no startling innovations—either in materials or method.

GEORGIAN STORIES 1927, edited by Arthur Waugh (10mo, 359 pages; Putnam: \$2.50). With one or two exceptions, the English writers represented here have recognized and happily fulfilled their obligation to draw real characters. One of the exceptions is Jean Devanny, whose "lissom" lady and "big man" seem to have strayed from the realm of cis-Atlantic *snappy* fiction, and another is William Gerhardi, whose Philadelphian quaintly ejaculates "Blast the whole bally crew of them!" To offset these discords, there are admirable contributions by Storm Jameson, A. E. Coppard, J. D. Beresford, and half a dozen others. And not one "big business" plot in the entire collection! The same emphasis on people rather than on story mechanics is discoverable in **THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1927**, edited by Edward J. O'Brien (12mo, 400 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50). As Mr O'Brien points out, the younger English writers at any rate "seem unwilling to permit machinery to uproot them from their tradition"—an auspicious omen for the future of their art. More than a score of characteristic examples are reprinted here, three of which—Daniel Corkery's *The Emptied Sack*, Seán O'Faoláin's *The Bomb-Shop*, and Lennox Robinson's *The Quest*—are already known to readers of **THE DIAL**.

TRIFORIUM, by Sherard Vines (12mo, 86 pages; Cobden-Sanderson, London: 5/) rides the waves of poetry aloofly, like a private yacht—trim and gleaming and polished, and ballasted fore and aft by synoptical notes. Here is a “sea-going pavilion,” a craft “gilded and bristling with crocketed barbs,” dipping and gliding to the rhythm of curious words—borborygms, nenuphars, symplegad, gambadoes. Snow becomes “that elegant pulvillio” and Fate is “bitter-sad as juice from plump wild pompions.” Mr Vines is in revolt against “cosy, home-made art”—the poetic bankruptcy which “produces yet again the foxglove in the hedge or the gypsy on the heath.” He composes with a controlled extravagance, flashing imagery, subtle irony. Every page is a challenge to the mind—and an invitation to the dictionary.

BURNING BUSH, by Louis Untermeyer (10mo, 109 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2) is not the crackling of thorns; rather it evokes the nostalgic fragrance of autumn leaves. The poet seems to be in a subdued and questioning mood. “The world has lost its edges” and “Even the heavens waver.” Yet from the haze of experience he still weaves glowing patterns, firm in texture and satisfying in their clarity. And he still dives—with delectable ease—into the deep pools of irony.

THE TURQUOISE TRAIL, An Anthology of New Mexico Poetry, compiled by Alice Corbin Henderson (12mo, 172 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$2.25). The old Spanish province of *Nuevo Mexico*, once a fragment of the Spanish empire in the New World, still retains—as the compiler of this anthology suggests—a “distinct regional personality,” a quality which is felt by poets as dissimilar as John Galsworthy and Alfred Kreymborg, or Willa Cather and Carl Sandburg. There is a sense of space and of primal force in these “mountains blanket-wrapped round a white hearth of desert” and on these “high stretched mesas” which vibrates the imagination and challenges the poet. Almost two score of them are represented in this collection.

AD PERENNIS VITAE FONTEM, Poems by John Lyle Donaghy (10mo, 32 pages; Minorca Press, Dublin: price not given) is a slender collection of verse, composed with such seeming simplicity of texture that one is surprised not to discern their underlying thought at once. Without question the creative impulse is here, but its substance remains evasive—“dreamily, hazily, foliated around.” One looks eagerly for something to which the poet himself has given voice—“a ray the more in one place, a just perceptible brightening”—but the mists are reluctant to lift. Perhaps it is the will of the poet that they remain.

THE MYSTERIOUSNESS OF MARRIAGE, by Jeremy Taylor, with illustrations from drawings by Denis Tegetmeier (12mo, 55 pages; Francis Walterson, Abergavenny, South Wales: 7/6). That such goodly authorship and beautiful book-making should be defaced with comic illustrations is confusing. The contrast, in this instance, of practice with preaching scarcely seems “salutary”—unbecoming though it is for a dial to discourage interest in contemporary virtuosity or in drawings so able as those which Mr Walterson has taken the trouble to procure.

