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A PROGRESSIVE MONTHLY OF LIFE & LETTERS



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The "Business Side" of Journalism

THE following letter may be regarded as typical of a large number addressed to Mr. Max Pemberton, and it shows that there are many to whom the methods of procedure pursued by the London School of Journalism are still something of a mystery :

"At present I have no idea of how to dispose of work when written, and do not know what kind of article is marketable. I do not know whether this knowledge can be obtained by taking one of your Courses. I have read through the synopsis of the Free-Lance Course and do not gather that the 'business side' of journalism is at all fully dealt with."

The question is a perfectly proper one, and is one which, for the benefit of other readers of THE NORTHERN REVIEW, we will deal with here.

Obviously no course of instruction could be regarded as efficient unless it included full and careful advice and instruction as to how to produce the kind of article or story that is acceptable, and also how to find the right market for the work when it is completed. To teach the new writer how to evolve ideas and how to put them into writing would not do very much if he were to be left "in the air" at this point, for, after all, the disposal of work is the ultimate aim.

The Question of "Guarantees"

The correspondent whose letter is quoted above is quite correct in remarking that the Prospectus of the School does not say a great deal upon this point. The reason is that the Directors of the London School of Journalism are, and always have been, averse from saying anything which might be interpreted as a "guarantee." Guarantees are too freely offered by institutions which possess no visible means of fulfilling their "guarantees." Delusive promises of this kind lead the unwary to suppose that a successful entry into the journalistic profession is a mere matter of paying fees.

Any practising journalist knows that it is far otherwise. Success can be won here—as in any other vocation—only by well-directed effort. Where there is evidence of natural ability and of a desire to work seriously, the London School of Journalism can do all that can be expected of any training institution. There is no need to labour this point, for the School's records furnish ample proof.

But, over and above this, the Directors of Instruction—being successful journalists and story-writers themselves—are able to give their students practical assistance and able advice in disposing of their work. This is what the correspondent (quoted above) refers to as the "business side" of the profession, and it is quite as important as any other phase of the training.

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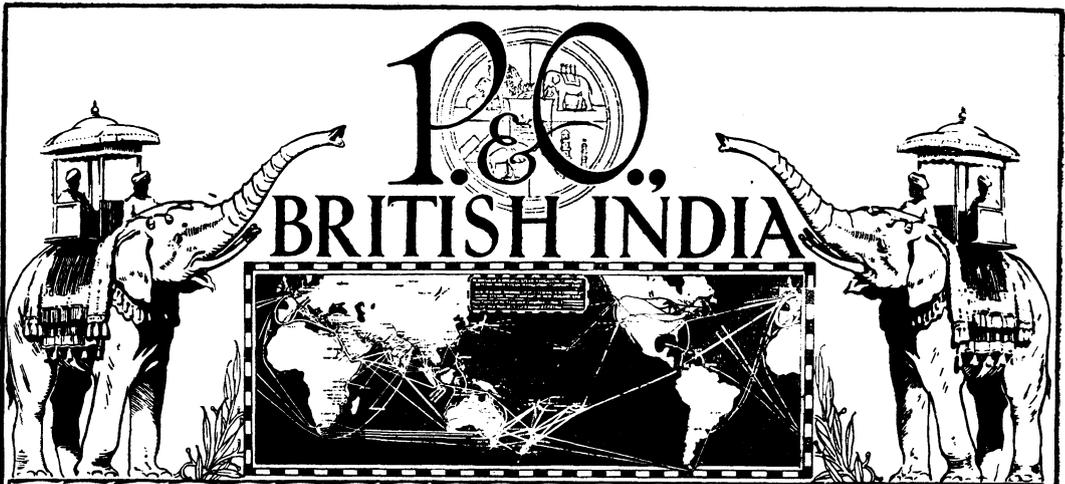
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THE NORTHERN REVIEW

VOL. I.

SEPTEMBER 1924

No. 4

Sir J. M. Barrie and Ourselves

“All good fortune to THE NORTHERN REVIEW. The first two numbers make excellent reading and a credit to Scotland, which surely ought to have such a monthly.”—J. M. BARRIE.

THERE are times when long-suffering editors get a little tired even of the most valuable and best-intentioned criticism, and would be tempted to throw up their tasks altogether were it not for an unreasoned conviction that what they are doing is worth doing. At times like these a little generous word of praise is like a tonic, but when it comes from someone like Sir J. M. Barrie, to whom we look up as one on a great height, and who being a Scot is naturally economical of praise, its effects are only comparable to those of the draught of fire which the gods handed to Tithonus when they cursed him with immortality. We present his verdict and his message with pride, tinged, we hope, with modesty and with perhaps a touch of defiance, because in these days criticism has not been lacking either in volume or in force. For unkindly personal criticism we do not care a jot. The programme which THE NORTHERN REVIEW has set before itself cannot but be unpopular in many quarters where prophets are without honour and nationalism is regarded as a subtle form of ill-breeding. If we had failed to arouse enmity, dislike, and ill-temper, we had failed in our mission as miserably as the gadfly whose equine victim refuses even to twitch. And that kind of criticism, however deplorable as evidence that Scotland's worst foes are they of her own household, has its kindly side in its proof that the anti-Scottish elements—masked, alas, in an exaggeration

of Scottishism as painful and as ridiculous as the Twelfth of August kilts—are sufficiently unsure of their victory to lose their tempers when their title-deeds are impugned.

* * * * *

It is the other criticism—the criticism of friends who are not yet allies—which is disturbing and causes amongst us heartburnings and discussions not, we hope, altogether without result. Some of this criticism is, we feel sure, based on a misunderstanding. It is best illustrated by the reviewer who complained of a lack of unity of aim, and on that we would attempt some observations by way of answer. The criticism, if one pays attention solely to the meaning of words, is entirely pointless, for the aim of THE NORTHERN REVIEW, to create the conditions for and carry through a Scottish literary renaissance—that is, the creation of a literature which in substance and form shall express the Scottish soul and add the essence of Scottishism to the European whole—has been clearly stated from the first number. What our critic means, we fancy, is either that we are losing sight of that aim for others or that we have no clear idea exactly how we are to attain our end.

* * * * *

The former we need not discuss. The latter, if it is what our critic meant, is based on a radical failure to appreciate the facts

of the situation. The difference between the Scottish literary renaissance and other national renaissances of the past is that the others—that is, in cases where it was a renaissance and not a new birth altogether—added a definite literary aim as well as a nationalist one. The road was laid down as well as the goal. The Belgians, for example, sought their revival by the road of naturalism and the Parnasse, and then by that of symbolism. The battle of rival theories came after the renaissance had been accomplished. That is impossible for us. The chaos the war caused in the physical world has been repeated in intenser form in the spiritual, and all our theories and all our forms are either survivals or experiments. Those who retain the old are those whom the war passed over, the shouters on the pavement, the exempted, the wearers of the butchery of their children as if it were a decoration. We others whom the war did touch physically, mentally, morally, are but in process of reconstruction, and what the final forms of it will be, what the final results, we cannot tell.

* * * * *

In literature to-day there is only chaos, with half a hundred prophets shouting their individual way to order. We are not creating definitively, though something of what we do create may turn out to be definitive: we are experimenting. That is the abiding fact of all contemporary literary movements. If it were possible to find a theory of art, let alone Scottish art, under which we might all march as under a banner, it would certainly infuse a unity into THE NORTHERN REVIEW which it undoubtedly lacks; but we are merely at the stage of evolving not a theory but theories. One has only to read carefully these little essays which we publish this month by way of memorial to the great artist who has just left us to realise how individual and how unstable are all our views. Over against the past the future is feeling its way slowly, blindly. It has not arrived, for nothing is more false than to speak of the war as the travail before birth. The war was the culmination that marks an end and a beginning. It was the explosion of tremendous concep-

tion, the final act of a great drama of passion. It is we who survive, we who in the night still glory to be alive, who must bear the agony of waiting and the dread pangs which shall end in deliverance. That there shall be birth we are certain, but we are not certain of its form any more than is the mother of the sex of the child she bears beneath her heart. We imagine, we guess, we hope, but we do not know.

* * * * *

That being so, THE NORTHERN REVIEW opens its pages to writers of any school with any theory of art or of technique, however apparently freakish, so be it they are resolved, in Max Waller's fine phrase, to make literature. Therefore its pages cannot have that unity the absence of which may be charged against it. It is a battleground, and the more bitter the battle, the harder the blows, the more evident friend from foe, the more shall we believe that out of battle shall come achievement. In the meantime we fight each for his own hand, for there is no more unity on the editorial board than in these pages—a sign of life, we take it, despite the critics. Shall we write in the vernacular, and, if so, what vernacular; shall we write in English; shall we write in a language of our own? Shall we seek new forms, new technique; shall we abide by the old; shall we modify what forms we know? Shall we be as far as possible independent; shall we admit influences; what influences shall we admit and what reject? Shall we seek a mystical Scotland greater and grander than all the parts and feelings and traditions that go to make our land what she is; shall we exploit regionalism; shall we reject our land altogether and create something so new and so different as to be universal? Shall we be Parnassians or symbolists, naturalists or romanticists, vorticists, cubists, Dadaists, impressionists, explosionists, paroxyists; shall we be none of these, all of these, more than these? Shall we turn to epic or to lyric, to verse drama or to prose drama; shall we evolve a new form unapprehended of any before us, which, as none other can, shall express the Scot that is in us? We do not

know and at the same time are very certain, and so go on creating until we shall have convinced others. Will the critic be satisfied with this explanation of the contradictions which disturbed him? We have our individual views strongly held, but we are willing to be convinced that you cannot found a literature upon them, and so, while we deliriously bang the heads of those who fail to agree with us, we are no whit indisposed to receive the salutary bang in return, believing that out of prolonged interchange of bangs truth may come. Consequently, it would have been a sign of grace in our critic had he but recognised that the direct negative of one article to another and the apparent inconsequence of a third was not evidence of editorial incompetence but of excess of editorial virtue, in that those who are responsible for *THE NORTHERN REVIEW* think, without being besought by the bowels of Christ, that it is not without the bounds of possibility that they may be mistaken.

* * * * *

It is just possible that these words may have their meaning to some who are our natural allies. It is conceivable—it is almost invariably urged against a new movement—that to some *THE NORTHERN REVIEW* may appear to be the organ of a coterie. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are,

after all, but two classes of writing: there is literature and there is non-literature. So far as is possible non-literature will be excluded from this review. Bad literature may be admitted with the good, either because its badness is merely a matter of opinion or because the good is not to hand; but it will be literature. Of non-literature, the good, the indifferent, the bad, none, if we can help it, though the disguises of the Evil One are many and ingenious, shall be admitted. Deceptions probably will occur, but the ideal remains; and because it does remain we do not merely welcome, we invite, those whose aims are ours to come in with us. For a literary renaissance there are two essentials—writers and readers. If they cannot help as the one, these friends of ours, they can as the other, for a renaissance without a public is like a sun without a sky. It is for this reason we have sought to cover many fields in our contents in a strictly literary interpretation of the Pauline maxim—with such reservations as that fierce little apostle doubtless made inside the bald head that affrighted Rome—and as time goes on we hope to cover the entire intellectual field of Scottish interests—political, literary, artistic—without any regard whatever to the Mesopotamian qualities of the word unity, but hoping in each case to bring to them the spirit of the future as well as of the past.

Joseph Conrad

THE death of Joseph Conrad has removed one who, with the exception of Mr. Hardy, was the greatest literary figure in England. Neglected at the time when he was writing what many hold to be his greatest work, and a literary lion when he was writing what many hold to be inferior work, he cannot yet be placed either in regard to literature or his own age. He held no creed nor founded any school, yet at the same time had a far-reaching influence on the men who followed him in time, an influence under which the youngest, and of those some had felt it most, were becoming restive. In the following essays we have collected the views of some representative writers of young Scotland, thus providing not merely a memorial to a great writer but an interesting study of tendencies.

An Artist in Grey

BY SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS, BART.

HAPPENING to meet "Taffrail" (Commander H. T. Dorling) at dinner in Edinburgh not long ago, I took occasion to ask him which of all our sea-novelists he thought the best. How well do I recall his hearty and emphatic answer, "Conrad every time!" There could be no possible doubt about that. Nor, seeing that I had mentioned Captain Marryat, Fenimore Cooper, George Cupples, R. H. Dana, Clark Russell, and one or two more, could any possible competitor have been overlooked. As the praise of one who has himself won laurels in the same field, I venture to consider that opinion as of great interest. And I was glad to remember that, having been called upon to respond for Literature at a recent dinner of the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club, I had myself presumed to place Conrad, next to Hardy, at the head of contemporary novelists writing in English. Next after Hardy, I say; but *proximus longo inter-*

vallo. Yet the great gap, if I may put it that way, was not entirely Conrad's fault, for I had not read and reread all his work, as I had done Hardy's. Nor, to my own individual temperament, is his talent wholly congenial. I shall presume here to state my private reactions from it with the utmost candour. If I cannot obtain the praise of discrimination, my honesty shall at least be unimpeachable!

In Conrad's work, then, I recognise the perfect expression of a very striking and original talent. And on these grounds I would place him above all contemporary English novelists that I know of, except Hardy. But if the question be whether I delight in his work, then I can answer yes, only with serious modifications. And for the following reasons. There is a sense, of course, in which all fine and accomplished art is delightful. It commands our respect and admiration as the consummated work of a fine mind, a consecrated and divinely materialised experience, a recognisable addition to the accumulated treasures of the human race. And the self-appointed critic is apt to flatter himself that a lifelong traffic in the works of the greatest writers will enable him sooner or later to identify such work as merits this praise. Beyond that point temperament steps in, and where temperament steps in I am fain to confess that to the Hispano-Scot who grasps this pen the work of that illustrious Pole seems dreary and unsatisfying. Grandly unsatisfying, if you will; dreary in the artistic sense in which Mr. Walter de la Mare's *The Riddle* is dreary. But dreary and unsatisfying for all that!

It may be that early up-bringing has a good deal to do with this. For, as scions of a naval stock and sons of an enthusiastic yachtsman, my brothers and I had been brought up to believe that the sea-life was before all things jolly. We had giggled over Mr. Chucks, the boatswain, and revelled in the rich humour of *Tom Cringle's Log*, long

before we left a private school. And, next to pervading jollity, adventure, strenuous but at bottom delightful, characterised the seaman's life as it had been represented to us, say, by W. H. Kingston and R. M. Ballantyne. But from sea-life according to Joseph Conrad, jollity has been eliminated; whilst such sea-adventures as we encounter, for example, in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Typhoon*, *Youth*, *The Shadow Line*, are as destitute of delightfulness as they are brimful of grimness and austerity. Now sea-life may have undergone modifications, or Conrad may be a truth-teller and the other writers flatterers. As a landsman I cannot pretend to pronounce judgment as to this. But, with due allowance made for novelistic convention, I can as little bring myself to believe that the truth is wholly and exclusively upon his side.

Still, the more crucial aspect of the question is, as I have already indicated, the racial one. Do you give your heart to Sienkiewicz among writers, or to Epstein or Mestrovics among artists? If you do, then I can understand your fanaticism for Conrad. For myself, I do not so give my heart, and a temperament which sees the world exclusively in greys, or hears it solely in the minor key, can never be among those which most powerfully appeal to me. I demand sunlight, colour, passion, laughter and joy. And these, so far as I know him—and that, I have admitted, is imperfectly—Conrad persistently denies me. He gives me beauty—much moonlight beauty; and heroism—an iron, joyless, stoic heroism. And for these with bowed head I thank him. And he has also given me a new sensation—"new shudder," should I say?—in art. And for this I thank him no less. But his work can never satisfy my sense of what great writing should be. And mainly for this reason: because it is not *central*; by which I mean that (so far as I know it) it has never seemed to me to touch the core of normal human life, to paint in new and striking colours the deepest passions of common men and women. Conrad may have been an unprecedented and profoundly interesting personality, as he certainly was a highly gifted and highly individual artist. But he never came anywhere near writing a

Trumpet Major or *Return of the Native*. Hardy reigns in a much higher circle of the literary heaven than does he!

The Rhythm of Conrad

By J. M. BULLOCH

THE appreciation of Conrad is one of the most inspiring facts in the literature of today, because he appeals to a very high standard both in point of matter and manner, and the fact that he should have attracted so large and so appreciative an audience is proof positive that good work tells. For myself, the most interesting aspect of Conrad is the complete rhythm of his work both in point of its insight into life and its style. I know few books in which these two streams of tendency are more perfectly linked than in the *Nigger of the Narcissus*, where from first to last one has the sense of the dominating power of the sea, just as in the *Ancient Mariner*, and there is the cadence of waves in its very sentences. In point of mere story, I can well understand how Conrad's appeal may fail, but for those who wish to look beneath the surface of things, and who have an ear for beautiful prose, there has been no modern writer like him, for unlike some stylists he gives you no suggestion of conscious effort. It is perfectly marvellous to think that he achieved his position from a purely foreign origin. It was as if he were able to stand aloof on Polish soil and hear our language spoken as none of us who were born to speak it can ever hope to hear it.

The Conscientious Artist

By EDWIN MUIR

JOSEPH CONRAD is dead. Everything he wrote, the whole character of his life, had austerity, and that demands from us now a certain measure in finding words to convey our sense of our loss. That loss has been primarily a loss to literature, how great one cannot yet say; but it has been also a loss to an entity which has never had any great

strength in this country, even among writers : the artistic conscience. Conrad has typified for the past two decades more singlemindedly than any other novelist in England the conscience of the artist, the artist's devotion. And his part has not been without heroism, for to persist in a pure fidelity to art one requires perseverance as well as passion, and above all the habitude, which in Conrad must have been confirmed during his life at sea, for hanging on after everything seems lost. He brought to the service of his craft a seriousness about art which was not English, along with a sailor-like toughness which was ; and during his life as a writer he needed both. He loved and admired the English ; he became English by conviction ; and it is a consolation to reflect now on looking back that among the people he adopted he won the recognition he deserved.

He enriched English literature with a dozen novels in which his genius shone uncertainly, and with two or three in which it burned steadily, as it should. He had reached the fullness probably of his powers before he died, and it would be absurd to waste on his death the pathos which we give to those who die before they have realised themselves. He himself would not have wished it. At his best, his work had the exactitude which is the mark of the artist who is not only born but has become—not without a discipline which is like a punishment—what he is. In spite of his Slavonic intuition and his English temper, he probably owed more lessons in art to the French than to any other race ; and he learned from Flaubert how to pick out of a multitudinous anarchy of words gestures and situations exactly those which expressed what he wanted. But his unconscious artistry was as mighty as his conscious ; he could evoke as well as describe ; and his evocations had occasionally a splendour which outshone any of his contemporaries. His descriptions of the sea are among the greatest ; in these he is second only to a writer who can hardly ever be surpassed, Hermann Melville. And his conception of life, sad but fortifying, was more profound than that of any other writer of his generation.

In that conception of life there was a striking fusion of the Slavonic and the English temperament, of melancholy and pragmatism. There was one question finally in all his novels, and he answered it always a little unwillingly : the question whether, with his back to the wall—the normal human position, as Conrad saw it—a man should fight or surrender. And his reply, although almost grudgingly given, was completely clear, for the question is one which puts a man's back to the wall : one must fight. One must be an optimist—if this is optimism—simply because there is nothing else to be done. But—here the originality and austerity of Conrad's mind were revealed—one does not fight in order to make progress, for there is, perhaps, not such a thing as progress. No, the best one can do is to preserve what one has, and to keep at bay—till a certain moment—the concealed defeat, the relief, perhaps, which waits for us all. Conrad's conception of life was that of a seaman, but of one who deliberately saw and counted all the perils which surrounded him. And he concluded, not unlike some of the Greeks, that we can keep our ship seaworthy, and fare for a while over the jaws of destruction, but that some day these jaws must close and munch up the boat and ourselves. Yet he did not count this, after regarding it steadily, as any reason why we should despair. Certainly this immense fact defined the limits of the serious game of living ; but, keeping it in his mind, he was endlessly interested in the rules which lay within these given bounds ; and the questions which concerned him most and out of which he drew a high satisfaction, were whether in our perilous voyage we captain our ships faithfully, stand our watches, and take the proper measures in times of peril, neither tempting nor running away from fate. His philosophy was a sort of workmanlike stoicism. He put little store on faith, which to him was a concealed abnegation of responsibility ; but he put all the more on fidelity, the fulfilment of men's obligations to their fellows and to nature, the most shining virtue to him of all those which men possess. Thus, fidelity was to him in the end—as it had necessarily to be—a point of

honour rather than an injunction of morality : the one essential thing between men and devouring chaos.

The philosophy which found this apparently irrefutable conclusion was not a supremely great philosophy, for it was without joy, without the power to satisfy the human spirit when it is most free ; but it was the philosophy of a profound observer of life. It no longer satisfies us ; perhaps nothing can. Conrad has less significance, let it be admitted, for this generation than he had for the last ; he represents the end of a tradition rather than the beginning of what will become one. But he was always an honourable and sometimes a great artist ; and English letters will be left infinitely poorer by his loss.

Dreamer, Aristocrat, and Artist

By WILLIAM POWER

THE man of letters, if he is worth his salt, is the ideal democrat, untainted by snobbery or provincialism. In his intercourse with his fellow-creatures he is free from any consciousness of conventional distinctions. But he is the perfect democrat because he is also the perfect aristocrat. He does not figure in "Fashionable Intelligence" or in the photographs of point-to-point races. But his social leadership is secretly acknowledged by the noisiest bagman and the most egregious of female "climbers," and where he sits is the head of the table.

This duality of literary genius is unmistakably expressed in two of the best photographs of Conrad I have seen. One of them is reproduced in Grant Overton's *American Nights Entertainment*, the other was taken by Messrs. Annan, of Glasgow, when Conrad visited that city last year on his way to America. The face is not only that of a great artist, but also of a great man who has lived and thought and known. Wistful humility and a sensitive pride are ineffably blended in every feature ; the profoundly considering look from beneath those long,

heavy eyelids is that of an "eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality." More emphatically than Carlyle, or even than Flaubert, Conrad is the essential aristocrat.