AESTHETICS OF THE NOVEL, by Van Meter Ames (12mo, 210 pages; University of Chicago Press: \$2.50). Mr Ames sees art as a problem expressed in terms of value, and value as the projection of a need. The aesthetic attitude he defines as that which is situated where habit has been arrested by a problematic situation in a moment of pure contemplation before reflection demands a solution. One might wish in this author's own literary method of expression a little more proof of that artistic felicity which it is his avowed purpose to investigate.

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH LITERATURE, by John Matthews Manly and Edith Rickert (12mo, 196 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$1.50). This manual for the student of current tendencies in literature, with its biographical data, bibliographies, study outlines, selected reviews, and suggestions for reading, is valuable in itself, and not less so as a demonstration in method. One can understand how not all British authors and not "even the most important notices of individual books" could be included, for "among the scores of striking successes it is hard to find a dozen, much less a score, of authors who have anything of permanent value to contribute to literature, and of these the greater part are not the best known." It is not at once apparent to one, however, why there should not be mention of Gordon Craig, Charles Whibley, George Saintsbury, John Eglington, Llewelyn Powys, Percy Lubbock, Logan Pearsall Smith, or Roger Fry.

A LECTURE ON LECTURES, by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (12mo, 60 pages; Hogarth Lectures, No. 1, Harcourt, Brace: \$1) is chiefly an examination of the oral discourse as an integral part of the English university system. Being himself an active principle in that system, he is neither unmindful of its handicaps nor unappreciative of its merits. Quite naturally, he aligns himself with the defenders—a gracious and a persuasive advocate. Concerning lectures in general, he holds it unwise "to reprobate a human function or a form of public enjoyment which, for reasons however obscure, apparently ministers, without bloodshed or cruelty, to some natural instinct."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY, by Harold Nicolson (12mo, 158 pages; Hogarth Lectures, No. 4, Harcourt, Brace: \$1.25). Mr Nicolson here sketches competently and matter-of-factly the course of English biography from Bishop Asser's life of King Alfred to Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria, and indicates his professional views as to the future of the art. On the whole he finds that though several developments were authentic as far as they went, they were discontinuous, perhaps even abortive, and that what he terms "pure biography"—"the lives of individual men considered as a branch of literature"—cannot be produced again, since, as he considers, our immense modern interest in biography is not literary. It is a defended and doubtless a defensible thesis. Yet the critic would seem to be taking much upon himself who suggests that the Boswells and Lockharts are less possible now than when they appeared—their apparition being in times when the general interest in biography was far more restrictive than now, and practitioners a good deal less informed in varieties of significant knowledge and technique.

POSSIBLE WORLDS AND OTHER PAPERS, by J. B. S. Haldane (10mo, 305 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). Nietzsche saw in the pretensions of science but a new set of dogmas to replace the old dogmas of religion. But if we must in our uncreditable ignorance be ruled by dogmas it is reassuring to know that men of Mr Haldane's reasonableness and liberality are the ones to issue the mysterious mandates. The subject-matter in this present collection of essays is extremely varied and ranges from vitamins and blood transfusion to the future of biology and the destiny of man.

THE NEW RUSSIA, by Dorothy Thompson (8vo, 330 pages; Holt: \$3) is a temperate and an intelligent report, set down with an accompaniment neither of head-shaking nor of banner-waving. What the author has seen she has recorded, and her modest disclaimer of omniscience fortifies—rather than weakens—the soundness of her conclusions. Of especial interest are the chapters dealing with the status of women under the Soviet government, for here the experiment is most radical and most precarious. It is a relief to find a book about Russia which the reader can follow without being dragged through statistical brambles or plunged into a morass of doctrine.

ESSAYS OF TODAY, 1926-1927, edited by Odell Shepard and Robert Hillyer (8vo, 392 pages; Century: \$2.25). The twenty-nine magazine essays reprinted here are of several sorts. The five concluding pieces are biographical sketches of various degrees of dignity and vigour, such as R. M. Lovett's of Charles W. Eliot, Tucker Brooke's of Queen Elizabeth, and R. F. Dibble's of Mary Moody Emerson. Against these might be set the lyricism of Waldo Frank's *The Art of the Bull Fight* and the aesthetic *un-illusionment* of Thomas Craven's *The Great American Art* (of the moving pictures) both reprinted from *THE DIAL*. Among the inevitable re-stirrings of educational matters, Hanford Henderson's essay *Concerning Endowments*, from *The North American Review*, is substantial and very pertinent. The bulk of the collection, however, is given to what the editors term social criticism—friendly examinations of the American *mores*. Among these efforts, which vary much in quality, Albert Jay Nock's *Decline of Conversation*, from Harpers, ought to be mentioned for its urbanity and pith. The collection as a whole is of considerable interest.