Had he not been that, British journalists would not have been in such a quandary when the news of his death came. The main facts of the formative period of action and adventure that preceded his literary period were more or less well known, but sequence and detail were lacking ; it was impossible to say at what exact time he passed from the French to the British merchant service, where precisely the Congo experiences came in, and of what nature they were. Not that Conrad set any particular value upon privacy and reticence. He has written direct autobiography, and all his books are in a very real sense autobiographical. But though—or because—a realist of the order of Flaubert, striving ever to "sink the intellect in the object," Conrad never gives us the mere formal actuality of his experiences. He sublimates all his impressions. They emerge from the alembic of his mind more real than life itself, or at least than the life of which most of us are conscious ; but they emerge as an integral part of Conrad's own mind, stamped with his intellectual personality, and bright with the intense but unearthly light of dreamland. The essential element is not in this or that episode or phenomenon. We are seldom conscious of any deliberate selection. His themes are often, I believe, accidental or casual. It is in the associative development that the genius lies. He is like a great composer who gives out a random phrase, scarcely recognisable as a "tune," repeats it, varies it, inverts it, loads it with haunting and majestic harmonies, and brings in by degrees the whole of the orchestra, until the phrase stands out as something inevitable, unforgettable, and infinitely evocative. Emotional complexity firmly based upon emotional simplicity : that is Beethoven's way, and it is Conrad's. "Those who read me," he said, "know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests only on a few very simple ideas—so simple that they must be as old as the hills."

There are only two flaws in Conrad's record: his share in the Carlist rising, and the influence of Henry James upon his later style. Both are reflected in what some critics persist in regarding as his greatest book. That a Pole should have had any sympathy with a belated piece of Charlie-over-the-water-ism is to me inexplicable. The Carlist episode, however, was only a boyish adventure. It was not in any sense an outcome of the aristocratic strain in Conrad. Where that strain expressed itself was in his general outlook upon life. The fertile union of dreamer and aristocrat in him made him a great literary artist. By an impulse that explains much of history, the dreamy spirit nurtured by the Sarmatian plain transferred itself to the freer plain of ocean, and plunged him into a life of adventure and action. He absorbed romance at every pore, without the slightest ulterior notion of making literary use of it. The nucleus of artistic creation was his aristocratic power of intense absorption and of self-command. "I have a positive horror," he wrote, "of losing even for one moving moment that full possession of myself which is the first condition of good service." He has no use for ideologues and "artless moralists" like Rousseau. "Inspiration comes from the earth, which has a past, a history, a future, not from the cold and immutable heaven." "Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life." "Let me only find the right word." In such expressions, and in the whole spirit and trend of Conrad's work, one finds this combination, so rare in English literature, and in sea literature unique, of dreamer, aristocrat, and painstaking artist. The quiet "bigness" of the man displayed itself in his dealings with his publishers and in his lavish use of the material painfully garnered in his seafaring period. "Understanding" is the note of all his writings. Understanding lies at the back of the gentle disdainfulness and the wistful melancholy in that fascinating photograph of Joseph Conrad.

Matthew Arnold declared of Shakespeare that he saw life steadily and saw it whole. No one ever saw life whole, of course. But a few people, like Chaucer, Shakespeare,

Goethe, do see a good deal of it and see it steadily. Conrad was unquestionably one of those few. He saw nothing but cruel and absurd contradictions in the ethical view of the universe. But to him the visions of the universe itself seemed a moral end in themselves. "The unwearied self-forgetful attention to every phase of the living universe reflected in our consciousness may be our appointed task on this earth—a task in which fate has perhaps engaged nothing of us except our conscience, gifted with a voice in order to give true testimony to the visible wonder, the haunting terror, the infinite passion, and the illimitable serenity; to the supreme law and the abiding mystery of the sublime spectacle."

We have heard much from pulpits about the religion of Shakespeare, Burns, "R.L.S.," and other untheological writers. No parson hard up for a subject is likely to fix on "The Religion of Joseph Conrad." Nevertheless, the confession of faith set down in *A Personal Record*, supported as it is by those remarkable "works," is quite good enough for most of us to go on with. Simplicity, sympathy, humility, self-respect, thoroughness, industry, undeviating fidelity to the inward vision of the external universe—these virtues of a great artist are really the great essential virtues of life. By his notable exemplification of them Conrad has definitely raised the standard of English literature.

A Critical Estimate

BY C. M. GRIEVE

ARNOLD BENNETT, in his capacity of "Jacob Tonson," noted as far back as 1910 that Conrad's turn had come, remarking that in every generation our British dilettanti of letters "select some artist, usually for reasons quite unconnected with art, and put him exceedingly high up in a niche by himself, and when you name his name you must hush your voice, and discussion ends. Thus in the present generation, in letters, they have selected Joseph Conrad, a great artist, but not the only artist on the island. When

Conrad is mentioned, they say, 'Ah, Conrad' and bow the head. . . ." Conrad's selection was an unexpected turn of the wheel of fortune: a saltatory (if quite salutary) development. A couple of years earlier Bennett had had to complain that a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* "has the strange effrontery to select Mr. Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agent* as an example of modern ugliness in fiction: a novel that is simply steeped in the finest beauty from end to end," and that he classified Conrad (really a genuine creative force) with mere dignified unimportant sentimentalisers like Mr. W. B. Maxwell. Bennett's, too, was the aside "if Joseph Conrad is one Pole, Marie Corelli is surely the other," and he it was also (busy man!) who, in his diverting analysis of an *Athenæum* review to which I turned instinctively soon after I read the news of Conrad's death, quoted the priceless regret "that the author does not give us more of the sea in his work," and the almost—equally—ineffable declaration that "upon the whole we do not think that the short story represents Mr. Conrad's true *métier*." "It may be," was Bennett's comment, "that Mr. Conrad's true *métier* was, after all, that of an auctioneer; but, after *Youth*, *To-morrow*, *Typhoon*, *Karain*, *The End of the Tether*, and half a dozen other mere masterpieces, he may congratulate himself on having made a fairly successful hobby of the short story. . . ." It was not, in fact, till the publication of *Chance* in 1914 that his popularity became really assured. He did not bow the knee to Baal. It cannot really be counted against him as evidence of even the slightest and most involuntary genuflection that he wrote articles—exceedingly infrequently—for the *Daily Mail* from 1907 onwards. They are practically the only articles of the very slightest literary merit that have ever appeared in the *Daily Mail*; and stuff of equal quality would scarcely be likely to secure publication under its present management. Witness the appallingly bad "War Anniversary" supplement the other week. Conrad was trying to complete an article for that paper on the day of his death. If it had been intended for the supplement in ques-

tion it would have been well to have had it alongside the others as a final example of an uncommon integrity. In an article on music the other day, Mr. Ernest Newman, commenting on ultra-modern composers and the promenade concerts, observed that "the only remedy seems to be for composers to write better music; and by better music I mean music that is not merely theoretically but practically good." The truth about Conrad is that he combined theoretical and practical goodness in about as fair proportions as can be expected, taking all things into consideration.

But what play could not "Jacob Tonson" make to-day with such statements as that "his fame, though it came tragically late, is firmly based as that of Meredith or Hardy" (a true enough statement, I fear, but one which means for me just the opposite of what its writer intended); the fact that he was perhaps the only living author who has had his title-pages forged and the figures fetched by first editions of his works; and the naïve reiteration of amazement that he should have begun writing at a comparatively late age, that he should have acquired so great a mastery of English, and that he should have devised so complex and accomplished a technique. . . . It is the same kind of people for the most part who are writing to-day of Conrad as were writing of him in the *Athenæum* or *Edinburgh Review*, or simply not writing about him anywhere, in 1908 or thereabouts; and though to-day they are wholly appreciative whereas then they were captious, they are no less egregious and inept than ever.

Conrad knew them. One of the things that endowed him with the necessary perseverance to wait for the sort of success that other elements in his work rendered inevitable sooner or later, was his curiously English attitude to letters.

Literary creation being only one of the legitimate forms of human activity (he wrote) has no value but on the condition of not excluding the fullest recognition of all the more distinct forms of action. The mass of verse and prose may glimmer here and there with the glow of a divine spark, but in the sum of human effort it has no special importance.

There is no justificative formula for its existence any more than for any other artistic achievement. With the rest of them it is destined to be forgotten, without, perhaps, leaving the faintest trace. . . . To have the gift of words is no such great matter. A man furnished with a long-range weapon does not become a hunter or a warrior by the mere possession of a fire-arm; many other qualities of character and temperament are necessary to make him either one or the other. Of him from whose armoury of phrases one in a hundred thousand may perhaps hit the far-distant and elusive mark of art I would ask that in his dealings with mankind he should be capable of giving a tender recognition to their obscure virtues. I would not have him impatient with their small failings and scornful of their errors. I would not have him expect too much gratitude from that humanity whose fate, as illustrated in individuals, it is open to him to depict as ridiculous or terrible. I would wish him to look with a large forgiveness at men's ideas and prejudices, which are by no means the outcome of malevolence, but depend on their education, their social status, even their professions. The good artist should expect no recognition of his toil and no admiration of his genius, because his toil can with difficulty be appraised and his genius cannot possibly mean anything to the illiterate who, even from the dreadful wisdom of their evoked dead, have, so far, culled nothing but inanities and platitudes. . . .

Admirable sentiments which completely justified our British dilettanti in their selection of Conrad! His extraordinary conservatism made him—alas, only—what he was. In his seascapes Conrad is second only to Hermann Melville—but how far second he is even in that, and to mention him alongside Melville in any respect that does not involve that particular comparison is a *faux pas* of the same type as to bracket Mr. W. B. Maxwell with him. Conrad was always on the side of the angels: too circumspect, limited, and essentially timid to have and seek to convey, as Melville did, any sense of the inevitable and utter disaster of the good and the fitness of it. He could conjure up almost everything that the sea has to show to the souls of men; but even his most haunting effects lack the subtle movements of the "white whale" which should have transpired as their ultimate

meaning. He was a world-ranger, but he never moved in the direction which would have brought his gifts to a subtler and worthier task than he ever conceived of—the direction Melville had traversed in silence for a whole decade when he wrote

That which we seek and shun is there—
Man's final lore.

Compare the end of these two men. Of Melville it has been said: "Nobody understood *Pierre*; apparently nobody had even a glimmering understanding of it. And the thirty-five years of silence began. . . . Nor is it to be wondered at that the scattered work of Melville's final period was neglected. He himself cannot have expected it otherwise. It never has been otherwise. Men who are driven by their genius along the lonely road, who suffer in their struggle to comprehend the universe, as the Swede in *Clarel* suffered,

gusts of lonely pain
Beating upon the naked brain,

are not, and do not expect to be, understood. They understand." And of Conrad I have just read: "He came to the practice of letters in the prime of life, still a beginner, and every book since then has seen him gain in simplicity of phrase, in economy of matter, in directness and in mastery." A testimonial to a diligent and apt apprentice, rather than a verdict on a genius!

I think that I have read everything that Conrad has written, and always with pleasure. There are not so many contemporary writers in the world of his calibre and above it that a reasonably omnivorous reader cannot read all that they write. But I do not think that anything he has written will live very long, or has been of prime consequence at any time. Hermann Melville's *Moby Dick*, *Pierre*, *Billy Budd*, and *Clarel*, are only now being "understood": Conrad's work contains nothing that will begin to come into its own thirty or forty years hence. We have it all now. We are, and have all along been, grateful for it, such as it is, which is by no means to belittle it; but that Conrad's integrity should require our commendation is less creditable to him than condemnatory of most of his contemporaries, that his vogue

has been welcome less of a tribute to him than an apprehension as to whom the dilettanti might have chosen if Conrad had not been there to enable them to effect so comparatively happy a compromise. But Conrad is of no account at all compared with Mr. Joyce and Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and . . . I feel that he might have been, if he had not been so afraid to appear *en pantoufles*; if he had not permitted himself to be so mistakenly overimpressed by Henry James and abstained like him so consistently from attempting the impossible; and if he had not, rather than *épater le bourgeois*, identified himself so all-too-completely with them, their fate being poignant, intensely interesting, and of not the slightest consequence. Certainly the effect of his philosophy of life on his work has been to make it just these three things.

The Pioneer

By WILLIAM JEFFREY

AT intervals during his prancing about upon the works of celebrated authors, Mr. Mencken sometimes leaves off being a mountebank and gives utterance to an illuminating truth. Upon one of these occasions he has said of Conrad's novels, "They are not novels but metaphysical sonatas."

The clear atmosphere of intellectual detachment that envelops the best of Conrad's work had its origin in two things. The first was racial and circumstantial. Conrad thought out his work in Polish or French, the languages of his race, and gave it literary expression in English, a language he acquired in manhood. Such a process is one of distillation: the crude facts are purified in the crucible of one tongue before they are absorbed into the form of another, and only qualities of purity can result from that. The second cause of clarity and detachment is a fact of literary style. Marcel Proust has said that writers of the Flaubertian type—and Conrad was one—completely sink the intellect in the object. The style accruing from that habit is clear and flexible: hard as

a diamond, yet pliable as a snake. In the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* Conrad expressed his conscious aim as a literary artist in one illuminating sentence. "My task," he wrote, "which I am trying to achieve, is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see." That is, Conrad's aim as a writer was to create in the mind's eye a concrete image of a particular part of the material world at a particular time and accompanied by a particular set of emotions. His style, therefore, was slow and deliberate. Like his narrator Marlow in *Lord Jim*, Conrad in effect said, "I am trying to interpret for you into slow speech the instantaneous effect of visual impressions." Mr. W. B. Yeats begins the first of his marvellous plays for dancers, *At the Hawk's Well*, with the same purpose—

I call to the eye of the mind
A well long choked up and dry . . .
A man climbing up to a place
The salt sea wind has swept bare.

It is such elements of language and style that contribute to the "metaphysical" quality of Conrad's novels. The "musical" (sonata) element in the novels is harder to define. It is linked up with the metaphysical, and the metaphysical with it. In music every minutest part of time, every nook and cranny, is filled with sound, is explored by sound. Now every nook and cranny of the souls of his favourite seamen was explored by Conrad, and he recorded his explorations in a manner resembling that of a film-photograph of events. A series of separate impressions is fused into a concrete whole. Some of the impressions, such as the state of mind of the crew of the "Narcissus" when that ship lay upon her beam ends at the complete mercy of the storm, when considered apart from the story as a whole reveal Conrad as a pioneer in modern methods of writing prose fiction. In such places the minds of the characters switch off from the events at hand to memories of past experiences, and for a moment or two the pen of the novelist follows these memories. Mr. Joyce has carried this method of treatment,

first effectively used in English fiction by Conrad, to its ultimate end in *Ulysses*. Conrad's style, however, was always smooth, like the development of a theme by Tchaikowski or like the long billows of the sea; while Mr. Joyce's style is staccato, like the buzz-buzz of the Morse wireless code.

As illustrating the "musical" and "metaphysical" manner of Conrad's best tales, consider *Heart of Darkness*, one of the great landmarks in modern fiction. In that story the Thames and the African river are treated like two musical themes interwoven by a composer. The Thames is symbolic of modern civilisation, and the African waterway of prehistoric savage life; and in the developing of these themes Conrad revealed more powerfully perhaps than anywhere else the acute metaphysical and artistic qualities of his mind. As Marlow stands upon the deck of the "Nellie" in the estuary of the Thames he thinks of all that the river had seen from earliest Briton times, down past the heroic Elizabethan age, down to the present day. The Thames is a symbol of evolution. But when Marlow is sailing into the heart of the African jungles on board a flimsy river steamer he sees himself plunging backwards into prehistoric ages. The cannibal tribes who inhabit the weird wet forests are his forefathers. Thus the African river has become a symbol of involution—a plunging backwards by the mind into long-past time. In his treatment of these two themes of evolution and involution Conrad is a modern of the moderns. Quite recently Mr. F. V. Branford gave poetic form to these themes in his remarkable poem, *The White Stallion*. Conrad's story, moreover, may be considered the fountainhead of the work of Mr. D. H. Laurence, who has but plunged deeper than Conrad into the subconscious mind of the individual and the race. The dead master kept as clear-sighted as Ulysses in matter of form and expression; the living disciple broke himself into fragments on Circe's island and spends his time endeavouring to reassemble them.

Tchaikowski's "Pathétique" symphony ends with a suggestion of complete annihilation. Broken wings of utter desolation lie

across the breast of the world. The Russian musician was a nihilist. Conrad, on the other hand, was a tragedian: from his work we obtain no suggestion of a philosophy of annihilation. Conrad believed, as for that problematical period of time that the human race shall endure, in the immortality of nature and the immortality of human virtues. These immortalities emerge out of all disasters. Conrad obtained his tragic effects by making emerge from feelings of safety a sense of fear and of ultimate catastrophe. Before the "Patna," for example, sprung a leak, Jim, "on the bridge, was penetrated by the great certitude of unbounded safety and peace that could be read on the silent aspect of nature like the certitude of fostering love upon the placid tenderness of a mother's face." Like a stroke of lightning, peril and disaster soon shattered that illusion of safety. Yet out of such disasters, however desolating they be, emerges belief in the immortalities, and it is that very belief that raises Conrad's tales of disaster to the high level of tragedy.

The Simplicity of Conrad

BY GEORGE RESTON MALLOCH

CIRCUMSTANCES make it impossible to offer anything but the most hurried comment on an event so lamentable to all concerned with literature as the death of Conrad. It may therefore be excusable to attempt nothing more than a note upon one of the many impressions made upon the writer by his work.

A certain unquestioning simplicity is a quality of all true genius. The man of genius might be likened to a rustic wandering amazed through the streets of London, agape before the wonders of the town, half-stunned by the noise of the roaring streets, astounded by the streaming crowds, eager to fix all in his memory that the wonders may be told to the neighbours in some far-away village. He is sent into the world with a mind simple enough to be astonished and dismayed, to tremble before beauty, to pause attentive before the hackneyed routine of day and

night: he will pick trodden things from the dust and marvel at them; stand, while we are hurrying from one distraction to another, to admire a sunset; rise, while we sleep, for the mere sake of the dawn. What distinguishes him from other simple minds is that he has the gift of expressing all his wonder in words. We are his village neighbours, and willy-nilly he will tell us of the marvels we have never seen, though we, too, may have passed in the midst of them.

Conrad has always seemed to me to have this quality of divine simplicity in a very high degree, so much so that the first page of his *I read* marked him off to me as belonging to the ranks of great genius. For all the most ornate and complicated passages in his descriptive work are so obviously the reaction of externals common enough not to move our blunter perceptions at all upon a mind simple enough to be surprised and moved by them. Like the rustic who will stop on the crowded pavement to count the windows of a great building, Conrad must have paused on his quarter-deck to note every aspect of a gale, catalogue mentally its sounds, its effects on ship and canvas, the shapes, colours, and motions of the waves. To the average sophisticated sailor this was a gale and nothing more: to the simple mind something to be marvelled at, explored, committed to memory for the benefit of those who must listen to the tale of miracle.

When he looked at his fellows the same thing happened. A drunken sailor, we might say, a dago, a smart officer, a girl, and go upon our way. Not so the simple mind: once he has looked at the girl attentively she appears to him as a marvel, a thing of strange complexities, of beauties of shape or thought that can only be captured by long waiting for an attitude or a mood, but worth waiting for; the drunken sailor has a strange, shy soul that looks furtively out of his bleared eyes and can be seen if one is patient; the half-breed is a disorganised musical box in which rival tunes jangle with each other at the impulse of a relentless hand—a hand of which, too, a glimpse may reward patience; and the smart officer, regarded attentively, may be Nero, Hamlet, and Christ in one. At

least so he tells us, and we being his villagers, though we count ours a sophisticated village, must believe.

In his own words, "It is better for mankind to be impressionable than reflective." And again, "Nothing humanly good has come from reflection." Naturally such sayings, taken from their obvious and implied context, may be twisted to a meaning other than they were intended to bear. But when we come down to Conrad's own words about himself, what do we find? "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a very few simple ideas." Again, "It must not be supposed that I claim for the artist in fiction the freedom of modern Nihilism. I would require from him many acts of faith, of which the first would be the cherishing of an undying hope; and hope, it will not be contested, implies all the effort of piety and renunciation. It is the God-sent form of trust in the magic force and inspiration belonging to the life of this earth. We are inclined to forget that the way of excellence is in the intellectual, as distinguished from emotional, humility. What one feels so hopelessly barren in declared pessimism is just its arrogance."

Perhaps it is worth while recording, at a moment when the subtlest critical minds must inevitably be busy with the task of reading their own subtleties into his work, that behind the wonderful and harmonious patterns of word and thought woven by an artist artistically conscious to his finger tips, there wrought a mind that turned away from arrogance and refused to entangle itself in fantastic philosophies but stood grounded on fact and on what Carlyle termed the Eternal Verities. There is a mean simplicity and a grand simplicity: Conrad's life and attitude to life were as grandly simple as truth.

By a curious coincidence our esteemed French contributor, Professor Denis Saurat, chose for his subject this month the subject of this symposium. Our readers will, we have no doubt, be more than usually interested in this appreciation which appears farther on in this issue.

Between Headlands

By N. M. GUNN

TO the naked eye the wall of sea-cliff stretched unbroken from headland to headland—dark, gaunt, forbidding. We had come under the lee of the land to drop anchor, and the drifter now rode nodding to the slow, sleepy rhythm of the sea. Sitting aft beside Rab, who was using his needle expertly on a torn herring-net, I felt about us the bare greyness of that land in the still afternoon as a glamour of remote, austere things, and the sea's murmurous searching of the rocks was a monotone haunting, elemental.

"Ye widna think frae here," said Rab, breaking the spell of quiet, "that there wis ae single harbour i' a' that stretch. Yet it's nae sae lang syne that scores an' scores o' boats fished oot o't here an' there."

Crossing over from the opposing shore of the Firth and before closing with the rocks, we had indeed observed the "faults" that were the fishing-creeks of Rab's implication. And now this sense of foregone human activity touched the mood of the place with something inexplicably heroic.

One could have sat and got lost in the sea's rhythm and had the feel of ebb and flow in far-off human things, the far-off things that yet are near as one's own emotions and as poignant, with a subtle touching of strange human chords and sudden visualisings of figures moving in and out the grey web of their destiny. For grey were the weather-naked rocks at hand; and the weather-worn, treeless land, foreshortening to our approach, had been grey enough in the quiet, slanting light.

But it was in Rab's mind to tell something, and, as though I had detected in his voice a note touched to memoried reflection by the sombre aspect of the cliffs themselves, it was suddenly in my mind to listen.

The story he told was of an old couple who had come from no one knew where to end their days near his own home on the southern

shore of the Firth. To all appearance they had their "puckle money pit by," and in the calm of life were devoted to each other in that simple, undemonstrative way that is felt by neighbours rather than seen. Soon, however, the sense of mystery deepened, for gossip "maun aye hae its clishmaclavers," and as time went on the rumour "gaed about" that they had come where they had come for "ae reason."

At that he slipped the broad bone needle in his mouth, and carefully but deftly trimmed some broken "masks" of the net with his knife.

"For ae reason," he repeated presently, giving me a quick glance to search my understanding, "an' that wis—tae look on thae hills!"

I followed the jerk of his needle to the southern headland whence long-backed mountains stretched inland, with one dim-blue peak dominant. Questionless my mind hung in a queer state of suspense as though the mountains held a mild virtue of hypnosis. Rab continued.