SPOKESMEN: Modern Writers and American Life, by T. K. Whipple (10mo, 276 pages; Appleton: \$2.50) is more noteworthy in its specific reasoning than in its general standpoint. It is, in fact, frankly derivative and continuative in point of view from bases already established by such other critics as Van Wyck Brooks and Lewis Mumford. The immediate thesis, illustrated by critical consideration of ten such Americans as Henry Adams, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and Eugene O'Neill, is that the inner life, which is defined as a life of disinterested realization rather than of interested action, has been stunted in America, if not actually deformed, by the hostility of *milieu* engendered by our universal worship of success. If this is not a vividly novel doctrine it is yet made specifically and interestingly relevant to the ten cases cited. The essays on Dreiser and O'Neill seem particularly well considered.

COMMENT

THERE will always be some who are in a hurry, and pleased to be shot from ship to land in an airplane so as to arrive in advance of the usual time. Equipment, however, material or academic, is not invariably a part of culture as Mr Douglas Kennedy reminded those who saw the exhibition of English folk dancing at The Art Center last autumn. We have long been familiar with the valuable unimitativeness of folklore—the green men, dogs, horses, and other sincere impossibilities in varying guises which appear in sagas and ballads the world over—the sister that as “a machrel of the sea,” every Saturday at noon, combs the hair of her brother, the Worm; and newest perhaps in the Danish version¹ the lover to be disenchanted by voluntary ordeal:

“You’ve plighted your word, and now be true,
Give hither your hand, my claw take you.”

The lady she gave the bird her hand,
And free from feathers she saw him stand.

W. P. Kerr noted that “strange excellence in the ballads,” “not merely of repeating old motives, but of turning the substance of daily life into poetry.” Folk dancing at any rate is a natural means of expression like language and presents itself as an antidote to shyness and those insidiously anti-social forms of considerateness which tend to impair innocence without conferring security. It is the aim of The English Folk Dance Society not so much to provide entertainment for the onlooker as to afford people means of entertaining themselves. Though no dancing could be more delightful to watch than that of Mr Kennedy and his group. The spiral swirled attitudes as in certain kinds of ships’ figure-head, the “speed and neatness,” the “flashes of wit cropping up in the movements,” were shapely and gracious, the terminal and divisional pauses seeming more deferentially courteous even than those of the minuet. The Morris dancing in its rhythmic complexity and

¹ Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads. By Lowry Charles Wimberly. 8vo. 466 pages. University of Chicago Press. \$5.

patter-step, achieved an effect of mastery the more remarkable that the dancers were not a full complement, and suffered nothing apparently in the absence of box hats, wreaths, fluttering streamers, Tom-fool and She-male (a man dressed as a woman) as supplementary coquillage. It was obvious that Morris and Sword dances are not "for as many as will," but for men, and for those that can do them; the Fool's Dance by Mr Kennedy alone was a particularly wise and unfatigued little whirligig of ability.

There is power in mystery and it is not disappointing not to know the origin of the Morris Dance or the significance of the handkerchief in either hand and to be aware merely that a good dancer should, as the Morris men said, feel the weight of his handkerchiefs. The "purpose" of wands, bells, blue and cerise ribbons tying the bells to the legs, and of miniature music, needs no explanation. Ensnared by the fineness of the airs and steps, one desires that it all be repeated and in certain places in England teams may be seen once a year on a particular day, "about tea-time" as Mr Kennedy suggests, since indigenious and rightful folk dancers appear *on* the day, not having engaged in self-distrustful preliminary practice.

Partly as novelty but also in itself, the drum and tabor (tabber) accompaniment perfected the grace of the scene and satisfies Henry Peacham's contention in *The Compleat Gentleman* that the musician is a second physician; that his art is a thing which "prolonge l'existence, guérit certaines maladies, rend inoffensive la pique de la tarentule, corrige les défauts de prononciation et remédie au bégaiement chez les enfants."

To see fortunately and delicately executed movements is as true an introduction to the skill of music as one could have. Lost words and airs rediscovered by Cecil Sharp in the Appalachian mountain region repaid him for many endurances and are important for speed-ridden and to some extent coreless modern expertness, reaffirming our belief that delightful manners, conversation, and culture, can exist devoid of opportunity and advantages.

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