Of course there was more in it than just that. If they were so fond of looking at "thae hills," why didn't they go to them and live by them—instead of back yonder? Why didn't they? It was a question that to trouble folk. In the long run it was solved. "They daurna gae back. . . ."

Oh, it was "richt enuch." Just before their end the particulars all came out. They had belonged to that land lying beyond the rocks there, as you could tell by the make of them. He was a well-set-up man near to the last, white-bearded, big-boned, strong-faced, with a slow, "quate way wi' im." And his wife was a kindly woman with something fine "about her face." And yet, though they were well-liked and neighbourly, no one ever somehow "daur'd try" take advantage of them, no one ever "spiered them too close."

Ay, that was the great secret of their life :

they belonged to themselves. You could not think of them apart; and you could never think of them any way but with respect, instant respect—"even the loons." But when all the particulars came out, that respect changed to a sort of awe.

It all happened to them before they left their homes there—for as to their after wanderings on the earth's face, till they came to settle finally, no one knew a word. It happened, too, in a way that got him full acquittal. "I heard tell o't a' among the auld folk." It was a long story, but the thread of it was love between them—and another man interfering. The other man was a man bent on his own ends, "an' ae nicht seemin'ly comin' hame frae a fair wi' a gless or twa o' whisky in 'im he laid roch hands on the lassie—an' juist then her ain lad, happenin' by, heard her cryin'." Killing may not have been altogether consciously meant, but "onywey, the man wis picked up fae a feck o' upturned harrows an' auld pleughs deid's a door nail."

Rab fixed a mesh with a couple of hitches, one over, one under.

So you see "they couldna gae back." But they had the cry of the grey land there in them. It was a queer thing how one wandered the earth's face aye carrying the longing to come back to the starting-place. Folk who have "traivelled" say that no place ever has the "feel i' yer marrow" like your birthplace—*whatever* the name of that feeling may go by.

However, all that was not what exactly had come into his mind in starting him off on his story. The thing that was strongest on his mind was the way they died. He could remember so clearly the feelings "about the place for the neist twa three days especial." In whispers folk asked themselves how it came about that he died as he died, "an' coupled the wull o' Gode wi' a starin' thoct i' their minds."

"They hed a bit lassie i' the hoose near the end, an' ae mornin' early she cam' runnin' breathless tae oor door. Up ma faither gaed—an' fun' the auld woman stretched on the floor wi' her heid hard by the hearth-stane. She hed got up tae pit on a bit fire as usual tae mak' a drop tea for hersel' an' the auld man. She aye did it, though by now they were baith gettin' a bit tottery. Weel, whatever way it cam' aboot, whether it wis a stroke or juist a kin' o' dwaum, doon she hed fa'en an' cut her face. She wis onconscious, as ye might say, but no' deid, ma faither jaloused, when he first cam' till her. So wi' the lassie's help he did whit he could.

"Weel, at the time the auld man wis sleepin' by himsel' ben the hoose. Och, he wis as healthy as could be, takin' his meat regular', but sae sair crippled wi' the rheumatics some wee while back that he couldna clim' oot o' bed o' himsel'. In a little, through ma faither gaed. He began tae tell the auld man whit hed happened—but he fun' thae calm, terrible e'en sae glowerin' on 'im that he sort o' stuttered. He saw the stark thoct i' the auld man's face, as though the auld man wis kennin' i' himsel' that ma faither wis stutterin' owre her deith.

"The auld man said nae word; but deliberate-like he juist gaed a hunch owre tae himsel' i' the bed—like this—an' turned his face tae the wa'. That wis at sax o'clock. Ane o' us wis sent hot-fit for the doctor for the auld woman. But the doctor when he cam' at night wis too late. The auld woman hed won awa'. There wis naethin' for them noo but tae gae through an' brak the news tae the auld man."

Rab paused. His blue eyes narrowed and glinted as they searched.

"They fun' 'im wi' his face turned tae the wa'—exac'ly as ma faither hed left him. He wis stane deid."

Prood Maisie

(*Vergil's Second Eclogue.*)

DEAR Maisie, Fine I ken ye dinna heed,
An' tho' I'm like tae dee ye dinna care.
I write you noo while frae the midday glare
The sair-stang stots rin daftlike for the trees,
While drouthy reapers dwalm aneath the
bleeze

O' cloudless sky. The sun's brocht up a haze
That seems tae loup an' trimmle in its rays,
An' I lie bioldily tae scrae this screed
In vain tae you.

Ye maunna think o' lassies, ye're the first.
Is no' Jess bonnie? Tho' ye're fair, she black,
Bluebells hae chairms, they say, the gowans
lack.

Mony's the maid I've met at Kirk an' Fair
That pleased me brawly. Twa or mebbe mair
I ha'e walked oot wi'. Need ye be sae high?
Ye've never even spiered whit I've laid by.
Shairly, o' a' highminded dames, the worst
Is saucy you.

I'm no' illmade masel'. I'm neyther beld,
Nor shauchlin', bandy, booit, blin', or glee.
Ma haun's are mebbe rid an' reugh awee,
But whan, frae neck or airm, ma sark flees
bare,

Ye weel nicht see my skin is saft an' fair.
I'm weel set-up, for ma ain shape last nicht
I saw in the caum sweemin'-pool—a sicht
Fu' comely—tho' it's oot o' place tae tell'd
Tae sic as you.

Ye're unco tunefu', lass, but sae am I.
I've a melodeon mony a chiel
Wud gie his fingers for. An' didna Neil,
The far-famed Neil, whaes tuines fair mazit
men,

His fiddle leave to me, as weel ye ken?
Ma pipes, reid Robin ca's a treat tae play.
The chaunters no' for lassies' lips, ye'll say.
Dinna believe it. Gin tae lairn ye'll try,
I'll gie mine you.

I've twa black rabbits for you for a toy.
I 'maist near broke ma neck in catchin' them,
Sae noo thur warth exceeds a shop-bocht gem.
Oh! be thou but ma dearie, an' thou'lt see
Hoo kind, and guid, an' coothy I can be.
I'll braw yer hair wi' roses an' I'll bring
Fresh flooers t'ye daily. Brammles, blaes, ilk
thing,
The countraside affairs for maiden's joy,
I'll hunt for you.

Apples an' nits I'll fush frae th' orchard trees,
Wi' ploomms an' cherries, het'hoose grapes, an'
figs.
I'll croon yer gowden heid wi' the saft twigs
O' hinney suickle sweet an' laurel byes—
But I may haud ma tanguae. Ye scorn the
wyes
O' a' us countra folk. Ye lo'e the toon.
An' I hae blighted ma hale life ower sune.
'Tis yisless for me mair ma hairt tae tease
Wi' thochts o' you.

Let ilk ane hae his taste an' gang his gait.
I lo'e the countra an' the countra life,
An', een tae hae prood Maisie for my wife,
I'll no' leave Tayside an' ma gairdner's traed.
Is this like simmer prunin'? Ply the blaed.
See hoo the horse, unyoked, gae swingin'
,hame,
An' I've dune naething ere sin noon but dream.
Leave me ma wark, May, there are lassies yet,
As guid as you.

WALLACE GARDINER.

Little Scots Theatre

At the Cenotaph

By ROBERT ANGUS

[To C. M. GRIEVE, with regrets that stern devotion to realism should involve surrender to romance.]

(There are only three characters, the man, the woman, and the policeman, and you can place them as you will. The stillness of a dank, foggy night has just permitted the sound of the University clock striking the half-hour after midnight to be faintly heard as the curtain rises, and reveals in a darkened background the Cenotaph which commemorates Glasgow's dead. The glare of the street lamps is yellowed with fog, and the thin wisps of it make taller and thinner the man who is standing at the Cenotaph's base. He is standing sternly to attention, and ever and anon his hand goes mechanically to the salute and his lips move soundlessly. Only the fog is visible, but he seems to be watching the passing of a marching column, and, if you have imagination, you may see it pass, fours by fours, pale and ghostly, with rifles at the slope, making no sound, although, if you have imagination, you might hear the faint swish-swish of kilts. If one were sentimental one would say it was a leader taking the last salute of veteran regiments. It is in reality only a boy in a deserted square sufficiently hungry to be seeing things.)

He has, of course, no count of time, but within a moment or two from the rising of the curtain a woman appears from the left coming from the direction of Renfield Street. She appears only as a dim presence, tired, sick, slouching, creeping somewhere like a stray dog without any spark left of a cat's independence. As she catches sight of the man her body braces up, and it is with a brave attempt at enticement that she approaches. As she passes the light she is seen to be dressed in a smartly-cut but frayed, stained and faded brown gaberdine costume, completed by a small toque and a worn brown

bag. Her stockings are of artificial silk and have been mended; the heels of her shoes are turned over, and the soles have just made up their minds to a definite parting from the uppers. Her eyes are unnaturally big and glittering, and even in the fogged light the paint and powder on lip and cheek seem overdone. There is a breath of cheap perfume about her. She wears glittering earrings, and they make a gentle tinkle as she moves her head, but her feet make no noise.

She comes to a half-halt beside him, her lips cracked into what is meant to be a smile of invitation, but the man does not seem to see her, and so she has to speak; it is a musical and refined voice, but curiously roughened.)

SHE. Hallo, dearie. *(As he takes no notice . . .)* Hallo, dearie *(putting a hand on his sleeve)*. Where you going?

(The touch of her hand on his sleeve seems to recall him from some tremendous distance, and in the shadow we can see a puzzled hand go to his face, a momentary instinctive recoil, and then a smile infinitely hateful yet infinitely pathetic.)

HE. No use wastin' your time, kid. I'm down and out more than you.

SHE. Oh, come off it now. With a nice girl like me asking.

HE *(one can almost see that twisted smile though his face is hidden)*. Honest, kid. I'm broke to the wide. No use to anyone. And, say, good little girls should be in bed by now.

(He comes into the light and we see a pleasant-faced young man of about thirty. At least his face would be pleasant were it not for the look of utter hopelessness on it. It is not the look of a mood: it has taken

months to stamp it upon him, longer than it took to give him his gaunt thinness. He is neatly dressed in a blue serge suit, but it is terribly threadbare, and his boots, innocent of blacking, but scrubbed clean with a cloth, are at their last gasp. Through the coat one catches a glimpse of medals on the waistcoat. As the light falls on that gaunt pallid face on which the slight moustache seems like a horrible fungoid growth, the woman stares suddenly and fiercely at him, so suddenly that he notices.)

HE. Hello, what's the matter? (As he speaks he sways dizzily, and with a quick intake of the breath that might be a sob the woman catches him.)

SHE. What's the matter with you?

HE (with an effort to stand erect). Nothing. Nothing, except that I haven't been home to supper.

SHE. God! You're starving.

HE (still swaying in spite of the arm about him). Yes, now that you mention it, I suppose I am. I hadn't noticed it before. Starving? Queer, isn't it?

SHE (the sound of his jangled laugh seems to have wiped something from her as a sponge might). Don't fall, now. Come over here (guiding him to a seat). There. You'll be all right in a minute.

HE (sinking into the seat). Thanks, kid. You're a good kid. But don't waste your time on me.

SHE (fumbling in her bag and flashing out suddenly). What the hell's business is it of yours, my time? It's mine, isn't it? Here's a sandwich.

(Only the simile of a weasel at a rabbit's throat can describe his clutch at it. It is not eaten: it is worried; and because there are some things at which no one can look the woman turns her head away. In thirty seconds it is gone and with a sudden reaction to sanity he buries his face in his hands.)

SHE (turning again to him. It may be the fog, but there seems to be a different brightness in her decorated eyes). Feeling better now, boy?

HE (after a moment and speaking with difficulty and through his hands). You're a

good kid, a good kid, but don't waste your time on me.

SHE (with an attempt at humour and seating herself beside him). Well, seeing you've eaten my supper you might waste your time. (Protectingly.) Tell me all about it, boy.

HE (shaking off her arm and turning about in an agony of rage). Your supper? Oh, my God, my God. (He flings his head on the seat and breaks into big low sobs.)

SHE (with an arm around him: her face is almost maternal). There, there. I didn't mean anything. I wouldn't have eaten it, anyway. (As the sobs continue she talks at him.) Brace up, boy. It isn't so bad. Nothing's so bad. I've felt that way myself. It's just when you've nothing in your stomach, and then all the emptiness seems to rise up and try to burst out through your eyes. I've given up crying now. It makes you feel hungrier. You'll feel hungry again in a minute if you don't stop. I know.

HE (suddenly raising his head). Do you know that's the first kindness I've had for six weeks—since a woman selling flowers gave me tuppence. And you gave me your supper. (He speaks as he might of the Host.) Your supper. And I went through hell to be fed by—(he stops suddenly).

SHE (defiantly). By a prostitute. Go on, boy; I'm used to it.

HE. Well, you'd be something higher than me even at that, for you haven't failed at your game as I have at mine.

Do you know what I was doing when you came? I was saying good-bye—for good. I've finished, and I wanted to say good-bye to the only pals I have. And they were all there, all of them—Watson and Buchanan and little Jeffrey and Macintosh and all of them, my Lewis gunners and the C.S.M. and wee Jacobs the runner—game little devil. That was at Delville Wood. Delville—devil—that's a joke now. And—now, I remember Ferguson wasn't there. Funny, Ferguson wasn't there. He carried me out of the Triangle when I got my second, and Stokes wrote me he was killed going back. Now it's funny he wasn't there when I was saying good-bye. He ought to have been there: he never failed before. He was my

batman eighteen months and he never let me down once. Not to come and say good-bye—it's queer about Ferguson.

SHE (*recalling him*). What do you mean—good-bye.

HE. The river. There's a fog to-night and cold and no stars, and I couldn't go on.

SHE (*suddenly comprehending*). Oh, you coward!

HE (*in a sudden fury*). Damn you, I'm no coward! I got that (*jerking a medal from his waistcoat*) at the Hohenzollern and that at Buzancy. I wasn't quitting. I've never quit yet. I'm sacked just like the old general was after they failed at Gallipoli farm. He failed and they sacked him and he didn't question. He had us on parade and he said good-bye. Well, I've failed, and life's sacked me. Life's got no use for me. It's give me my discharge and I can't question any more. It gives you a lot of chances, and then—well, there you are. (*As she is silent. If he knew women better he would see her intelligence is furiously at work.*) Look here, I'll put it up to you. You called me a coward. All right, listen. (*Her face is alive, but if he knew women better he would know that of his speech for the defence she hears scarce a word.*) I was out four years—twice wounded, D.S.O., M.C., captain and temporary major. I came back in '19, and there wasn't a job I'd take. I volunteered for Russia and went and came back in '20, and there were less jobs. I tried for the Indian Army, and they wouldn't have me—they'd discovered I'd been wounded by then—and for the Black and Tans. No use. I hadn't a trade or a profession. I was just through college when I joined up in '14. Then I tried everything, but nobody wanted a hero. My God, I did everything but kiss their boots, and I'd have done that if it'd have been any good. I asked men who said they knew my father, men who used to stand me drinks till I was fuddled when I was in uniform. Oh, I got jobs—odd ones—a month here, a week there. I've been a bookie's clerk, I've been a barman, I've blacked boots, I've cleaned middens. I once got a job as a dancing instructor till I found I was expected to be a pimp. And now even that's closed

up. Even pimps get unemployed. Why didn't I go to associations? I don't suppose you'd understand that, nor that I didn't sell my medals when I took tuppence from a flower girl. And then sixteen months ago the mother died. She never knew I was out of work, and nothing very much mattered after that. I've just been living anywhere. I hadn't clothes any more to apply for a job, but I could pick up a copper or two if the bobbies weren't active. I met a pal yesterday—he was my subaltern for eight months—and he turned away. You see I asked him to buy laces. He was funky I'd say "My God, Forrest!" I think that did it. There wasn't anybody but the dead. (*He pauses.*) So you see I thought I'd join them. (*As she does not speak.*) That's all. I suppose I am a bit of a coward.

SHE. And it's taken two bites of cold ham and old bread to make you see you're a coward. Oh, you boy, you were only hungry.

HE. God! And I'm still hungry. (*Arguing with himself.*) But it wasn't the wrong way out all the same. It's a clean way. Now I suppose I'm beginning to funk even that. You see I haven't had anybody to talk to for a day or two. That makes a man out of himself with pride. Well, I guess you've broken my pride. I'll chance one of the associations to-morrow.

SHE. Sure you haven't any pride left? (*He does not realise the appraisingness of her look.*)

HE (*with a dreary laugh*). Sure thing, kid. I suppose I should say thank you. I'll worry along like the rest.

SHE (*meaningly*). You needn't do that—like the rest. (*Hastily.*) Look here, I've a nice little room. Come in on it with me. You could look after me a bit, and I'll get enough for two. A girl needs—somebody.

HE (*with a sudden disbelieving horror*). What d'you mean?

SHE. Oh, go on; don't be so mother's boy about it. Heaps of fellows do it, and I'll be good to you.

HE (*in a curious flash he has become a gentleman holding himself strata away from her: he must have looked like this on a strafing parade, and now as then he weighs*

his words). No, kid. Not after eating your supper. I can't explain.

SHE. You mean you won't pay me for my supper.

HE. It's because I can't pay for it that it's "No," and I couldn't pay anyway.

SHE (*it is her turn to sob now, though she does not see why and he has not the remotest idea*). And I wanted a boy so. It's all right for you with your stuck-up goodness. Do you know what it is for a girl like me? I'm not pulling the old gaff off on you, honest: I wasn't always—this. I don't want men: I hate men, all of them, but I want their money. It means a room with a bed and a chair and a mirror and clothes and food and booze and cigarettes, and if you get enough it means you forget. But I want a boy of my own.

HE (*entirely uncomprehending but manfully believing he does*). What sort of a boy 'd I be? Got nothing, not likely to get more than nothing, nobody, and no guts left to be anybody, not even—(*he stops at a word*). You're right, kid. I'm a coward, a rotten low coward (*mystically and with an atavistic remembrance of a Latin class*); non credo quia impossibile est.

SHE. You needn't swear at me in Dago, anyway.

HE. I just meant it's impossible, all of it, everything; and I'm too big a coward to attempt the impossible even on an empty stomach. Queer, isn't it? You know, once I'd have struck you for asking me that. Now I'm arguing like old Henry Jones. If all A is some B. I suppose it's just hunger. Well, good-night. (*He rises unsteadily and moves off a pace or two. She continues to sit, her face set and her eyes mysterious. They were very real tears, and there are curious red and black and white furrows on her cheeks. He turns irresolutely and comes back.*) Look here, kid. There's that ham—isn't there anything I can do?

SHE (*rising slowly*). I told you and you won't. And what else can you do?

HE. That's right—nothing. My God! (*Perhaps his despair was never blacker than at that cry.*)

SHE (*with a hand on his arm*). It's all

right, boy. I knew you couldn't when I asked you. You're different. I wish I was. We're just two bits of lost things, and I'm lofter than you. It was my own fault, and yours wasn't. This was—the easier way. (*Realising an unspoken question.*) Oh, it isn't a grand story. I had to earn my living since I was seventeen—the last year of the war. Four years I had of it—they were good years—and I was "axed." Nobody wanted a typist they had to pay a wage to. They were coming up from the schools by the scores with good homes to go to when work was through, and I had all myself to keep. And so, one night after a lot of nights I was tired and hungry and two weeks' rent owing, and I met a man who'd asked me half a hundred times, and—I went. That's all—just a steady down, down, down.

HE (*stupidly as if mesmerised*). Down, down, down, and not even a bump, just down.

SHE (*with a laugh that might mean anything*). Well, there isn't much further to go till it won't matter a bit. Good-night, boy. (*She holds out a poorly-gloved hand, but he is gazing at the Cenotaph.*) I said good-night, boy.

HE (*his voice is hushed but queerly resonant: it is almost as if he were reciting.*) In Scots law a man is married if he acknowledges a woman for his wife before witnesses and she acknowledges him as her husband. There are plenty of witnesses here. Could you chance it? Could you?—and then I'll go home with you and we'll be right married to-morrow. There's my medals and the associations. (*She is still silent.*) It isn't me that's speaking: it's them. They told me. Out on a post three's better than two, and two's better than one. I'd never have put one man in a post. Watson reminded me of that. He's here and Buchanan and little Jeffrey and Macintosh. They're all here. (*His voice rings out.*) It's the Highland Division you'll have to swear before. Two bits of lost things. (*They do not notice, so absorbed are they, that the policeman has stopped under the farthest lamp-light and watches them.*) Could you? (*For full a moment their eyes hold and*

neither knows what the other reads there. If you were French you would say the Square was *halluciné*. Then she nods without taking her eyes from his face.) But we need a ring. (There is nothing comic about his remark: it has the trembling anxiety of the neophyte.)

SHE. I've one here. (She fumbles in her bag and produces a plain brass band similar to a million others made out of shrapnel except for a curious twist to its clasp.)

HE (examining it). Do you know there's nothing real but ghosts? I had a ring once with a queer clasp like that. I was out a day when I was on leave with a fellow Armour, and I gave it to his kid sister Jean. I remember it because she kissed me when I went away. I didn't ask her. I daresay that's why I haven't forgotten. I suppose she lost hers long ago. But it'll do.

SHE. She didn't ever lose it.

HE (there is no surprise in his voice, only acceptance). Ghosts, ghosts, nothing but ghosts. Teddy Armour's sister, Jean. Oh, my dear, my dear. Two bits of lost things. (Catching her hand.)

(They face the Cenotaph hand in hand like two children asking a benediction, and then he speaks.)

I, Allan Macgregor, take thee, Jean Armour, to be my lawful wedded wife. Now you.

SHE (there is an ocean of unshed tears behind the words, but they ring out quite clear on the fogged air, dropping away as she ends). I, Jean Armour, take thee, Allan Macgregor, to be my lawful wedded husband—until death do us part. (As they stand there he fits on the ring clumsily, and for one breathless second there is that hush that the Highlander knows betokens that something not mortal has passed.)

HE. They were all here, my dear, all of them. Except Ferguson. I don't understand about Ferguson.

SHE. Never mind about Ferguson. Oh, Allan, are you sure it's all right?

HE (his mystic exaltation has reached a

perilous height). They told me. They never let me down yet. (He holds out his arms, and still searching his face with her eyes she comes into his embrace. They have stood like that for a moment oblivious to everything, even to the fact that the policeman has advanced close to them. He is a young policeman wearing three ribbons which show through his cape as his hand wanders nervously to his face. He seems a little out of his depth, or perhaps not far enough out. At any rate . . .)

POLICEMAN. Now then, now then. What's all this?

(The two move apart, but he does not release his hold of her. In one swift flick of time the outcast has disappeared, and it is an officer of the Highland Division who answers.)

HE. Is there any byelaw to forbid a man kissing his wife in George Square? And why the hell didn't you salute the Cenotaph when you passed? Haven't you got your orders?

POLICEMAN (after thirty seconds, during which the two men gaze at each other). I beg your pardon—sir.

HE. That's all right, constable. Only obey your orders. Carry on. (Turning a quiet face to the strained eager one at his shoulder.) Come on, dear. (With her held tightly against him they slowly walk out right. The policeman smiles half-grimly, half-sheepishly, and then turns to face the Cenotaph. Slowly he removes his helmet and stands motionless: the light falls on a long scar close to the close-cropped hair.) Carry on, Private Ferguson, carry on. An' I thoct he was deid. (Suddenly and with a sudden leap to attention.) Comin', sir, comin'. (He replaces his helmet, salutes quickly, and hurries off in the direction in which the two have gone. For a moment the stage stands empty save for the lamps, the seat, and the Cenotaph, and again we sense the passing of things not mortal. Then the curtain slowly falls.)

Religion and the Scottish Renaissance

By C. M. GRIEVE

ANDREW. You would notice that at the last General Assembly (the fact that Jimmie Brown was Lord High Commissioner was the only thing most folk noticed apparently) a strong plea was made for higher pay for ministers. The opinion was expressed that a minister should be free from material worries; that he should be above the sordid battle of the work-a-day world. What did you think of it?

THOMAS. Nothing. Curiously enough, I have just been reading Archibald Weir's book on "The Anthropological Point of View." He defines better than anyone else, I think, the new conceptions of leadership, the new standards of responsibility, which are emerging in modern life as the result of our growing sense of human solidarity and of the meaning of the material struggle. He points out that most of the unhappiness of life comes now to the "sufferer" in the form of either angry hate or restless jealousy, and that change must be brought about by leaders who must be gentlemen in a more perfect sense. Leadership of this kind is nothing showy or remote. It is unobtrusive, subtle, and intimate. It must be mingled with affairs of daily life and business. It must, therefore, be concerned with all the strife, suspiciousness and covetousness attaching to monetary transactions. It must, indeed, take as well as give. Isn't that notion of a new race of gentlemen whose distinction won't be to have escaped the meaner offices but to have conferred grace and honour upon them by an unassuming participation more like the thing than that Assembly plea? It is, at any rate, a highly realistic belief that in a true Democracy, after all, the hero, the outstanding personality, fulfils his mission for the common good by sacrifice, by voluntary immolation of his entire self, and that he must not expect even a reward of approval and contented following from the crowd: he works their good in spite of them, and has to

suffer for it. I wonder how much really vital religious thinking is being done in Scotland to-day? I think Stewart McDowall, following Gentile, is right when he says that the revelation of God to man is of the nature of the revelation which the artist presents in the production of a work of art. The revelation and the reception of the revelation imply a mutual activity. Mr. McDowall holds with Croce that the appreciation of a work of art is itself an aesthetic activity finding expression. So with God and his revelation. . . . That would account for the present state of affairs in Scotland, wouldn't it? If the revelation of God is to be regarded as a work of art, which can only affect the beholder to the extent to which he himself in appreciation aesthetically creates the responsive image, "wae's me for puir auld Scotland." God'll remain a shaggy daguerreotype or a crude oleograph for all but a negligible minority till the end of time unless the present bases of existence can be changed.

ANDREW. Judging by the Assembly speeches intellectual integrity is certainly conspicuous by its scarcity. I question if the calibre of the Scottish ministry, Established or Free, was ever lower than it is to-day. What men of vision or authority have we? How many contemporary Scottish ministers count for anything in the world, either in respect of powerful human qualities or scholarship of any international standing? They are almost all hopelessly provincial. I was writing some time ago about the relation of Professor J. T. Simpson's views to Soloviev's, and I wasn't the least bit surprised to learn that Simpson hadn't read Soloviev. I question very much if a single soul in Scotland except myself has pondered Merezhkovsky's religion of *The Third Testament*, that synthesis of paganism and Christianity, of flesh and spirit; or read Vyacheslav Ivanov's profound treatise on *The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God*. Practically

the whole range of human thought and art is irrelevant—non-existent—for the entire population. Not one per cent. of contemporary Scottish sermons is worth publishing even from the point of view of, say, *The Missionary Record*. The very best of them are to the best that is being produced elsewhere—even in England—as Graham Moffat is to Bernard Shaw. The Scottish Churches dare not undertake the long overdue task of declaring in clear and unambiguous language what they believe and—even more important, considering how much has to be jettisoned—what of their former doctrines they definitely renounce. At any rate they're making no beginning, although the delay is obviously reducing them to a negligible factor in the national life, or, rather, making them a despiritualising one. "Brains, O Lord, more brains," should unquestionably be their most urgent and continual prayer. There is a percentage of hard-thinking, hard-living laymen—the sort who are to some extent or other realising Weir's idea—but they are for the most part too unintellectual, and, in any case, they are isolated phenomena. If they could be brought into touch with each other and set to work co-operatively and systematically they could do a great deal—but it would depend upon their mental grit and stamina. The present Christian Study Circles are no use: they don't *think*! They simply take their case for granted, swat up masses of facts about Foreign Missions, Temperance, and so forth, and acquire, or try to acquire, a knack of re-expressing all the hoary old platitudes in a "higher and brotherlier" style. Pep is all right in its way, but it's a poor substitute for power. Then—outside the Churches—there are all sorts of left-wing people. The average brain-power is higher here. They are purposeful and penetrative: but the best of them have only arrived at Foote's old conclusion that "God is not a person but an ideal varying in each individual with the greatness and purity of his nature. . . ." But I'm interested in this Scottish Renaissance business. Perhaps it'll sweep all these people up and force the Churches to think yet. Scottish literature has always been intensely religious—and

always heterodox. The debility of religion in Scotland curiously enough coincides with the desuetude of truly Scottish literature and the reign of Kailyairdism, against which these chaps are now reacting—just as the Americans are against the doctrines of "success" and their underlying Puritanism. That's why Socialism in Scotland has produced no art or literature—the Glasgow school are all passéist puritans. But writers like M'Diarmid, Edwin Muir, F. V. Bradford, and William Jeffrey are all tremendously preoccupied with religious problems. Nowhere has literature suffered so much from religion as in post-Reformation Scotland. I fancy literature is about to get its own back, with interest, at last. And the right sort of revenge too—"heaping coals of fire." It only wants the re-erection of any half-decent standard of criticism in Scotland to silence all these ministerial poets and essayists and reviewers who have made Scottish journalism the most painfully subfusc in Europe for the past four or five decades.

THOMAS. The conditions of modern life call for an immense spiritual, an immense constructive, effort; and construction can't begin till there has been any amount of preliminary destruction. The field must be cleared of the choking tangle of weeds first; and yet the bulk of the energy devoted to so-called spiritual things goes to the sustaining or reviving of threadbare formulas, to the fighting in imagination of battles no one fights in fact, or to the unifying of incredible beliefs or futile disbeliefs. Because progress has been so inconceivably slow in the past doesn't mean it must continue to be so, of course. As somebody has said, "The course of evolution is unpredictable from the very fact that we've begun to think about it. The consciousness which has come out of it is at last in control. If only the conditions of improvement can be understood they can be arranged for: and that may change both the speed and the direction of our advance!" Life exists in so far as it is discovered: Adam and Eve could have had wireless in the Garden of Eden—if only they had found it. Look at the industrial and social problem.

Science has really solved it already: our powers of production are infinitely ample, and the richness of the earth is inexhaustible: a full and free life is assured to every individual—if it could only be arranged for! If what we most need to follow clearly is the relation of the late-born factor of conscious guidance, of this ferment of ameliorative ideas in which we live, to that still persisting undercurrent, that vast, slow stream of vital evolution on which the human animal is borne, we must realise with Dr. F. C. S. Schiller that “natural selection is not a *creative* principle in matters of belief any more than in the variations of living organisms.” As he says, “Beliefs no longer figure merely as products of nature fortuitously thrown up by the cosmic welter, but themselves become facts in determining reality. On a very minute scale, but in a very real sense, our preferences and our acts are contributing to the shaping of the world and sharing in the unceasing process of creation.” It is just the mass of dishonest beliefs, foolish beliefs, and nerveless half-beliefs—injurious not only to those who adopt them unfortunately—which are preventing that remoulding of reality to a better shape which a wiser belief would show to be immediately possible. Are these Scottish Renaissance people consciously and competently combating these—are they touching the great mass of the people to whose bad thinking or want of thought the present deplorable condition of Scotland is attributable at all?

ANDREW. As to the first part of your question, yes—all the best of them are, more and more so, though they may have a long way to go yet to get into effective grips, so to speak. And as to the second part of your question—no, but qualified by remembrance that, as has already been said, nothing more than an almost negligible part of all literature and art exists for the great majority of any people, or affects them except very, very indirectly and slowly. But I think it is already realised that the Scottish Renaissance will stand or fall by what it ultimately achieves along these two lines. I’ve just read Schiller’s *Problems of Belief*, too. It is

great stuff. I fancy he’s the wittiest philosopher extant. You remember Wells’s definition of the human mind as “essentially a food-seeking system and no more necessarily a truth-finding apparatus than the snout of a pig.” Does it matter *what* one believes—since all humanity except a handful believe, and have always believed, and probably always will believe, in the weirdest agglomeration of demonstrable nonsense? Isn’t it rather how one believes? Isn’t our cry really Vachel Lindsay’s:

Let not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their
pride.

It is the world’s one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp, and leaden-eyed.

Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly;
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap;
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve;
Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

Take Schiller’s story of the Indian chief, Jeremiah, for example, who had a church in which he conducted three times a day a curious service attended by all the Indians in the vicinity. . . . The service consisted of counting from one to ten and saying the alphabet in English, each being first recited by the priest and then repeated by the congregation. I’m sure that service did as much good, and had as much validity, as the great majority of services of whatever kind. Papini points out that whole passages of Hegel are meaningless unless considered as forms of poetry comparable to Mallarmé’s sonnets. Edwin Muir asks: “Of what avail to us any longer are the great truths of the past? They lie open to us: we know them all: but in spite of this we are not fundamentally interested in them. Never has culture, intellect, knowledge, been more common and more barren than it is to-day. Truth is arid because we no longer create it and by creating realise its nature. The truth of the past is dead to us because the spirit of truth is dead within ourselves. To be, then, on the side of “new truths,” however shallow they may be, in the faith that creation is the law of existence, the way of

humanity: that is the way of the old dangerous and ultimate wisdom. "Modern truths" may be shallow, but to condemn them is still more shallow. Let us therefore support new truths against old dogmas, simply because they are new, and in being new are a mark of life, of health, and of unconscious wisdom. This, at least, is sure, and it is the most modern of truths, that we must be wise unconsciously before we can be wise consciously." That's why I welcome the Scottish Renaissance, however its products may rank—it is a sign of life, the creative spirit at work again, at long last.

THOMAS. But how far are these writers really "new"—what is their technique, their "message"? I have been thinking a good deal lately about German *Expressionismus* and all the other "beyond meaning" tendencies in ultra-modern art, for, as Muir, whom you have just quoted, says elsewhere, "The aspiration of art is towards absolute meaninglessness: all the rest is solemn unreality." "All that men in their hearts finally call art is pure music, pure fantasy. Except intellectually, the greatest thing is to men the most enigmatical thing: that which is meaning and yet has no meaning: what is called magic." Muir seems to see pretty much eye to eye with Hans Vaihinger. I have just been re-reading his *Philosophie des Als Ob*. Where the pragmatist says we make truth, Vaihinger holds that we make fiction, and that fiction is so much more valuable than truth, that having the one we can quite well dispense with the other—in fact, that the very concept of truth is itself a useful fiction. The theory, of course, originates with Kant—who was a Scotsman! It may be along these lines that Scotland, despite its past history and its present sordid conventionalism, will yet realise its true genius. The easy passage of some of the old makers from the gross to the sublime—"intermingledons," as Burns called it—suggests that. Anyhow, the present condition of Scotland is unquestionably due to the general lack of imagination. Indeed, if this "as If" theory is held to be true, the deplorable state of humanity to-day—holding itself in an

unnecessary and useless thralldom because it will not see the solution science has already provided for the perfect freeing of human life and culture—can be ascribed to the unfortunate inability of the masses of mankind to act "as if" the conditions they desire existed (as they demonstrably do), and so, by acting as if they didn't, perpetuating a cruel and chaotic state of affairs which they can transcend whenever they like, merely by changing their minds. Call it want of creative faith, if you like. Or, as an American poet has reminded the workers looking for the dawn of better conditions, "*you are the dawn*"—if they could only see it. "It is nonsense, but there is method in it," says Vaihinger of the secret of the infinitesimal calculus, where he deals with the use of fictions in science. Berkeley, he says, in pointing out the contradictions in Newton's method of fluxions and Leibniz's differentials really made a brilliant discovery of the necessity for the introduction of fictions into mathematics and of their justification; but instead of recognising what he had hit upon, rejected his theories as illogical because they were fictions! So we may say of the general public—in Scotland above all—that what is wrong is that it has no madness in its method. Only people with a method in their madness are worth a rap: the rest are either too sane or too insane.

ANDREW. It has been said that a resemblance of instinct and ethos can unite men of wide dogmatic disagreement; but among those who differ in their subconscious sense of "direction" a diphthong may suffice to kindle wars. Until we assign its full weight to the non-rational element in human affairs it must remain an enigma that men persist in beliefs that are demonstrably untenable, attach most importance to matters which are obviously least vital (to say the least of them), and everywhere prefer the letter to the spirit and the shadow to the substance. Something worth doing may eventually be done in Scotland by some Rabelaisian poet, founding like Vyacheslav Ivanov not on individualism but upon the principle of *sobornost*, or that communistic expression suggestive of Vachel Lindsay's creed, with the

mentality and the manner of a mystagogue as the sugar-coating on his pills. What couldn't the Cooper of Wick have done if he had been at one and the same time what he was, and a Machiavelli and a makar? . . . But I don't know. How far did Burns get even? Oh, I'm not one of those vulgarians who so ubiquitously overrate him, and always for the wrong thing. But he holds his position to-day and derives his fame not from his satires but from his sloppy sentiment and his excruciating platitudes. A frontal attack is no use: the thing must be done very, very slowly and very subtly. But I can imagine nothing that any young Scottish writer should be more concerned about attempting. St. John Ervine traces the ugliness of Glasgow and the decadence of the drama to the same source—"the contagion of commonness." "Something is lacking," he says, "which accounts for the failure of the public to support good drama—something that was present in the populace of Shakespeare's day. It may have been a high fervour of spirit, but if I were pressed to say what I believe it was I should say that it was a noble and manly religious faith"—Ervine is right; and to fight that "contagion of commonness" with a few one-act plays and a sheaf

of lyrics is like charging malaria with a bayonet. . . . And yet, I'm not scoffing. Far from it. Whether it succeeds or not, it is the only thing to do in the circumstances. "Banality is our chief sin," said a recent writer on Art and Religion. "We contentedly abound in the sense of our own insensibility; we sustain one another's bathos; we welter in a conspiracy of commonplace emotions," but he concluded with words which might fittingly be addressed to each of the young writers of the Scottish Renaissance who have begun to *think*—to go ahead each with his own work and not bother about a movement. Their work must come first. Or, as he puts it, "Only when the foundations are solidly laid will the waverers come in. It is fruitless to divert them with side issues, to prop up a little bit of beauty here with a little bit of goodness there, or coax the hesitant by imperceptible degrees into the cold waters of independence. Further, let us calmly repeat to him, what he already knows, that the plunge has to be taken, that each man must swim for himself in waters that will not automatically sustain him, and then the note of sincerity will be heard in our voices, the response will come, and our organisation can proceed."

The Kestrel

A TEMPTING target for the fowler's lead,
 Moveless and dark against the summer sky,
 The kestrel poised, upbuoyed by wings out-
 spread,
 And watched for prey, nor knew his own
 death nigh.
 Soon the dark islet left the sea of light!
 A sharp report rang out—the victim fell.
 Alas! not straight to earth in death outright;
 The curved and fluttering descent showed
 well
 The shot that only wounds and does not kill;
 So where the bird had fallen I searched the
 ground,
 Intent the creature's agony to still;
 And long and patiently I sought, but found
 Only some blood-stained feathers, to arraign
 The iron rule of cruelty and pain.

JOHN ANDERSON STEWART.

The Future of Scottish Liberalism

THE prospects for Scottish nationalism are for the moment in the hands of the great political parties. Of these, two—the Labourists and the Liberals—are committed in principle at least to what in our zeal for indefinite terms we call Home Rule, and the former have actually produced through the unofficial medium of the Member for Gorbals a stunted abortion of a Bill. Neither have had the courage to come out on a nationalist programme, the one thing necessary to give life to too familiar party creeds, for the reason, probably, that they have as yet no definite evidence that such a programme would increase their chances at a general election. For the moment, therefore, the nationalist issue is very much above the battle, and we have to consider the immediate future apart from it. At the last election there were two notable features—the victories of Labour in the towns and the revival of Conservatism in the North, under the combined effects of which Liberalism suffered heavy losses. In certain quarters it appeared—witness the startlingly low poll of Sir John Pratt at the keenly-fought by-election at Kelvingrove—that Liberalism was definitely out of the struggle, and that the issue was solely between Conservatism and Labour. That this is what these two parties want is certain from the steady concentration of Labour propaganda against Liberalism and the appeals of the Conservatives for an anti-Socialist front, which means, of course, the absorption of Liberalism within the Conservative Party.

Yet in spite of these facts, Liberalism is the historic Scottish party. It has led Scotland so efficiently that the Scottish Conservative is least of all Diehard, and the Labour member least Labour, having preferred in the true Liberal spirit principle to politics. There is, indeed, behind both the opponents of Liberalism a powerful reserve of the old Radical tradition of Scotland to which they are in great measure indebted for their victories. If that view is correct, it would seem

that the Liberal eclipse may be only temporary, and that it only requires a programme to rally back the lapsed masses. What that programme should be is a matter for dispute. We ourselves are in no doubt about it; but it seemed that here was a fruitful field for inquiry, because on the decisions of the Scottish electorate at the next two elections will depend very largely the cause of nationalism. THE NORTHERN REVIEW therefore ventured to ask a number of the leaders of political thought in Scotland their opinion, and in this issue we print three opinions, with the intention of following these up with others. Our three contributors have special claims to be heard. Mr. Phillipps is the Chief Liberal Whip; Mr. Macgregor Mitchell scored one of Liberalism's best victories in 1923 by recapturing Perth with a big majority; while Mr. Dickson, fighting for Labour, defeated the strongest Conservative candidate in Scotland, Captain Walter Elliott, in a straight fight for an historic Liberal seat in Lanarkshire. Mr. Phillipps maintains the revival of Liberalism as a result of "settling down" after the war; Mr. Mitchell gives us the programme on which Liberalism will fight; while Mr. Dickson, in giving the reasons for the success of Labour, indicates the failure of Liberalism to appreciate the situation. To these three gentlemen this review is deeply indebted for the following articles, which are certain to arouse keen discussion. Need we remind our readers that THE NORTHERN REVIEW is not a party organ?

The Hope of Liberalism

By VIVIAN PHILLIPPS, M.P.

THE hope of Liberalism in Scotland lies in the high quality of political intelligence in the Scottish constituencies. In the period 1906-1914, when a Liberal Government under Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith wrought,

by a wisely co-ordinated plan of social betterment, the most far-reaching transformation of our social conditions ever recorded in a similar period of our history, Scotland with an overwhelming representation of Liberal members at Westminster played a great and notable part.

The unsettlement of the post-war years has provided an atmosphere peculiarly suited to the purely class policies of the Labour and Tory Parties. As that unsettlement passes, so will the appeal which Liberalism makes for the subordination of all selfish and sectional interests to the good of the community as a whole revive and reassert itself as the true expression of the permanent political genius of the Scottish people.

A Programme for Liberalism

By R. MACGREGOR MITCHELL, M.P.

To most thinking people the study of cause and effect is natural, and it is also interesting. At the present time we have three parties, each striving for the government of the Empire, each proclaiming its own virtues and with certain piquancy enlarging on the defects of the others. What cause has produced this effect?

In days gone by, taking a wide survey of history we find that the landed class possessed of wealth and power held the reins of government and drove the state coach. Benevolence to the governed was tempered by a very shrewd regard for self-interest. A kind word or a good deed was often expected to be received on a bent knee. "The Constitution" was modelled on a policy not inconsistent with security of tenure for the governing class; else why the restriction of the franchise and the enactment of the entail and game laws. Gradually inventive genius and business capacity became assertive, and wealth laid claim with family estate and pride of birth to some share in the governing rights of the "Constitutional" or Conservative Party. The population increased; the country was left for the manufacturing centres. Labourers were abundant; hours long and

wages small. Still the Constitutional or Conservative Party kept a tenacious hold on what was considered an almost divine right to govern.

Liberalism emerged as an expression of the ideals of freedom and equality. Keen fights ensued with Conservatism, and gradually some share in their government was secured for the people. With education and an enlarged franchise the people's aspirations developed, more especially as, through rapid increase of population and centralised industrialism, conditions emerged which weighed heavily on the working-class. In the words of George Eliot: "When uncultured minds confined to a narrow range of personal experience are under the pressure of continued misfortune, their inward life is apt to become a perpetually repeated round of sad and bitter thoughts; the same words, the same scenes are revolved over and over again, the same mood accompanies them—the end of the year finds them as much what they were at the beginning as if they were machines set to a recurrent series of movements." If to this be added bad houses, too little food and little or no relaxation from the drab life of the factory or mine, it is not astonishing that there should arise a Socialist Party, as the protagonist of the working-class, disgruntled with the present system and aspiring not only to a full and equal say in the government of the country, but also to the destruction of individual ownership and enterprise as being the cause of many of the present evils.

Individual genius, industry, invention—aye, and character—can never be obliterated or harnessed to a state duty on terms of equality. It has been tried and has failed.

Rather the question is how to fit the services of all in right proportions to the work of the state machine. Herein lies the possibility of Liberalism. Untrammelled by vested interests either of capital like the Conservatives or labour like the Socialists, Liberalism can best set about adjusting the balance, for "When self the wavering balance holds 'tis rarely right adjusted."

A humble member of the Liberal Party may try to interpret the spirit which will guide its policy and the end which that policy

has in view. The policy must be broad so as to encircle every class, to give hope to all, and to afford a standard which legislation can do something towards achieving. A great party of the State is more than a mere legislative proposer and producer—its ideals, however scoffed at, effect as much for the common good as its Acts of Parliament. These ideals are just an interpretation of the needs and aspirations of the people. We thus see that from the watchtower of the Liberal Party the bells ring out a message to all sects and sections of the people; and amidst the welter abroad and the struggle at home, the peals distinctly proclaim the happiness of duty and the duty of happiness—and to the ears that hear there is no delusion—happiness not vain and self-seeking pleasure, and duty not an ascetic sacrifice. There must no longer be only a crust of bread and a hovel for the humblest toiler. The appeal of the message will find a response to a noble work from many.

Scattered over our land are large centres of industry where opulence struts and poverty skulks, where good houses abound and hovels prevail, where good health is scarce and sickness is rife, and where plenty is abused and starvation is rampant. These cities are overpopulated and are under- and badly-housed. Food is dear, and much of it is unwholesome. These cities must be drained of their surplus population. They must be swept clean of their poverty, slums, and sickness. Health and houses should be obtainable by all, and a supply of wholesome food be available for the whole populace.

We have a quite fertile country, but full advantage is not being taken of its fertility. Agriculture has not advanced. Our system has not expanded with the times nor have modern inventions made the progress in agriculture which have appeared in other industries. The land is ceasing to come under the plough. Our system of land tenure has served its day and generation, but that day and generation is past. The cultivator of the soil should be a scientific man, with liberty to put his views in practice. He cannot and will not do so under the present system. Give him absolute security of tenure,

compensation for improvements, and a fair rent, and he will not be miserly of ideas or money to put them to the test. A new era would dawn for agriculture. Science applied to it would transform its methods, and soon we would have increased fertility and teaming barns. Cheese production and poultry rearing would follow in the wake, and our milk supply would not only be increased but purified.

All this would attract people to an agricultural life and ensure employment. It would give an enlarged food supply produced at home. Cities would to a certain extent be relieved of overcrowding. Health would be exuberant and happiness follow.

You must "colonise" your own country, say the Liberals, by placing smallholders on good land in suitable places near cities, or on the coast where fishing may be followed, and these must be available at fair rents. It will cost money; national equipment cannot be secured without expenditure, but who can count the return in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence?

An enlightened agriculture policy goes to the source of the national stream of life. It will weed out disease, secure a healthy population, and provide food in more abundance.

The Liberal policy again applied to our industrial life aims at giving to the worker a say in the management of the industry, and insurance as a security against the gaunt spectre of unemployment and participation in the profits proportional to his effective work, thus eliminating as far as possible disastrous and suicidal strikes and lockouts. With the keenest intellects applied to commerce and manufacture, with the best workmen in the world, it is sad that conflicting interests cannot be so adjusted as to prevent the clogging of the wheels of industry and the frequent stoppage of the machine. Give and take must prevail, and here it is that the Liberal ideal of the happiness of duty is bound to prevail, because all sensible men and women, whether employer or employee, must recognise their respective duties, and that only in their proper adjustment can happiness result.

There is great fear that the housing

problem will not be solved on purely socialistic lines. To provide houses—aye, and proper houses—for the people, not only must the State do its duty, but individuals must shoulder their responsibilities. Workmen and providers of material must not exploit the situation to their own advantage. Imagine what would happen were there a dearth of doctors, and that those who practised that honourable profession made exorbitant demands or attached unreasonable conditions to their attendance on the sick and dying. Accordingly Liberal policy aims at an adjustment of the relations between the State and the individual, so that houses may be provided and individual initiative may not be killed.

There is not wanting evidence that Britain is lagging behind other nations in the application of electricity drawn from her natural resources, to industry, to agriculture, to town life and country life. To recovery of the lost ground, Mr. Lloyd George's report embodying a national policy is the first step. The economy, the efficiency which would be achieved are undoubted, and there would follow a happy prosperity.

Something has already been achieved to maintain the health of the people, yet much remains to be done. The canker of drunkenness in our social life has always exercised Liberal statesmanship. The national drink bill is still enormous, and daily evidence is forthcoming to prove the evils of the excessive consumption of alcohol. Public opinion is altering, and Liberal policy rightly interprets it to sanction rational and comprehensive temperance reform.

Whatever the future may hold for the three political parties, there can be no doubt that Liberalism will play a great part. Its ideals cannot be shattered, and public opinion will see to it that they are translated into actuality.

The only antidotes to ill-health and alcoholism are good food, good houses, steady work, and healthy recreation. When these are secured our medical service will have a real chance to devote their skill and training to the prevention of disease.

While Liberal policy has a keen eye and hearing ear for the improvement of our home

national life, yet our Dominions have not, and never will be, forgotten. Success has followed Liberal Imperial politics, and in its comprehensive sympathy with the aspirations of our Dominions, in the provision of facility of intercourse, in the helping of conditions in the Dominions, and in the trust of their self-government, the Empire has been consolidated and will be maintained.

The Conservative Party shouts patriotism and claims a monopoly of this feeling. I would most emphatically remind my readers that it is not commercial treaties that bind our great Empire, but the freedom, justice, sympathy, and equality extended to our Indian Empire, Dominions, and Colonies, by the Liberal Party which knit us into one great being. I would also forcibly remind them that in the days of the great Armageddon the leaders of our party bore a full share in guiding the patriotism of our people, and enabled this great Empire to claim victory as her portion.

Scotland has always been Radical and progressive at the elections, and her patriotism and sacrifice in any national emergency stand unequalled.

Why Labour has Triumphed

By TOM S. DICKSON, M.P.

IN any calculation of the future of political parties in Scotland, it would be an error, in my opinion, to assume that either the success of the Labour Party or the partial eclipse of the Liberal Party in the election of 1923 was due to some wayward tide that may ebb when next parties put their fate to the test. That undecided mass whose varying moods determine the "swing of the pendulum" was never less in proportion to the total electorate of Scotland than it is to-day. For this, there are definite reasons.

A geographical survey of the election results discloses Labour's main strength to be in that industrial belt of coal, iron, and shale which stretches from Fife and the Lothians in the East to the Ayrshire coast in

the West, with the highest point of concentration in Glasgow and Lanark county. In the latter area we have the richest part of Scotland. It has produced at once the greatest wealth and the most glaring poverty, the largest fortunes and the vilest slums. Here the struggles between master and man have been bitter, keen, protracted; and the workers have come to observe that the industrial interest of the employer—and not his Liberal or his Conservative creed—determined his attitude towards employees. This fact prepared the ground more quickly than elsewhere for an independent political outlook, and provided the conditions favourable to the Socialist, who declaimed: "A plague on both your houses." For thirty years or more now the Socialist has been fighting at every point of vantage in the big towns, at every street corner, wherever men do congregate. Their experience has been that of all pioneers: first, they were met with howls of execration and brickbats; then they were tolerated; finally, they have been accepted.

But faith (or the declaration of a new gospel) without works is dead. And the mass has been reached by channels it can appreciate when mere theorising would leave it cold. In every struggle with an employer, the Socialist would be found in the forefront; in shopwork committees, he was willing to take the risks; if a deputation had to beard a colliery manager in his den, the Socialist was there; in industrial disputes, in fighting property-owners, in running soup-kitchens, you would find invariably the Socialist at the centre. But not at the centre only: he would be found doing the meanest and most uncomfortable tasks, accepting victimisation and "the sack" as part of the day's darg, while the Liberal and Tory workman was much less in evidence. By these prosaic means, and not by any subtle and subterranean methods, the Socialist element has become the driving and directing power in the Trade Union and Labour movement in the industrial belt. Primarily tested in such ways, he has been selected for parish councils, town and county councils, and finally for Parliament. And in his representative capacity, the Labourist and Socialist has

gathered increasing power because he is more personally accessible to the rank and file; because he did not follow the old schools who nearly always came before the electors to solicit their support, and troubled them not again until once more in search of votes. Between elections, as during them, he kept continually in touch, arguing, debating, presenting his own case, and examining that of his opponents.

And from what point did the Socialist start? What purpose directed his energies in every sphere—industrial, civic, and political? The older issues over which our fathers had fought so strenuously had assumed lesser, and even lesser, importance. The elimination of poverty in a world teeming with potentialities was the problem to which the Socialist set himself. In a Republic as in a Monarchy, poverty is to be found; under Home Rule as within an Empire; within a Tariff Reform system as in a Free Trade system. Poverty persisted throughout each and all of these variations; therefore, the causes of poverty must be something more fundamental than governmental, territorial, and fiscal issues. The Socialist and the Labour Party (whose missionary fervour and tireless drive comes from the Socialist) seized this fact and attacked the capitalist system as the constant factor which produced the constant result of poverty. From day to day, from year to year, this doctrine has been preached throughout industrial Scotland. The Labour College has its branches and its tutors everywhere. In every town, and in almost every industrial village, groups of young Socialist men and women meet to study industrial history and economic development. The Liberal and Tory Parties have not been throwing up their youth to meet these in debate and discussion. Socialist Sunday Schools reach the children; there are Socialist choirs, art circles, dramatic societies, and an organisation of Socialist teachers. Always the Socialist is ever for public debate with defenders of the old order. Inevitably, Socialism has become the live centre of political controversy, with the Tory and Liberal Parties converging on similarity in their arguments against it.

If it be conceded that the big issue of modern political life centres round the defence of capitalism on the one hand, and the advocacy of the co-operative or Socialist Commonwealth on the other; if it is agreed that the Liberal Party, alike with the Conservative Party, stands for the maintenance of capitalism, then it was bound to follow, in my view, that there would be a crystallisation of political thought in two main directions. Also, it would appear to follow that two parties which agree upon a predominant issue—however much they differ upon minor issues—must come closer in their policy and their tactics. [Compare the speeches of Lloyd George with those of Winston Churchill and Lord Birkenhead, and observe the increasing tendency of “moderates” in both of the old parties to urge unity in combating “the Socialist menace.”] In such circumstances, the parties which take the most distinct and definite stand will persist, for your elector likes the definite and clean-cut line. The party which hesitates will be lost. To-day the Liberal Party is the party of hesitancy. As such it is not only fading; it is predestined to fade.

In my view, then, the issue has become too

clean-cut in the industrial areas of Scotland to permit of the existence of a party which endeavours to face both ways on that which must be the big issue in the elections to come. In central Scotland the Liberal Party will never “come back” unless it is content to be Liberal in name and blatantly Tory in policy and in purpose. In which case it will be Tory jam with a Liberal label, and faithful Radicals will discover the fraud. It may linger for a time in the rural areas; but there, too, the Labour Party is sounding a challenging note, and branches of the I.L.P. are springing up in remote and lonely places of the Highlands and the Islands. To me, it seems that a few years will see the battle confined to two great parties—the Labour Party with a Socialist objective; and the anti-Socialist Party, which will be a combination of present Tory and Liberal. Labourists and Socialists are confident of retaining and increasing their hold upon Scotland. Many old-time Liberals have come over with a swing, for in their opinion the Liberal Party has failed to develop its policy with the needs of the time. For them, Liberalism has become as a casket from which the jewel is gone.

“Pop Goes the Weasel”

LIKE a futrat bobbin' in a bourachie o' scrogs,
Is the glory o' God i' the herts o' men.
It pops oot here, an' it pops oot there,
An' it's nae sooner scansed than it's tint again,
Like a futrat bobbin' in a bourachie o' scrogs.

Like a futrat bobbin' in a bourachie o' scrogs,
That the gamey traps an' nails to a tree,
As sodjers did wi' the Son o' Man
When he 'good t'unsettle little auld Judee,
Like a futrat bobbin' in a bourachie o' scrogs.

HUGH M'DIARMID.

At the Sign of the Thistle

I. Frederick Victor Branford

BY WILLIAM KLOOS

[Mr. Branford as a poet has more honour abroad than in his own country, and it is with great pleasure that we present this critical study by a Dutch writer in the translation of Mr. F. A. Huybers.]

ANYONE who has the faculty of understanding with his full spiritual consciousness the art of writing poetry, both as to its psychic depths and its literary form, must admit that the average Dutch reviewer, while giving due attention to the style, will direct his criticisms from a point of view widely differing from that of the average critic of other nationalities. As a result of this individual standpoint, his conclusions are for the most part correspondingly wide of those arrived at by his fellow-critics.

It has indeed been more than once remarked that of the mental gifts bestowed upon man that of sound judgment and understanding known as common-sense is a feature peculiar to the Dutch character; and this quality, partly inherent in the race, has been enhanced by constant intercourse in the past with other nations. When this particular trait is allowed free rein and is untrammelled by foolish conventional restrictions, it certainly forms an excellent mental equipment. We can hardly place too high a value upon a quality which enables us to solve at the right moment some of the most difficult problems of life. But the quality of mentality which enables us to regulate our daily life is different in kind from the spiritual equipment which inspires the man of letters or the art critic (the latter demanding a special aptitude possessed only by the few). Philosophy calls this quality super-conscious, because it deals with matters outside the ordinary range of existence, and enables the critic to plumb the depths of the mysterious *ego* and to analyse some of its subtlest emotions. For it is only

in the very depths of the soul that the psychic forces come into play, and in truth reach the plane that touches the Absolute. It is on this plane that poetry comes into being, which otherwise is merely dry rhetoric or a stringing together of rhymes devoid of soul. It is on this plane that the heights or depths—call them what you will—of poetic fancy are attained; and the true critic will span the distance between the commonplace and the sublime, and realise that true poesy, springing from the absolute and unchangeable, must not be dealt with as an average product of man; for it is, in its essence, in direct touch with the Infinite, and therefore worthy of immortality.

With regard to literary criticism, the sooner it is acknowledged that the gift of æsthetic discernment and of true literary taste is a very rare one, the sooner will public opinion kill the foolish spirit of pedantry and self-assurance which is affected by "dilettanti," in *rebus æstheticis*. The dilettantism in which each individual indulges his particular fad would in my opinion be contemptible were it not so ridiculous. Hardly any one of these foolhardy souls who thrust themselves to the forefront approach the work of criticism in a spirit of reverence; nor do they apportion praise or blame according to sincere or honest conviction. They have some pet theory to advance quite outside the domain of literature; this man preaches communism, the next man something entirely different. Thus in passing judgment from their respective standpoints, they arrive at conclusions diametrically opposed to each other. The intelligent section of the community is completely baffled, and finally decides to judge for itself; even the critics must be perfectly well aware that the real truth is not amenable to such irreconcilable points of view.

Such is the situation as I am sorrowfully compelled to view it. I am therefore about to make an effort to show that literary criticism, especially when dealing with verse,

must be lifted above the region of individual prejudice, and free itself of vague theories and conflicting spheres of vision. I do not say this with the object of censuring any particular individual, but simply to emphasise the fact that it is far more difficult to pass a reliable opinion on poetry than on any other branch of literature.

No one in fact can be entitled to rank as a critic of verse who has not the natural gift of appreciating the finer subtleties of language as the medium for expressing the emotions of the soul. And naturally he is best equipped in this respect to whose inner consciousness the music as well as the inwardness of real poetry most strongly appeal, like the passing scent of flowers wafted by the breeze. But there is also another quality indispensable to the critic apart from the fully-developed sense of æsthetic beauty of verse, and one that bulks largely in the accomplishment of his task: I allude to that faculty of the mind which may best be described as philosophic penetration. By this I do not, of course, mean to imply that he should have mastered all philosophic systems, or aspire to fathom the limits of the human intellect; but that his philosophy should rest on the plane of *intuition*, and as such that he is able to face the great Riddle, the Riddle of Life, in a spirit of due reverence. His æsthetic sense must indeed be not only fully developed in the truest sense of the word, but he must have applied his philosophic intuition to those multiple problems of life, ontological, psychic, historical, and social, which have engaged the attention of thinkers, past and present. Otherwise he is likely to fail in a just and sympathetic understanding of the poet's inner meaning. For how could he understand portions of Walt Whitman or of Shelley without a previous knowledge of the subject-matter, the conflict of the social classes dealt with by the former, or the year-long struggle between pantheism and the belief in a personal God, to which so many of Shelley's poems bear witness. It is but a few years ago that a well-known Dutchman of letters boldly proclaimed that the famous world-poet had merely given us pretty-sounding verses, and that his daring innovations

and flights of fancy were merely strung together at random.

I can only reiterate my conviction that a philosophic-æsthetic appreciation of poetry as the outpouring of spiritual emotion is one of the most difficult tasks in the field of literature. And as the spirit of poetry is universal in all lands, and is the medium for conveying the subtlest as well as the highest emotions of which the human mind is capable, so, in order to do full justice to the poet's art, only minds attuned to the finer issues of human thought are capable of measuring its full value. Such minds are not met with in every-day life; they must have a broad outlook on human existence, coupled with a sympathetic understanding of the emotions which stir the heart of man. In a word a true critic is born rather than made. Could these truths be fully acknowledged by all those who choose to ponder over them, I am convinced that we should have fewer critics of the class I have referred to as "dilettanti," and less amateurish babble about poets and the art of poetry generally. The public would be the gainers by this return to sane discussion; we need no longer hesitate as to whom we should give ear in reading a criticism. For we should have the assurance that the verdict proceeded from someone mentally equipped to undertake the task, and that it was based upon a sane and sympathetic judgment of the particular work in question.

In 1916 my family and I made the acquaintance of the young aviation officer whose name stands at the head of this article. As stated in the British newspapers, he had been engaged in aerial combat with the enemy, and had fallen with his machine into the sea. After a life-and-death struggle he succeeded in reaching the Dutch coast, where he was naturally interned without further parley. Although an Oxford student, he was only English in the broader sense, being a pure-bred Scot. This was no doubt the reason that we were sooner on a mutually good footing than might have been the case had he been a thorough-going jingo. He was a perfect specimen of the well-bred British gentleman, albeit very simple in his

manners ; his frank bearing, sense of humour, and sympathetic nature gave me at times the impression that Scots and Dutch civilisation have something more mutually in common than either of these has with the rather stilted and pretentious type of British "culture." As the war was over shortly after our meeting, and Branford was able to return to Scotland, we parted as good friends, one of whom sets out on a long journey ; and we expressed the mutual hope of a future meeting. For myself, not the least important feature of our war-made friendship was that I discovered in Branford a true poet ; and having a very good knowledge of the Dutch language he was fairly acquainted with our modern poetry, his comments thereon revealing a keen sense of discrimination. And on other subjects we were in complete accord.

He himself, as a Scotsman without any special bias in favour of England, had no whole-hearted hatred of the Germans, although he naturally condemned their crimes against art and innocent lives ; and he dismissed the subject with a few energetic remarks. While a valiant fighter so long as he sat in his flying-machine, the whole war between the nations of Europe, in which blatant stupidity was accepted as the acme of wisdom, appeared to him incomparable folly. He proved himself an excellent soldier, but at heart he always remained the sensitive and far-seeing artist, the philosopher in his views of life. So for him the war was nothing but an experience with which his inner self had naught in common.

Although Branford did not care to discuss in detail the psychological side of the war, yet it may be inferred that his views were much the same as those of other people of sound judgment. So our friendship remained after he had returned northward and rested near the rocky fastnesses of his Scottish home, with his face towards the sea. Our correspondence was not very frequent through the force of circumstances ; but it was regular, and it was with the first batch that I received his "Novissima Verba" in the original.

Branford is not a voluminous writer. This is not through any lack of ability as the unthinking might infer, but because he would

not stoop to turn out verse merely pleasant to the ear and devoid of that inner spirit of the poet who touches the unknown. It is easy with a little technical skill to produce rhyme that gives a passing sense of satisfaction ; but work of this kind does not outlive the writer. Like all true poets, he only writes when the spirit moves him. Many Dutch poets through the ages have failed to acquire that self-discipline which allows the poet to give rein to his verse only when the mood raised him to a just level of artistic self-realisation. Branford, however, has always worked upon these lines, with the result that his contributions, as seen from the newspaper cuttings which have reached me, have received recognition in leading journals and magazines—the best collection of verse from a young writer that has been seen in the present generation. I was much struck by the general level of the criticism ; it seems that in one European country at least—that is, in Great Britain—newly-appearing MSS. are entrusted by respective editors to brains capable of judging their merits, the men chosen for the purpose having ample intellectual attainments. One can easily see from the nature of their criticisms that they are far removed from the mere dilettante, and that owing to their grasp of the subject-matter in the domain of psychology and philosophy, they can avoid the fault of intruding the personal note in dealing with the matter at issue.

In referring my readers, or those of them as yet unacquainted with this poem, to Branford's *Titans and Gods*, I have no intention personally to advertise its merits, and will merely refer to the fact that one of the critics compares him with Shelley for his philosophic depth of vision. A comparison may reasonably be made between the great Englishman who passed away a century ago and the young poet, now, as I understand, in his thirtieth year. For in spite of disparity in methods of versification and difference of spiritual vision, in one main point they agree : that both endeavour to approach the invisible and unknowable which lie behind the visible universe, and to symbolise, each according to his individual fancy, the inward and spiritual emotions of man.

In order to give the reader an idea of the manner in which Branford touches the metaphysical, I reproduce hereunder one of his sonnets. To those endowed with true poetic discernment, a close study of the sonnet will reveal a rugged, yet withal a mystic, flavour of the rocky Scotch landscape, a suggestion of the soil; and in this poetic quality Branford may almost be regarded as Shelley's antitype. But in spite of the mysticism underlying his verse, he remains still more the poet of reality than Shelley himself in his description of nature in *Alastor*; but, on the other hand, Branford's metaphysical insight gives evidence of genius quite equal to Shelley's.

Here is the sonnet in question :

A BLADE OF GRASS

Horses I see, and on the horses Gods
Cumbering desolation as they massed
In battle on the plains, around the vast
Toil of the Titan Masons, in whose hods
Swirled the red energy of lightning rods,
As they this cloud-compelling trophy cast;
Till conquered chaos withered in the blast
Of Heaven's loud bugles blown at diremost
odds.

Here is the heart of hazard, where the fate
Of cosmic things hangs dubious to the end.
Nor shall the traces of the sword endure,
Nor all man's wit the matter arbitrate.
The awful powers are armed and naught's
secure!

Within this blade the hostile stars contend.

I feel convinced that many of my readers will comment on the foregoing somewhat in this fashion: "I can make nothing of it; to tell you the truth, it seems nothing but an effort to string together high-sounding phrases with an appearance of reality; but to me they are merely rhetoric without meaning."

To those who judge so hastily I reply: "Remember that you are Dutch, and that your forefathers took a precisely similar view of the much simpler and more intelligible *Mathilde* of Jacques Perk, when during the poet's life portions of it appeared in the Dutch *Spectator*. This was forty years ago, when what was called the "new poetry" came into existence. It was ridiculed and parodied by critics of the day as incompre-

hensible; and poor Jacques Perk had to pass away without a word of recognition beyond that of a friend. We may congratulate ourselves that since then literary taste has greatly changed; and in the next generation, the present one, Jacques Perk has come into his own.

It must be admitted that Mr. Branford's concept of the universe being contained in a blade of grass may appear somewhat bold to the Dutch mind accustomed to regard poetry as a series of jangling rhymes devoid of any lofty flights of imagination. An effort, therefore, to place the idea more clearly before the reader may not be out of place. Thus, by its power of imaginative flight, poetic fancy, considered as an effluence of the Godhead or the Absolute, can transcend the limitations of time and space; for both of these, when philosophically considered, are human concepts; and when set free from sense limitations, resolve themselves into a point without dimensions. Judged from this standpoint the blade of grass and the universe do not differ fundamentally in size, as is the case when we regard them from a materialistic point of view. The same argument will apply equally to their diversity of aspect. For Divine Mind, the omnipresent Essence to which no other term can be applied but the "IT" itself, is the only reality lying behind all visible phenomena; hence the diversities which the unthinking accept as diverse in the ultimate sense only represent a difference in degree, as seen through the medium of the senses, and not in kind, as proceeding from the Absolute. Thus the idea, instead of being a pretty metaphor, expands itself into a highly abstruse philosophical postulate. The Bible student will find many poetic passages revealing a similar trend of thought; these at first sight might be attributed to the alien mentality of the Jewish race, but on closer inspection their deeper meaning becomes apparent.

Whoever may care to visualise and penetrate the inner meaning of this richly-coloured metaphor will realise that the author, in a single verse of fourteen lines, has plumbed the depths of the mystery of Being, and the superficial realism of the reader will be jolted

into a deeper vein of thought. All that we can know through the aid of our finest perceptions is mere shadow. The mysterious invisible Unknown alone remains. The poet reveals to us this invisible realm, which we cannot grasp as reality through our reason, but we accept the picture as his fancy paints it. And the conclusion of the verse leaves us in presence of the everlasting riddle—the Why, Wherefore, and Whither, the destiny of man. Let each one answer the question according to his lights.

II. Bruce à la Française

By MALCOLM McCOLL

WHEN one thinks of it, it is curious how few Scots novelists have gone for a story to our country's fight for independence. Scott tackled it in *The Lord of the Isles*, the dullest and feeblest of his long poems. Annie Swan, if I mistake not, devoted a novel to the fortunes of a young gentleman who was "out" with the Bruce, and did not succeed in differentiating him much from her heroes of middle-class Edinburgh. There is, of course, Miss Porter; but of Miss Porter more anon. At any rate, whether it is because the Scottish artistic temperament instinctively shrinks from a period whose characteristic is success, and prefers to dwell on the tragedies of Flodden and the '45, or because it simply will not rise to a great but difficult occasion, the fact remains that twenty years of our history, in which we ran the whole gamut from stark suffering to brilliant triumph, remain neglected, despite the fact that they hold material for a dozen tragedies and a dozen romances. It may be that a Scottish renaissance will see the opportunities these years present, and reinterpret to a new generation two of the noblest monuments of heroic verse in our literature—the epics of Barbour and of Blind Harry. If it is to be so, it may not be uninteresting to examine the work of a French artist who, greatly daring, has given us what so far the Scottish author has failed to deliver.

M. Leon Charpentier is a writer with much

to his credit. He has written plays, poems, and novels. He has specialised in things Chinese, and his Chinese plays are justly admired? He has attempted the historical novel with considerable success in his Hundred Years War story, *Le Capitaine de "Grande Compagnie"*; and it may be that in his studies he cannot have failed to have met those gallant Scots auxiliaries who maintained their country's honour on half a hundred stricken fields, and that that circumstance, aided by the recollection of gallant deeds in later and sterner battles, may have led him irresistibly to the choice of our war of independence as subject for a second novel.

M. Charpentier is an historical novelist of the French school. He deals in historical personages, and, while not falsifying history more than an historical novelist may claim the right to do, he does not object to take considerable liberties with it. At the same time he takes his task seriously. He studies his sources as a novelist, not as an historian. Detail, not criticism, is what he wants; and that one should be totally unable to base his Bannockburn on a survey map does not worry him, provided you recognise the battle as Bannockburn, and a good battle at that. Given plenty of detail, he will select all he needs and complete the psychological part out of his own, which is a French, head. Consequently it is no use expecting to find the Bruce of Barbour in M. Charpentier's pages. He gets nearer the Wallace of Blind Harry; but Wallace is only an introduction, and does not interest his naturally aristocratic mind as Bruce does, and so, while Wallace is a Scot of a kind, you could never mistake the Bruce for anything else but a Frenchman, who can declaim as well as any of Corneille's heroes, except that he eschews Alexandrines for a prose, which, however attractive to French readers, inevitably suggests all the little traits of the Gaul in caricature.

That is not to say his Bruce is ridiculous. M. Charpentier's hero is strange, no doubt, and foreign-looking; but this is a legitimate transformation, if not one that a Scots writer could perpetrate, though one shudders to think what some of our ultra-moderns would perpetrate if suddenly let loose on Bannock-

burn. And being legitimate, it is an interesting study. Let us study it.

We start with the inevitable historical introduction from the death of Alexander III., each chapter of which is a novel in embryo, and we pass to the murder of Marion Wallace, the revolt of her husband, Stirling Bridge, Falkirk, and the withdrawal of the chieftain of Elderslie before the hostility of the nobles. It is here we first meet Bruce, sent by the nobility to persuade Wallace to abandon the struggle, and, after the delivery of a set speech by the latter, Bruce "taking him in his arms and pressing him to his heart," swears: "I swear to live or die for the liberty of our country." Seven years later, one page further on, Wallace is taken, judged, and executed, and Bruce has not yet begun to think of fighting, much less dying, for anything. Indeed, even a year later we find him at the Court of Edward, fast in the toils of Pretty Katty, "a renowned and powerful courtesan, the idol of English chivalry."

With much more insight than the uninstructed reader, Edward of England divines Bruce's possibilities, and knowing of a plot against his own life, sends out Bruce to meet it, dressed in the royal robes. Here M. Charpentier has the chance for the sort of scene he can do so well. Into the snare Bruce promptly falls, and as the assassin's sword is at his throat he recognises in the wielder his brother Edward. It is enough. The seven-year-old oath is remembered: Pretty Katty fails to hold him even for an hour; and up the great north road Scotland's future King hurries to his destiny.

Tactfully the novelist draws a veil over the many questions which his long-deserted wife must have asked, and we are hurriedly bidden to meet the Red Comyn, with the result that history tells us, where, by the way, M. Charpentier misses the effective incident of Kirkpatrick and his "mak siccar." It would not have spoiled his delight in chronicling the scenes where Bruce, struck into unaccountable trances, sees before him his murdered rival, and it would have given life to a wooden scene—wooden, because M. Charpentier cannot approve of the dispatch in a holy place of

even so despicable a traitor. The coronation at Scone follows, enlivened by an attempt at assassination by Comyn's followers, and the resumption of war should be at its heels; but, instead, with all the French passion for a proper and dramatic termination of an *affaire*, Pretty Katty must needs appear disguised as a minstrel, sweep the new crowned King off his feet, and be baffled only by the appearance of the devoted wife, whose settled, but not unnatural, gloom acts as a douche of cold water on the hot passions of her spouse. The renowned courtesan is repulsed, attempts revenge by poison, repents, drinks the poison herself, is saved by a sorceress's draught, and departs from the story—all at a prodigious speed that leaves one giddy.

It is possible that M. Charpentier felt the absurdity of this chapter; but that he did not relish it is clear from his treatment, for beside it d'Artagnan's passing flirtation with another and lesser Katty is surcharged with tenderness and passion. The *affaire* successfully done with, Bruce now settles down to war, but we hear very little of it. Instead, we get the finely handled episode of the sack of Kildrummie, in the King's absence, by the Lord of Lorn, the brave death of Nigel Bruce, the woes of the Queen of Scotland, and the chivalrous intervention of the "Comte de Lorvey," much of which is due to M. Charpentier's imagination, but is all well conceived and boldly executed. Then comes triumph and M. Charpentier's most effective scene.

By a curious freak of fate, which has overtaken better writers than M. Charpentier, the most impressive thing in the book is its villain, Edward I. His hate of the Scots is epic, translating itself into the swift remorseless action of a fanatic and the unreasoning paroxysms of a raging madman, and out of that hate M. Charpentier has constructed a dominating figure of tremendous power, which overshadows everything else in the book, even its hero. The old King is dead, mouthing his fury till breath fails, and his son is a *roi fainéant*. To him comes the wretched Mowbray, paroled from Stirling, to appeal for aid for the last stronghold of the English. For one terrible moment Edward I. relives in

Edward II., but it is only for a moment; and to throw, as it were, final light on the character of the Hammer of the Scots, it is to command dishonour. It is a fine touch.

The rest is easy; Bannockburn, and then the inevitable historical epilogue, with the Douglas's last fight, and the battle of Dupplin, and M. Charpentier's task is over. Perhaps my analysis has seemed a little contemptuous, but *L'Épopée de la veille Écossé* is a fine novel. It has the true authentic air, though all the scenery is French, and there is hardly an honest Scot in the whole of the *dramatis personæ*. But it deserves Scottish readers—for its own sake, no doubt, and for another reason: it may draw in these days attention to a somewhat neglected book, but a very great book, *The Scottish Chiefs*. With all the defects of her age, sex, and temperament, Miss Porter wrote a great Scottish novel. She went as far astray with her amorous Countess of Mar as M. Charpentier with his Pretty Katty, but she had grasped the essentials that the war of independence was the first battle of democratic nationalism. For vivid description, for action, for drama, she leaves M. Charpentier, modern and masculine as he is, far behind. It is not fair to compare her Bannockburn with his, for, after all, Miss Porter was describing as a patriot the greatest victory in Scotland's annals. But compare her magnificent—despite its rhetoric—description of the Barns of Ayr and the vengeance of Wallace with M. Charpentier's perfunctory account, and, still more, her description of the death of Edwin Ruthven at Wallace's feet with M. Charpentier's account of the death of Nigel Bruce, which reads like a pale copy of Miss Porter, and all the advantage is with the lady. The curious thing is that she stands in isolation. There is no rival to her in our land, and so we are driven back, not without profit, on M. Charpentier. But should we not be ashamed?—especially when Miss Porter is a Scot only by adoption.

NOTE.—*M. Charpentier's novel is published by Albert Méricant, of Paris, and costs 6f. 75.*

III. Charles Macintosh

By MARY BLAKE

If some years ago—say, the years before the war—you had chanced to wander among the woods and dells around Dunkeld, you might have seen a tall, spare figure, white-bearded, and stooping a little with the weight of years, with a roughened Scots face, out of which gleamed singularly piercing but kindly eyes, who, if you had passed the time of day with him, would have answered you in the cultured tones of an old Scots gentleman, and, if you continued to talk, would have led you to curious plants, strange nests, and little-seen flowers. Had you asked the children in the village they would have told you that you had spoken to "Charlie Macintosh." Had you pursued your enquiries you would have been told he was a retired postman, a skilful player of the 'cello, a keen Radical, a staunch upholder of temperance, and a leading man in the national Church. You might have been told more, for this kindly old gentleman had many friends and no enemies; and if, still curious, you had mentioned his name in certain exclusive circles, you would have heard that he was a very great naturalist.

Charles Macintosh belonged to a Scotland that is passing—passing perhaps inevitably, but scarcely to our gain; passing so completely that his story reads curiously like something out of a book, something unfamiliar and terribly of the past. He was born in a thatched cottage in the little village of Inver on March 27, 1839; the son of a handloom weaver and a descendant of the murdered Macdonald of Glencoe, humble Scottish peasants, perhaps, but people of a character, and of an education which, if different, was perhaps higher and better than a similar family would have had in these days of progress. Educated by fits and starts, the lad showed no disposition to leave his native strath. Handloom weaving was dying, and he became a worker in the local sawmill which accounted for the timber of Atholl and Murthly. For two years he worked there, and then an accident cost him the thumb and all the fingers of his left hand. From hence-

forth he was that most tragic thing in a village—a cripple.

Macintosh could hardly have failed for being a remarkable man, but that he was anything more was due very largely to that accident. He was a born observer and student of nature, but the worker who works six days a week and respects the Sabbath on the seventh has little time for nature study. Now he was no longer a worker; he was free, and his appointment as post-runner gave him just the opportunities which he craved. He had the inestimable advantage of being originally no student. His love of nature had no connection with textbooks or the examination-desk. It was deep and instinctive, founded on a deeply religious sense of the beauty of the world and man's kinship with it: the attitude of a worshipper who studies because he wishes to understand. His first book was a modest shilling handbook on ferns; and the search for and identification of the many ferns in the district turned him into a real, if a little amateurish, botanist. That was before his accident, and thereafter as "postie" he was all day under the sky learning eternally as he tramped road and path.

There have been many men whom fate has placed in the country who have known nature and been kin to bird and beast, and never progressed any further. But there was in this Scots lad a desire to know. It was unconnected with any sense of the economic value of knowledge; it is very questionable if thoughts of fame through knowledge ever entered his mind. He never picked up a great work on natural science with the flickering *Forsitan et nomen* dancing before him. He simply wanted to know. To many it seems an easy task—the mere collection and absorption of textbooks. But such book knowledge was not his desire. To him the book was merely a means of explanation, invaluable but secondary; even if to complete—indeed, give meaning to—his observations, books were necessary. But reading did not come easy. He had been well-grounded in the village schools; but the technical training for scientific reading and, still more, for writing, had to be painfully acquired. It was acquired with such earnestness that this product of a

village school, who rarely left his strath, taught himself the most tricky of all European tongues, scientific German.

It was when his mind was filled with the desire to know as he daily stocked it more densely with bits of uncorrelated knowledge that he met a now-forgotten personage, whose work for Perthshire still abides—Dr. Buchanan White, to whom we owe the exhaustive *Flora of Perthshire*. To the scientist this eager student was a delight; to Macintosh the scientist was a heaven-sent guide and helper, and the friendship that united these two men was a singularly deep and beautiful thing. From these days in the seventies, when he gathered specimens for White, till death faced him and saw him quiet and dignified before the last visitor as before his fellows, Macintosh worked as a scientist under many difficulties which one by one were surmounted.

The story of his life, so feelingly told by his biographer, Mr. Coates, is an uneventful one, and yet a great one. Lives like his do not lend themselves to the uses of biography. They lack incident, for they are not lived in the crowded haunts of men, but they have peculiar virtue of their own. One could not spend an hour with Charles Macintosh in the flesh without feeling better and wiser, and it is with that same feeling that one rises from his biography. It is at once a little life and a great life. Macintosh's name is not on the great roll of scientific discoverers. He was not one of those who divine a great synthesis; he was first and foremost an observer who drew lessons for life, not seeking to create a scientific system. What, one might ask, did one expect from a "postie"?—For religion, for life, that deep earnestness and confident faith that once characterised the Scottish peasantry; for science, the discoveries of rare specimens, the work of a country naturalist. That, surely, is all that could be expected. As a matter of fact, this self-trained countryman made contributions of permanent value to science in botany and zoology. Some of it is enshrined in the *Transactions of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science*—a model society of its kind; his valuable census of the bird life of Strathbrann appears in Mr.

Harvie-Brown's *Vertebrate Fauna of the Tay Basin and Strathmore*, and names no fewer than thirty-four species in this narrow valley—a bald statement which conveys no idea of the work of patient observation involved. Most valuable of all, and work which has given him a secure place in that branch of botany, were his researches into the various groups of fungi. It was his last work when eyesight was failing him, and he was already over seventy. Yet he added in one group alone—the “Cup-fungi”—six previously unknown in Britain, and two which had never been known before. Many better equipped students have nothing like this to their credit.

These facts are taken from Mr. Henry Coates' monumental biography, the work of a friend as well as of a fellow-scientist, and a book which should find a place in every Scottish library. Not for its merits alone, but because men like Charles Macintosh are the peculiar glory of our country. One can imagine a rural postman elsewhere knowing the nature of his district intimately. One can

hardly imagine him equipped with a microscope, surrounded by serious textbooks, and learning a difficult language in order to know more abundantly and to instruct those who were his teachers. There is in this career, lived in the narrow confines of a Highland parish, recking little of honours or fame, yet in its way comparable to those of better-known but less modest or more fortunate ones, something specifically Scottish, and nothing more so than in this, that he would not have used the term “more fortunate,” counting a life spent in beloved study in the simple round of daily duty, on weekday or Sabbath, in the service of his fellow-men, as something to which the adjective “fortunate” is too weak to be applied.

NOTE.—*The standard, indeed the only, biography is “A Perthshire Naturalist: Charles Macintosh of Inver.” By Henry Coates, F.S.A. (Unwin: 18s. net. Of this an excellent abridgment has been published lately, entitled “Charlie Macintosh: Post-runner, Naturalist and Musician.” (Unwin: 3s. 6d. net.), especially designed to appeal to younger readers, and beautifully illustrated.*

At the End

WHEN the long years are past, and youth behind me
Looms far away as some lone misty star,
When the warm hands of love no longer bind me,
And voices call no longer from afar;
Gone all desire and tumultuous longing,
Cold as the ash of fires of yesterday,
The myriad dancing thoughts that once were thronging
My busy mind as still and cold as they.

Then all I'll ask is this of those that knew me,
To lay me with my face towards the sea,
That my poor form be lulled by songs that drew me
To the vast waters of Eternity.
Ah! then the Hour of Beauty will enfold me,
And Peace will come to me down ways of light,
Love once again with thrilling arms will hold me,
And veils of dark be lifted from my sight!

BARBARA E. SMYTHE.

Arne Garborg, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. M'Diarmid

By J. G. OUTERSTONE BUGLASS

THESE three writers have striking affinities in many respects (apart altogether from the pitch to which they have carried their gifts, the extent of their literary output, and their respective position from a European standpoint), and no little interest attaches to a comparison of their relations to the national renaissances in their respective countries—Norway, Ireland, and Scotland. Internally—*i.e.*, in comparison with their contemporary compatriots—their rôle is extraordinarily similar in many vital respects, and their methods not dissimilar, making due allowances for the differences in national condition and psychology.

In his *James Joyce: His First Forty Years*, Herbert S. Gorman points out how in the case of the Irish literary Revival, when prose eventually followed drama and poetry in what was, first of all, an imaginative rebirth, it naturally found its most perfect outlet (the initial stage which has only just begun to take unmistakable shape in Scotland). "From a false exaggeration of character to an indefinite approximation of reality the Irish sketch-writers steadily forged their way. A kindling sense of nationalistic pride went hand in hand with a deepening comprehension of the subjective values of literary creation to curb their inclination to clown their own humorous aspects. The vacant laughter of a condescending multitude of strangers began to mean less to them than the approval of an intelligent minority of their own blood. . . . The days of amusement had slid perceptibly into the days of revelation, and, best of all, into interior revelation. It was time to study the heart and the brain and the peculiar instincts that made an Irishman an Irishman. Nothing less than a meticulous observation and a sedulous avoidance of the old sentimentality that had overrun Ireland could make this possible."

It is an identical task to which Mr.

M'Diarmid has set himself in his reaction against the entire conception of "the canny Scot" and his contemptuous repudiation of Kailyairdism and the Burns cult in all their shapes and forms. An Irish reading public had been gradually cultivated up to that degree, however. In Scotland it is otherwise. There is no nationalist press. Harry Lauder rules the roost. Mr. M'Diarmid, however, does not worry about a public. He writes as if the necessary public were already in existence—although, as a matter of fact, it may take generations yet to emerge. He is under no delusions as to the actual political and cultural condition of his country. While he fights it steadily in his programmatic and propagandist writings and seeks to undermine the false Scottishism into which the great Burns cult, the St. Andrews Society, and other associations have steadily degenerated on the one hand, and inveighs against the progressive Anglicisation of Scotland on the other (for he rightly regards these two things as complementary, as aspects of each other), in his creative work he treats both as non-existent, as unthinkable. His work assumes a Scotland which has never ceased to be independent, free, and progressive, maintaining a distinctive culture and language of its own, and asserting itself fully as an essential and invaluable element in world-culture. The Scottish people may be indifferent to Home Rule; but Mr. M'Diarmid coolly assumes it throughout not merely as a *fait accompli*, but as an unalterable condition of national autonomy which always had obtained and always will obtain. His work is almost entirely unintelligible unless this basic assumption is understood. He writes as if the Crowns and Parliaments had never been united—as if, in his own words, "there was no England and never had been, and Scotland was, like Ireland, an island off the coast of Europe."

"Scotland," he declares, "is coterminous

with the universe." In other words, his position is that of the true internationalist against that of the literary chauvinist. It is the antithesis of regionalism, and of what all small and essentially non-artistic minds fancy is meant when they hear of a nationalist movement. It is, therefore, not surprising that his work has been condemned as un-Scottish in its technique and ideas—especially as he neither suffers fools gladly nor at all. He detests mediocrity, and bourgeois mentalities in general, with an icy venom. The phenomenon is not a new one: prophets are seldom honoured in their own country. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* similarly "astounded and outraged that body of Irishmen who regarded the Gaelic nature with romantic veneration and exploited it in sentimental drool"; and Gorman observes, in words that apply equally well to Scotland and Mr. M'Diarmid, that "this romanticisation of the Irishman has, so far as the rest of the world is concerned, worked the nation an unintended wrong. It has obscured a distinguished cerebralisation which manifests itself in more than a sharp wit. It is possibly because the Irishman has been so coloured by romance that we have grown to accept him as a creature of emotions; that James Joyce, at a first cursory glance, appears to be so un-Irish in his approach towards his work. Yet a little consideration will show him to be essentially Irish, the possible product of no other country. While the Irish were a dominated people it was, perhaps, but natural to regard them from a romantic sentimental point of view. But now the pendulum is swinging the other way. Passing from the romantic-sentimental stages, the Irish mind will assert itself as a cerebral force—a force strengthened by the innate mysticism that is the heritage of its spiritual development. Joyce is Ireland's first great cerebral writer. Being the first, it is but natural that he should be misunderstood by a people still lingering in the old heroic tradition."

Mr. M'Diarmid similarly goes dead against the popular assumptions and vehemently attacks the stock-conceptions of things Scottish from the same cause; but his task in Scotland is a more complex and difficult

one, because the issues have never been so dramatically perceived as in Ireland. The Scottish position, while fundamentally that of Ireland while still under English domination, is inversely construed by the great majority of the people themselves. They are like the slaves who did not wish to be set free. Scotland has never been a "distressful" country. National affairs are steeped in a further stage of unreality than Irish affairs ever were. Mr. M'Diarmid rightly declares that the conceptions presently entertained by the bulk of Scotsmen of their own character, attainments, and rôle have been insidiously ingenerated by the English themselves (with the complicity of a section of the Scottish intelligentsia) as part and parcel of their policy of assimilating Scotland to England. Scotland has been coloured not so much by romance—as Ireland has—but by a horrible pseudo-realism, a subtly degrading denigration, and the effects of which are infinitely more difficult to get to grips with than the romantic sentimentalities which prevailed in Ireland.

Politics apart, Mr. M'Diarmid resembles Mr. Joyce in his preoccupation with death, sex, and, above all, religion. "It is a curious thing, do you know," remarks Cranley in the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; "how your mind is super-saturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve." Mr. M'Diarmid's profane heterodoxy is of a similar kind, linking him significantly with the old Makars; and his attitude to the conventional religion of his country must be assumed to be not unlike that of Stephen Dedalus, who, in reply to the question, "You do not intend to become a Protestant?" answers: "I said that I had lost the faith, but not that I had lost self-respect. What kind of liberation would that be to forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is illogical and incoherent." But his (Mr. M'Diarmid's) reply would be the other way round: "If I am to adhere to an absurdity, let me adhere to a real absurdity—one which is illogical and incoherent (Protestantism), rather than change over to a half-hearted absurdity which still remains logical and coherent (Roman Catho-

licism). As for self-respect, it is the attribute in the main of people who have nothing better to respect."

"It is said of Mr. Joyce that he belittled the idea of a national theatre for Ireland, and even suggested that any funds might be better invested in the production of European masterpieces. That possibly sounded more unpatriotic than it was meant to be. I doubt whether Mr. Joyce is either patriotic or unpatriotic. He is not provincial, and he refuses to circumscribe his mind with the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea." Mr. M'Diarmid for similar reasons uses a world-wide vocabulary of ideas; studs his Doric poems and plays with references to foreign writers in every country in Europe, of whom few Scots, if any, know anything; gibes at his contemporaries for their mental parochialism, and ridicules the pretensions of writers like Joseph Laing Waugh and Gilbert Rae, who, sycophantic to the mob's detestation of "highbrowism" and to the present pseudo-Scottishism, express an essential mindlessness in terms of domestic anæmia. When Gorman refers to "the banal depth to which Irish fiction had fallen—a vulgar, falsely virile, slap-stick medium compact with clownishness and Drury Lane melodramatics," he equally well defines the type of Scottish writer who is still exclusively popular, and it is true of that type as of *Handy Andy* and the burlesque heroes of Lever, "that they were enough to disgust any artist who had begun to coordinate his cerebellum with his medulla oblongata." So far as the Scottish vernacular is concerned, however, Mr. M'Diarmid is the only writer who has reached this position; and he has not been tending towards it, but further and further beyond it into the *terra nullius* of Scots psychology ever since he first began to write. But it is as grotesque to call him un-Scottish as it is to call Mr. Joyce un-Irish. As Mr. Gorman says of the latter: "Any broad observation of modern Irish letters will reveal a deliberate shifting of modes, the slow turning of an emerald so that its varying facets strike the light. From polemical outbursts occasioned by a thwarted sense of nationality through a dream-like return to the pale wizardry of the ancient gods,

down to an autochthonous naturalism which embraced dramatic representations of peasant life, the Irish Revival has steadily marched towards a cerebral revelation of the essential Gaelic spirit. From the obvious, though intense, outcries of the school of Davis and Mangan, Ireland has passed through a sudden literary rebirth in the belated recognition of its own huge province of native material. Exhausting (or, rather, being satiated) with this rich heritage, its modern writers have turned to the depiction of *mœurs contemporains*. An inward groping was the natural corollary. Man progresses through God to man by a most reasonable road. It is but a consistent step, after all, from the exalted mysticism of A. E., and the mournful symbolism of William Butler Yeats to the meticulous spiritual analyses of James Joyce." So far as Scotland is concerned, Mr. M'Diarmid has merely short-circuited a similar development; but his emergence is (as far as the vernacular is concerned) a saltatory development and not a stage reached in a process of evolution, for at one bound he passed from the Kailyairdism reminiscent of *Handy Andy* to a cerebral nationalism analogous to that of Mr. Joyce.

While Mr. M'Diarmid thus resembles Mr. Joyce in his attitude to the religion of his countrymen, to sexual problems, to political and cultural nationalism, to humbug, hypocrisy, and sentimentalism, in his preoccupation with "interior revelation" (a preoccupation which incidentally implies an overwhelming interest in his countrymen that does not need to be bolstered up with any delusion regarding them), and in his European range in technique and ideas, he writes almost exclusively in a form of Doric which is no dialect in particular, but a new literary language drawn from all the dialects, like the Norwegian "Landsmaal" of which Arne Garborg (who has just died at the age of 73) was the leading exponent.

Garborg's work in Norway closely parallels Mr. Joyce's in Ireland and Mr. M'Diarmid's in Scotland in its political, moral, and religious implications. In his play *The Teacher*, 1896, he exclaims: "This sender of swords, this overthrower and remoulder of everything,

the man who came to make high that which was low, and low that which was high, to rouse kings and princes to a world-fight against himself—him we have made into a gentle Jesus, a ladies' Jesus, a prayer-book Jesus, nay, into a padlock for our larders and money-chests, and a night-cap for good rate-payers; and the gospel of the poor we have turned into a bulwark and a stronghold for the mighty of this world." And, again, in his novel *The Lost Father*, he cries: "Man has forgotten how to live. Life ought to be art, and it has become commerce."

Garborg was tremendously preoccupied with questions of sexual ethics, defending free divorce, and holding that mutual love is the sole and sufficient moral foundation for sexual relations, and that marriage in this respect is of no account, while, in regard to religion, of his novel *Tired Men* (1891), he says: "If I have had any practical purpose with my work it has been to combat dogmatical free-thinking, or rather to deliver people from the very newest seminarism. More persons than I had imagined have meant by free-thinking not to think freely—that is, to think your own thoughts—but to think like Mr. So-and-So, to think as it is fashionable to think. . . . Of course, I have amused myself a good deal at the bewilderment caused by the 'conversion of the free-thinker,' although I am perfectly aware of the reasons for being sad about it too." This is precisely the attitude of Mr. Joyce and Mr. M'Diarmid to those who either espouse or denounce the Roman Catholicism or the Protestantism with which, despite their heterodoxy, they are respectively so inquisited.

Space does not permit me here to go into the question of the success of the Landsmaal movement, and to point the moral as far as Scotland is concerned. It outraged the philologists, antiquarians, traditionalists, and formalists, just as Mr. M'Diarmid's generalised Scots bewilders the ingenuous people who

are interested in the exact demarcation of our Scottish dialects and in such nice questions as to whether "tae" is rightly used for "toe," "too," or "to" in Braid Scots. Garborg did his work, however, after Aasen and others had laid the grammatical foundations of their artificial new Norse. Mr. M'Diarmid has had no such forerunners. He has simply done the fundamental spadework to his own satisfaction, and cares nothing for the opinions of the "authorities" or of anyone who is more interested in the letter than in the spirit. Professor Craigie and others who are busy dictionary-making and the Vernacular Circle of the London Burns Club he defies with an arrogance which cries: "A fig for your researches! If I write in a language I invent wholly myself and insist upon calling it Scots in defiance of all precedents, nothing you can do can prevent my ultimate success—if I write well enough! And on the other hand nothing you can do with all your industry can revive the Vernacular, until you can enlist a creative artist to put the breath of life into it once more."

Mr. M'Diarmid is the youngest of the three. Both Mr. Joyce and Garborg have a big and varied output to their credit. Mr. M'Diarmid has already written literary criticism, a big body of poetry, and several plays in the medium he has chosen, but none of his work is yet available in book form. If he succeeds in ultimately doing for Scotland linguistically and politically anything like what Garborg achieved for Norway, and in cerebral and psychological interpretation anything like what Mr. Joyce has done for Ireland, he will have no need to wish that he had hearkened to his professional and other advisers who on the one hand would wish him to abandon his "Landsmaal" and spice English with a strong selection of selected Vernacular words after a Riksmaal fashion, and on the other condemn his intransigence and racial introversionism.

The Literature of the Irish Revolt

BY ALEXANDER MACGILL

I

THE fires which consumed the heart of Dublin City in Easter week, 1916, did something greater than destroy mere stone and lime, for they destroyed the menace to the soul of Ireland. Prior to that event the people of Ireland were rapidly acquiring all that the material world had to bestow, but just as rapidly were they losing their own soul. Our different Churches and creeds explain how we may consummate the fine desires of our individual souls; and the bright incorporate soul of a people reaches its highest and purest manifestation in similar ways. Our religious sects and our political parties have striven long with one another, splitting hairs over definitions and formulæ, but amid the noise and conflict of controversy one bright dream held them. There have been different paths towards the realisation of Ireland's greatest good, and all those paths were broad; and there was joy and enthusiasm in the travelling. The great crowds did not realise the purpose of all those powerful labours; attracted by the comfort and security of the moment they did not seek to enquire. Great men strode about among the common folk and were ignored. Men rebelled in angry fury against J. M. Synge as men jeered at Lincoln. They found no time for Hugh Lane or Horace Plunkett. They held monster parades and assemblies as they did at Mullaghmast, turned out the musicians and the florid orators, made great resolutions, and then pursued their petty, cheap ways until the next occasion.¹ The soul of Ireland was smothered. The poets and the dreamers became impatient or gave up the task to others. Yeats cried out:

Was it for this the wild geese spread
The grey wing upon every tide;
For this that all that blood was shed,
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,

¹ This is all expressed in Lennox Robinson's very able play, *Patriots*.

And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,
All that delirium of the brave?
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Into the life of every nation at times there comes a period of gross materialism, when the very citizens of a land prefer the ways of the alien, and in every way imitate the customs and habits of those in power. There comes a time, however, when a nation is driven in upon itself, and often, when the national soul emerges from its hermitage, it bursts upon the world with a revolutionary energy. Norway did so, so also did Belgium, and many students of Irish literature and other intellectual expressions wondered whither Ireland was tending. The English and other aliens were so greatly engrossed with the political movement that the more intellectual movements were ignored. One would think that the political movement existed in spite of Ireland, so far removed was it from the keenest minds in the nation. What room was there in the bourgeois party for such minds as Pearse, MacDonagh, Horace Plunkett, "A. E.," Yeats, or Hyde? There was barely a literary organ prepared to receive the work of men so varied in outlook, but so keenly patriotic, though beneath the mass of mediocrity which represented the predominant political party other agencies were permeating which were to explode and destroy the whole fabric of Irish society. Close and careful observers recognised that the state must be built anew, and upon a different basis. One cannot truly say which produced the great change, the literary, the language, or the volunteer movement, so closely were those three activities dovetailed. In time to come the historian will properly evacuate the contribution to the final work made by each, but it might repay one for a little to notice the part played by the artists in prose and verse in preparing the revolt, and the influence produced by the revolt upon more recent Irish literature. One is struck

in reading contemporary Irish literature by the inevitableness of the rising. It could not have been avoided or delayed; it was as inevitable as it was necessary for the sake of Ireland's own soul. What spectator viewing the fine plays of the Abbey Theatre could avoid thinking far beyond the mummers of the moment, and dreaming of the great destiny of the land, broken and destroyed though it apparently was? Who could regard Yeats's *Kathleen ni Houlihan* as merely a stage-play, a pageantry of shadows? Who could regard its call to bitter service as only a poet's song chanted to amuse? To many who mourned and wept over the tragedy of Synge's *Deirdre* came the thought that that bright queen of the dead past was a symbol of Ireland that none could explain away. Those were bright and dangerous days, when the leaven of dreams and fiery inspiration was moving in the minds of the poets and the writers of fine prose. The young men were preparing; some were girding themselves with the hard, unmerciful swords of war, others armed themselves only with dreams.

Men loyal in their party allegiance were beginning to study again and to reinterpret the history of the country. They began to examine what the Irish Volunteers stood for, what the comrades of Tone desired and fought for, and what the men of '48 and '67 struggled for. One cannot help this harking back to the brilliant, fiery days of the past; when the young men of a nation cast aside the temporary problems of the present to study the past, that nation is on the road to joy and victory. It was not sufficient for the men of Ireland to recite Emmet's *Speech from the Dock* or Meagher's *Apostrophe of the Sword* or sing the songs from the *Voice of the Nation*. These memories of the past were symbols which, instead of being studied and properly interpreted, were accepted as they were, a word-for-word remembrance of them being regarded as sufficient. The spirit in English literature, which for convenience we may call Victorianism or Phariseism was gradually blighting the Irish genius and causing intelligent and inspired patriotism to be regarded as little more than

folly. The Irish Ark was being carried in the face of the enemy by pious resolutions and flowery perorations. The blight of apathy was being noted and analysed by men impatient of party and old-time shibboleth, and these literary products, stirring up the anger of the ignorant and the parochial, eventually brought about the Revolt. One may note the impatience of Yeats at the apathy of his countrymen in his *September 1913*; but two prose works, Canon Sheehan's *Graves at Kilmorna* and Lennox Robinson's *Patriots*, show us how lonely the real patriot was in those lifeless days. Reading either of those works one would have despaired of a resurrection in either the polity or the literature of Ireland. Yet the necessary evangel was proclaimed and the missionaries of the Gaelic League went into the most remote part of the country in spite of persecution and of apathy. The logical outcome of all the intellectual movements, not merely the language movement but also the submerged political movement and also the purely literary uprising, was that the people recognised the need for absolute separation. They ceased to hide their cause or to apologise for it in order to conciliate the English. They began to recognise the Parliamentary party as a shoddy, mean affair, without spiritual purpose or significance, and they turned from it as from a useless thing.

In the chaotic condition of intellectual life in Ireland it was necessary that strong personalities should guide the troubled mess and give purpose and direction to the blind groping. The correspondence of Yeats and John Eglinton in the *Daily Express* helped to discipline the more moderate intelligentsia, but it was necessary that house-room should be given to men and women not afraid to declare their gospels with apostolic energy. Thus one period had Arthur Griffiths's *Sinn Fein*, later came the *Irish Review* of Colum, Houston and MacDonagh, and afterwards *New Ireland*, with *Studies* pursuing a more stately course in the same direction. In none of those periodicals was there hesitation, indecision, or insincerity: all was vigour and a new, bright life. It is a very sad thing that the intellectual leaders of Ireland were

divorced from the political party. The same unholy hostility as was shown towards Davis and Young Ireland by the O'Connell dynasty and oligarchy was shown towards the keener minds in Dublin by the now happily deceased Parliamentary party. We need only instance the bitter antipathy of T. W. Russell for the new Co-operative organisation of Sir Horace Plunkett, and the attempt of the party to seize the military force of the Volunteers. The party of the publicans, the pawnbrokers, and the gombeen men at no time suffered from excess of imagination. They had empty, florid speeches of eloquent hostility for the English, and savage, cynical hostility for the non-party intellectuals of Dublin. Meditating upon their dreams of Ireland, the poets and artists found in the chilly contempt of friend and foe that those dreams became the more intense. They sought alliance, therefore, with parties and forces that did not compromise the cause of Ireland; and so we found men like Pearse, MacDonagh, Plunkett, and MacNeill creating an army, while Arthur Griffith, statesman of the New Ireland, was evolving a political scheme. The heartlessness of Parliamentarianism was dismissed by these men as impeding the progress of the Irish state, and all those bright minds allied themselves with the old Fenian idea of an independent Irish republic. Such men as these, in spite of the opinion of the enemy, did not go over to the Revolt for the sake of overturning the stable fabric of the state or to tear up the sacred principles of the Decalogue. What do the aliens make of such a man as Pearse, poet, shanachie, and pedagogue? He was no cheap revolutionary fanatic who wrote *The Singer* and *Iosagan*; it was no rowdy anarchist who delivered over the grave of O'Donovan Rossa the calm statesmanlike speech which one may compare with Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg or his Second Inaugural; rather, let us say, it was a poet speaking with the peer-like inspiration of a Hebrew prophet.

Pearse was a big man, how truly great we can now truly estimate; but during his lifetime few could sufficiently appraise his worth. Those whose speech is English will find his monument in the volumes published

by Maunsel. He was a complete man—a man of the heroic mould fit to be included in Carlyle's hagiology—poet, story-teller, and educationist. Then, one day he found himself the chieftain of an army and the head of a Republic, whose domain on that day extended over a few war-swept streets, but in a few days more would be swept away from the plane of material things by the guns of the enemy to take residence in the hearts and souls of about three million citizens.

Some great historian with a true knowledge of tragedy will describe and interpret the last meeting of the Council of the Irish Volunteers. Some might judge and measure the words and decisions of that meeting by utilitarian standards, but they will not solve the mystery. When Pearse and his comrades voted for an armed protest they were acting logically, for the literature and thought of intellectual Ireland were more and more recognising the principle of separation from the English influence. Those men knew defeat was inevitable as John Brown knew at Harper's Ferry in 1861, but a blood-offering was necessary. When those men walked out on Easter Monday with rifles in their hands, they did not walk merely out against the alien: at the same time they sought escape from the imprisoning materialism of prevalent Irish opinion. It was necessary, said a Confederate partisan, that blood should be cast in the face of the South before the latter would realise its separate destiny. But a far loftier motive actuated the men of 1916. Pearse, at once the head, the voice, and the soul of the Revolt, explained it all in his play *The Singer*. MacDara, after the quelling of a little useless rebellion, goes out saying:

One man can free a people as one Man
redeemed the world. I will take no pike;
I will go into the battle with bare hands.
I will stand up before the Gael as Christ
hung naked before men on the tree!

They fought for a vision, these men—a bright, undimmed vision—and they could not be moved from their soul's decision either by debate or threat, for they dreamed what Ciaran in Pearse's *The Master* dreamed:

The Seraphim and the Cherubim stand horsed. I hear the thunder of their coming. . . . O Splendour!

When was the Rising planned? No one can rightly tell, for in many minds it existed for all time, as true, perhaps, as the Day of Judgment, but as remote. But Pearse in *Christmas 1915* writes :

O King that was born
To set men free,
In the coming battle
Help the Gael.

And Thomas MacDonagh about the same time writes in his *Literature in Ireland* :

And it is well, too, that here still that cause which is identified, without under-
thought of commerce, with the cause of
God and of Right and Freedom, the cause
which has been the great theme of our
poetry, may any day call the poets to give
their lives in the old service.

Prior to the outbreak intellectual Ireland was being gradually emancipated from the bondage of materialism. This was the era that gave rise to the lovely work of Seumas O'Sullivan, and the impish genius of James Stephens, and that splendid assembly of literary treasures, *The Irish Review*. Such a periodical was necessary, because previous attempts at voicing the national sentiment were to a great extent under the influence of sects and traditions. The *Review* opened its pages to all Ireland, to the revolutionary and to the most conservative imperialist alike. It thereby gave hospitality to great work, "A. E." 's important study of rural Ireland, the stories of Lord Dunsany, and James Stephens's story of Mary Makebelieve. Joseph Campbell contributed a play, *The Rising-Out*, dealing in a masterly way with the rebellion in Antrim in 1798, but it has been allowed to remain in the pages of that unfortunate magazine which, by raising intellectual revolt in men's minds, had to pay the appropriate price in the flames and fury of Easter week. It left nothing in its place just so good until last summer when Seumas O'Sullivan started the *Dublin Magazine*.

Many, we might say most, of the great

writers were averse from the idea of a military rebellion. They believed in the power of reason and the extraordinary force of man's will exercised in pacific means. As in Scots literature, we find that Irish literature has its "Lost Leader." George A. Birmingham, in the fiery enthusiasm of a noble youth, wrote Irish novels that are masterpieces—*Hyacinth*, *Benedict Kavanagh*, *The Northern Iron*, *The Seething-Pot*, and *The Bad Times*; but in later days, in order to amuse his old age, he writes best-sellers that raise a laugh. When all Ireland had escaped from the atmosphere of Lever and Lover, and had come to ignore to a great extent the entertainments of Somerville and Ross, a man of the abilities of Birmingham moves backwards, losing the affection of the people of Ireland to gain the dollars of the English. He was becoming, gradually, the great novelist that Irish literature has lacked, but that literature will develop now without his aid. Canon Sheehan just missed greatness, and Birmingham could have attained it if he had continued the work of his early days, for after all, when he is dead, readers will have forgotten *General John Regan* and *Spanish Gold*. It is a pity that he has deserted the enthusiasms of his youth, for a good many of his class have been true to the Irish case and given their voices and their pens in that service.

II

It must have sounded like the last shock of doom when the guns spoke angrily in Dublin, for it was sufficient to have the war fought on the plains of Europe; but when the flames burst out in the city few realised at the time that they witnessed the flames of a violent Pentecost. People would have forgotten the warfare and the slaughter had it been only the rising of the underworld; but the men who fought were great men, men who had spent their days ennobling the soul of Ireland and making it lovely for the world's regard. Some forgotten chords of sympathy and understanding were struck when Dublin realised that the English were shooting Pearse, Plunkett, and MacDonagh. Then common men scrambled for the printed records of

their deeds and songs; ballad-singers chanted their memorial lays and devised "Last Speeches" for them. Ireland pulled herself together. For a little she was blinded and a little stupefied by the warfare in the streets of the capital, but the surprise and amazement gave place to an exalted pride that is well expressed in James Stephens's description of those seven days of destruction. Like the other intellectuals, he had no part in the sordid, soulless politics of the parliamentary régime. Like a true artist, James Stephens recognised the fact that the great uprising required not so much to be described as to be interpreted. For a connected historical narrative we may consult Wells and Marlowe's *History*; but those who seek to understand the exaltation and excitement of those days will turn to James Stephens's *Insurrection in Dublin*. In the conclusion to Miss Susan L. Mitchell's study of George Moore, of all unlikely places the most unlikely, the author turns aside from gibing and smiling at Moore to mourn upon the inevitable tragedy of Ireland. In a similar way James Stephens left aside his raillery to declare that in the failure of the military revolt the spiritual insurrection of Ireland had succeeded. Day by day he kept his journal of impressions made on his keenly sympathetic mind by the warfare that was destroying the stones of the edifices of his beloved city. He had to leave aside his work and his pleasures that he might reflect upon the terrible splendour of that tragic Pentecost. His friends were going down to death with the weapons of war resolutely in their hands. He had seen all types of men go out into the struggle, brightness and confidence in their eyes, and later, as the machinery of the conqueror ground out its decrees, he saw the names of the friends they had shot. Only such a one as he could write:

Nothing is lost. Not even brave men.
They have been used. From this day the
great adventure opens for Ireland. The
Volunteers are dead, and the call is now
for volunteers.

There is always something simple and
beautiful about all that James Stephens

writes, and he has the admirable gift of saying appropriate things in a very striking manner. For a time he amused his readers with his mannerisms and occasionally one could distinguish at the back of his lyrical pieces the laughter of a sardonic jester. Like Francis Thompson, he could play games with the stars and take his fun off the dignified archangels; but while one wearies, after a time, of the riotous ritual of much of Thompson's work, one is made by Stephens to feel on friendly terms with all the hosts of the sky. It is not always easy for the licensed jester to lay aside his motley and cease from his gibing. Shaw did it in *John Bull's Other Island*; but even there one is made aware of a personal point of view, whereas Stephens can sink his personality in the great emotion of the moment. The small man would have spoiled the brightness of his emotion by ranting upon political themes and shibboleths instead of concentrating upon eternal principles. It is this tenacious hold upon eternal ideals that has lifted the doctrine of Sinn Féin from being a back-street philosophy to the status of a national creed. The poets did that, the poets and Maxwell's fring squads. The elegies written in memory of the Dead Leaders might have been angry shouts of defiance and the animal's howl for vengeance, but that stoic Christianity, that now and again seizes upon the Irish mind, gave voice to a nobler elegy. James Stephens's *Green Branches* will take its place beside the richest and greatest memorials in the world's literature by reason of its beauty, its love for fellow-man, and that fine restraint in the face of adversity we can only find equalled in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, who would reform the world by the same fine doctrines as Stephens propounds. Who ever commemorated the mighty dead in finer lines than did Stephens in *Spring 1916*, Part III., in the little *Green Branches* volume?

In other lands they may,
With public joy or dole along the way,
With pomp and pageantry and low lament
Of drums and trumpets, and with merriment
Of grateful hearts, lead into rest and sted
The nation's dead.

If we had drums and trumpets, if we had
Aught of heroic pitch or accent glad
To honour you as bids tradition old,
With banners flung or draped in mournful fold,
And pacing cortège; these we would not bring
For your last journeying.

We have no drums or trumpets; naught have
we
But some green branches taken from a tree,
And flowers that grow at large in mead and
vale;
Nothing of choice have we, or of avail
To do you honour as our honour deems,
And as your worth beseems.

There is in the first line of the last stanza
a beautiful sentiment turned to a very fine
rhythm :

Sleep, drums and trumpets, yet a little time;
All ends and all begins, and there is chime
At last where discord was, and joy at last
Where woe wept out her eyes. Be not down-
cast :
Here is prosperity and goodly cheer,
For life does follow death, and death is here.

Joseph Campbell is much more mystical in
his voicing of Ireland's thoughts. Stephens,
too, can be mystical; but when one reads the
former's book of free-verse poems, *Earth of
Cualann*, one is made aware of tremendous
power at the back of the simple words, and
yet, even in *Raven's Rock*, Joseph Camp-
bell's contribution to the commemoration of
the spiritual revolt, he does not shout like a
noisy politician :

Who are the marching fianna?

*Ask the spring,
The summer torrent that swept us.
If we are dead, it is for the great love
We bore the Gael.*

Who is the tall prisoner?

*I go to the rope and the quicklime.
They have no hands that would deliver me—
O Christ of Nazareth! no hands.*

Even yet with the blood of the Rising dried
and the flames of the burning city quite ex-
tinguished, no poet has glorified in verse the
memory of any one particularly heroic figure.
No one has written an *Adonais* or a *Thyrsis*.
That is a very significant fact, for men now
regard the death of Pearse, MacDonagh,
Plunkett, or MacDermott, not as the loss of
great individuals but as the willing contribu-
tions to the redemption of the nation, for
higher than the affairs of those individuals is
the cause for which they died. They fought
not as chevaliers or paladins for personal
glory, but as units co-ordinated in one army.
Therefore the greatness of these men will be
celebrated in other ways, grouped together
as the famous men in *Ecclesiasticus* :

which have no memorial; who are perished,
as though they had never been; and are
become as though they had never been
born; and their children after them.

But these were merciful men, whose
righteousness hath not been forgotten.

Conrad est Mort . . .

PAR DENIS SAURAT

CONRAD est le premier et, à ce jour, le plus important des phénomènes qui marque l'avènement de l'anglais comme langue universelle. Il est de toute première importance, en effet, de constater que des hommes d'autres races—un polonais, un provençal, un arménien—peuvent créer de la littérature en langue anglaise. Et de la littérature de premier ordre. Qui dans cette génération a écrit de plus belles pages, de plus sonores, de plus profondes phrases anglaises que Joseph Conrad? Le monde, en s'élevant à l'unité linguistique, ne perdra donc pas 90 pour cent. de la littérature. J'entends bien les protestations des langues nationales : mais je ne veux pas les supprimer. Seulement elles se doubleront de l'anglais de plus en plus "Quand même l'Angleterre et même l'Amérique" disait Victor Hugo, pour exprimer les possibilités dormières. La langue lue par l'Angleterre et l'Amérique doubler fatalement les autres. Pour parler au monde, il faudra parler anglais.

Et le français, dites-vous? Eh bien, le français sera la langue aristocratique universelle, et l'anglais la langue publique universelle. Pensez vous que les hommes intelligents de l'avenir pourront se contenter de deux langues? Tout le monde saura l'anglais—et parmi ceux-là les gens cultivés sauront en plus le français. "Elle a choisi la plus belle part. . ."

Mais nous parlions de Conrad. Il est vrai qu'une jolie légende raconte qu'il avait hésité entre l'anglais et le français.

Or, Conrad n'a rien d'anglais. Aussi sa langue littéraire anglaise n'appartient pas à la tradition, et nos amis de Grande Bretagne n'ont pas le droit d'être fiers de Conrad. Ils ont pourtant le droit d'être fiers de lui avoir fourni l'instrument assoupli à son besoin, et cela dit beaucoup en faveur de l'anglais. Un linguiste me disait un jour que l'anglais, à

force de simplifier, était parfois retombé au substratum commun des langues indo-européennes, et cela serait une base linguistique suffisante pour en faire la langue universelle. Mais nous parlions de Conrad.

Donc, Conrad n'est pas anglais. D'abord, son esprit est un chaos, comme tous les esprits slaves. L'esprit anglais—non plus que l'esprit français—n'est jamais un chaos malgré les apparences (pour l'esprit anglais). Conrad comprend la nature, terrible ou tranquille; mais troublante toujours pour lui parce qu'elle est le chaos. *Typhoon* est une belle description du chaos. C'est aussi une belle description de l'esprit de Conrad. De même que le bateau survit, ce bateau qui n'est qu'une platitude, et encore une platitude remplie de luttes intérieures, puisque les coolies sont en révolte et le second en folie—de même dans le chaos qu'est l'esprit de Conrad quelques platitudes incohérents mais généreuses survivent. Il faut être honnête, généreuse et bon, nous dit Conrad.

Honnête, généreuse et bon. "Honesty is the best policy" dit les Anglais: la parole la plus malhonnête qu'ils aient jamais prononcée. Mais Conrad n'est pas anglais. Pour lui l'honnêteté n'est pas la meilleure des politiques. Heist sombre dans la catastrophe de *Victory*. Il faut être honnête, généreuse et bon, non parce que cela réussit, mais parce qu'il le faut. If n'y a aucun autre moyen de garder l'estime de soi. Aussi, lorsqu'on échoue, on échoue bien.

Il reste cependant une malhonnêteté intellectuelle dans cette conscience si claire. La conviction profonde que le monde n'est qu'un chaos, sur lequel l'esprit surnage en vain sur un radeau de platitudes—cette conviction profonde de l'esprit slave—nécessite une catastrophe à la fin de toutes les destinées. Et cette catastrophe n'est obtenue par des moyens honnêtes. C'est une catastrophe *ex machina*, manufacturée exprès

pour les besoins de cette cause qui est le contraire de sainte.

D'où le coup de revolver qui cause le naufrage de *Victory*. D'où le saut incompréhensible de Jim qui est pourtant le seul moment où la destinée, dans Conrad, se rapproche de la réalité—puisque nous comprenons tous ce saut incompréhensible. D'où la fin de *Lord Jim* avec ce guet-apens imbécile d'échappe de baigne. Mais Conrad sait mettre ce chaos et cette fatalité dans l'esprit même de l'homme. Ainsi *Almayer's Folly* et *Heart of Darkness* (qui est probablement son chef-d'œuvre). Les forces chaotiques qui soulevent l'esprit humain comme le navire de *Typhoon* sont intérieures autant qu'extérieures. *Heart of Darkness* est une sombre et magnifique révélation du retour de l'homme civilisé aux orgueils des orgies primitives, et que reste-t-il à faire à ceux qui ont vu cela quand ils reviennent devant les hommes—et les femmes—ordinaires? A mentir, loyalement et honorablement.

Aussi pouvons nous soupçonner que Conrad et les slaves nous mentent lorsqu'ils nous offrent comme moyen de salut leur radeau de platitudes. Ils n'y croient pas : ils ont vu le fond de l'abîme. Ils savent qu'il n'y a rien à faire. Mais honorablement et loyalement, comme l'ami ment à la fiancée dans *Heart of Darkness*, ils nous mentent, parce qu'ils croient que la réalité serait trop à porter pour nous. Or, la réalité est trop lourde à porter pour eux.

En réalité Conrad est un faible. Cette réalité trop lourde pour lui, trop lourde pour Dostoïevsky, trop lourde pour les slaves, les

anglais l'ont porté avec leur bon sens pratique et leur volonté puissante : et Shakespeare n'en est pas écrasé. Les Français l'ont portée avec leur esprit méthodique et leur volonté non moins puissante quoique plus consciente : Corneille et Racine, Balzac et Stendhal l'ont regardée en face. Cela a produit une littérature quelquefois—je dis quelquefois—inférieure, mais cela a produit des hommes supérieurs. Quel terrible sophisme que cette idée de Nietzsche que la Russie était en Europe le réservoir de la volonté. La Russie, c'est le chaos sans volonté. En littérature assui. Chez Conrad aussi.

Remarquez que ce défaut en humanité est une qualité en littérature. Cela joute à quelques-unes des œuvres de Conrad ce sens du mystère, du trouble de la vie, qui élève si facilement, trop facilement, les œuvres d'art au rang des chefs-d'œuvre. On paie pour cet avantage par cette facilité fatale à la catastrophe qui semble à nos esprits européens (non, les slaves ne sont pas des européens encore ; c'est bien vrai, quoiqu'on le dise) un autre manque d'honnêteté. La réalité n'est pas si mauvaise que dans ces autres romans qui finissent mal.

Le succès artistique de Conrad participe donc un peu trop du mélodrame. Mais ceci mis à part, l'œuvre de Conrad a quelques magnifiques volumes, forts et beaux, et peut-être nul autre ne survivra comme ce mort récent dans les lettres anglaises d'aujourd'hui. Lui et notre Loti s'en iront ensemble à la postérité, très semblables malgré leurs différences superficielles.

Books of the Month

I. The Uses of Ancient History

BY J. A. MACKENZIE

THE Cambridge University Press has laid us deeply in its debt not once but often; but it may be questioned if scholarship and the general reader alike are not laid under the most serious obligation by the latest of its great series—the *Cambridge Ancient History*.¹ For some reason which I own I do not fully comprehend, it is easier to make ancient history interesting than it is mediæval or modern. There is a charm about the King lists of Egypt or of Babylon which is altogether absent from the records of mediæval Germany or the lists of the Presidents of the United States, and men will willingly tackle unfamiliar, shadowy figures like Shargalisharri, Shaushshatar, Puzur-Ashur IV., and the tribe of the Ramessids in a way that they never reproduce when confronted by Ulrich von Hutten or Garfield or Cleveland. I suppose it is the charm of especially old, especially far-off things, when Europe was but a baby and men had not sailed the outer seas. At any rate the first volume of this series has already—*i. e.*, within a little more than a year—gone into a second edition, a thing that never happened to any of the volumes of the Mediæval or the Modern History.

It is, of course, quite foolish to sit down to praise this second volume or to try to criticise on obscure points of detail. Even if in my dreams I fancy I could have improved a little on Mr. S. A. Cook's history of the development of the Israelite tribes to nationhood, that does not prevent this being a monumental work, a work due to Anglo-Saxon scholarship which is without rival anywhere.

¹ *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Edited by J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock. Vol. II. (*The Hittite and Egyptian Empires to c. 1000 B.C.*) 35s. net. (Cambridge: The University Press.)

Let me just glance at its contents. We take up the story about the end of the third millennium B.C., and are beginning to see history leave the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile and spread west and north and east. So very fittingly Mr. P. Giles begins with two chapters on the peoples of Asia Minor and Europe. Professor Breasted then takes up the story of Egypt in six chapters—the expansion of the empire south and north after the expulsion of the Hyksos, the conquests of Thutmose, the zenith under Amenhotep III., the religious reformation, or rather revolution, under Amenhotep IV., and the loss of Syria, the reaction and the fresh expansion under the second Ramses with that most interesting of pre-classical battles—Kadesh—and then the struggle to maintain the conquests under Ramses III., and the total collapse of the Empire under his impotent successors—which Professor T. E. Peet rounds off with a brilliant chapter on Egyptian life and thought. Under Mr. R. C. Thompson's skilful leadership we then pass to Assyria and its rapid first expansion until, under the first Tiglath-Pileser, her armies reached the Mediterranean. Then we come to the newer peoples, peoples of whose existence our grandfathers did not dream—the Hittites (Mr. D. S. Hogarth), the Keftians, Philistines, and other people of the Levant (Mr. H. R. Hall). From that it is an easy step to Palestine, and here Mr. Cook traces from all the sources the history of that cockpit of the ancient world from the conquest by Egypt through the Amorite domination and the struggle with invaders from the desert, till the obscure tribes of Jahve-worshippers secure a foothold and become a nation under the judges, a kingdom under Saul, and an empire under David and Solomon. From Asia we turn abruptly to Europe, and Mr. A. J. B. Wace traces for us the progress of Crete and Mycenæ, whose vicissitudes the spade of the excavator has traced for us; Professor Bury discusses the Trojan War and

Homer, and we discover we are already in history; while Mr. Wade Grey and Mr. Hogarth tell us of the coming of the Dorians and the consequent colonisation of the Asia Minor coast. Professor Halliday has a chapter on Greek religion, and Mr. Hall one on contemporary art in the Near East; and then Professor Peet, Dr. Ashby, and Mr. Thurlow Leeds tell us of the prehistory of Western Europe, in which for the first time we come to our own land. And there we leave off, and are not yet entered on the last millennium before Christ.

It is a record that has all the freshness of recent history; and, indeed, it is in a sense very recent history indeed. So far from being now unknown it is considerably more familiar and detailed to us than is the present history, say, of Turkestan. It has been built up on contemporary records painfully recovered from centuries of burial; and marvellous as is this volume, represented in 1824 by a couple of pages, it is but the beginning, and we have still to win completer records and older records which will unveil some of the deep mystery of man's origin and development. It is scientific history and not romance or legend of real people who were in most essentials our equals, if not our superiors. That, indeed, is the real reason why we should study it for edification as well as knowledge.

No one can read these pages without a striking sense of the continuity of life and the meaninglessness of progress. I should say that the first use of ancient history is to strike a shrewd blow at our conceited modernism. Ludendorff and Foch are no improvement on Thutmose III. or Ramses II. We score over them in the unessentials indeed—trains, telegraphs, wireless—but in the essentials, in qualities of head and heart, they do not need to fear comparison. Man has changed very little in the millennia. He is still agitated by the old questions—where to get food, where to build a house, where to obtain a livelihood. He is still happy when full and bitter when empty; and his struggle for existence in the streets of London is no whit more real than it was in the streets of Thebes or Babylon. Nor do the national problems differ—world-power or downfall, the class-war, colonialism,

food supply, the civil service, the army—all are there just as they are to-day. For four thousand years men have sat down to solve them all, and with man's curious inconsequence have always sat down to them as if they were a new and unique experience.

Now in ancient days the problems, though the same for the individual and the nation, were simpler. Life was not so complicated; a subject did not require a lifetime to separate from other subjects; and alternatives were clearer-cut and decisions needed less forethought. But they had to be made, those decisions; and if, individually, they were often right, nationally they were often wrong, for the end was decay and death, which stand out to us like warnings, silent to the point of being cataclysmic noise. That history of mankind's first experiments in civilisation, the first stage in which we can begin the study of development, we must know not merely if we are to understand subsequent history but if we are to decide wisely ourselves. There is less fundamental difference between these ancient men and ourselves than between one species of rose and another; and although we are farther on, it is the same path of free-will and destiny that we tread.

Those who speak of history as a branch of science, of exact science, do her injustice. History is the data in which we study politics, ethics, and metaphysics, out of which we build our theories. There is no other reason needed for the study of these earliest stages of it. If one reads with comprehension, one sees man's mind, man's individual mind, under Egyptian skies, the Syrian sun, or the shadow of Assyrian hills, beginning the eternal seeking—what shall I do with mine own soul; to what God shall I pray; how shall I rule or be ruled? And the battle between past and future convulses the polite circles just as it convulses the coteries to-day. One gets a new sense of life from the study; one learns to reckon progress at its true rate, as something as extraneous and as indifferent as a suit of clothes; one recognises one's debt to the pioneers, and one is willing to learn—practically, for Megiddo and Kadesh are masterpieces of offensive tactics, and we have not builded anything like the pyramid or

fashioned aught so lovely as the hanging gardens of Nineveh; spiritually, for these were simpler men who faced their problems and set us on the path to spiritual freedom, teaching us that belief which rests not on the twin pillars of knowledge and conduct is not religion but merely compromise.

One may doubt whether any such ideas were in the minds of the great scholars who wrote the fascinating chapters of this volume. They had their deep and genuine interest in solving the problems of chronology, of the sifting of truth from legend, but the ordinary reader has not and cannot. He is interested in man; and here for the first time in English he has a comprehensive history of these early days in which unknown men and women laid strong and deep the foundations on which we are still building, and consecrated them with blood and tears. And in reading we, if being foolish we gain nothing, at least pay our debt.

II. The Beast Epic¹

By ALLAN WYLIE

YEARS and years ago I remember gloating over a little papered book—one of Stead's *Books for the Bairns*, I think—entitled *Reynard the Fox*. I suppose the countless illustrations played their part in my fascination; but I like to believe that it was simply that I had reached the age of mental development when the fantasy of having beasts talking and behaving like human beings had its peculiar appeal. Even then one did not wholly sympathise with Reynard. Successful scoundrel as he was, there was something malicious and cruel in his exploits that repelled one, especially when his victims' sole crime lay in being honestly stupid. And, indeed, looking back it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise, for, for childish consumption the satire had been left out,

¹ "*Reynard the Fox*," translated by William Caxton (1481), edited by W. Swan Stallybrass, with an introduction by William Rose, and "*Physiologus*," translated by James Garlill. 7s. 6d. net. (London: Routledge.)

with the result that even a child recognised the story had somehow missed fire.

It is, of course, the satire which gives *Reynard the Fox* meaning. It is a literary tale and not a folk-tale for all its appeal to the folk intelligence; but it was not till I re-read it in the beautiful binding and type of the *Broadway Translations* that I realised how effective the satire is, with its pungent moral that in society as constituted it is the rogue who wins the biggest success.

Reynard the Fox had a chequered career. It had as many hands to its formation as "Homer," and some of them were capable hands and some of them were not, and one was an original genius of the first order, who first saw in the talking beasts of folk-tale the material for effective satire, and so transformed them that they retain the semblance of beasts while being most clearly men, types of society sharply and clearly differentiated as in any realistic novel. The version which Caxton followed to make his wonderful English version is one of the best, and succeeds in enveloping the court of the Lion and its courtiers with personalities, making them as distinct as the actualities they were, and yet curiously retaining—which makes the satire even more effective—their peculiar animal characteristics. The Bear, the Wolf, the Badger, the Lion, Reynard himself, are types of men: they are also real animals; and if they act as types they also act not unlike what anyone would imagine a wolf or a bear would act were they suddenly endowed with an intelligence equivalent to that of the human beings around them. In fact, *Reynard the Fox* might well, in this form of it, be a satire written by an intelligent animal, say a wise and unusually observant owl, against animals, and it took a good deal of genius to accomplish that.

The "Beast Epic" belongs to a period. It derives from the extraordinary *Physiologus* of which the reader is here presented with a translation of singular interest and merit. *Physiologus* is really a sort of theological natural history, in which all sorts of stories culled from all sorts of sources about the habits of animals are used as symbols of the war of the soul with sin and the Devil. They

look, and indeed they often were, illustrations to a sermon, and they are not altogether neglected to-day, though it is open to question if some of the ministers who derive moral wisdom from the habits of the ant or the bee ever heard of "Physiologus," the purely mythical gentleman who first improved on David and Solomon. They were immensely popular with the divines and with the congregations, and they were written and quoted from Iceland to India, and no doubt have gone further afield since—hopeless things, really, but wonderfully calculated to catch the attention of hearers who wanted to hear strange things. As natural history they are deplorable, but they ascribe so much intelligence to the animals that from them to the "Beast Epic" was a momentous but an easy step, and it is likewise easy to understand that epic's popularity among hearers familiar with *Physiologus*.

For the history of that epic I must be permitted to refer the reader to Mr. Rose's excellent essay thereon in this volume. It was a form that lasted for only a little while, though it has been revived since, by Swift, for example, and I am not sure if a recent novel has not some affinities with it. Like *Physiologus*, its interest is not in natural history at all—there is nothing whatever of the spirit, say, of *Black Beauty* about it—but where *Physiologus* is theological, the "Beast Epic" is satirical. It is the product of that remarkable outburst of democratic criticism in Western Europe which heralds the Renaissance and which would have ensured a Renaissance even if the classics had never been rediscovered. It is the voice of the proletariat which is heard in the days when there were but two classes—the noble, civil or clerical, and the rest, of a proletariat bitterly conscious that the world is governed with little wisdom, with less wisdom than the proletariat possessed and so ordered that the exploiter, the hypocrite, and the liar have a distinct pull over folk who are simply honest and decent. Characteristically enough, it seems to be confined to Western Europe, where the proletariat was sufficiently sturdy to rise every now and again for the sake of principles, or, if you will, catchwords which

are essentially modern, and it suited these rough peasants who suffered from the bears and wolves and Reynards of the upper class as no other literature would.

If one reads *Reynard the Fox* with that in mind, if one sees the listening crowd identify each animal locally, if one sees the intelligent class who could read, similarly identifying its characters, but with more subtlety and greater enjoyment, one can understand its appeal. There is no greater sport than literary identification, especially of your enemies, in a story, and the sport is greatly enhanced if in addition the story is a good one and the points clearly made. Now *Reynard the Fox* is a good story and a clever one. With all its essentials left out it can fascinate children to-day—the best test of all simply as a story; and the satire is extremely cleverly done, for it is never particular, and yet most people would very leisurely name the local Reynard or the local Isengrim. No wonder a literary work of high merit became a popular success.

The form passed with the age, and we hear no more of "Beast Epics," though the numberless translations down to this year of grace indicate how cleverly the first inventors hit the public taste, which, after all, remains pretty constant, but the satire survived in changed guise. Is not the Reynard of the final forms of his epic, if the last hero of the "Beast Epic," also the first hero of the picaresque novel, the rogue who succeeds by roguery? By the end of his career Reynard was almost humanised; and I am pretty certain that his plausible villainy, far more than any classical model which really did not deal in plausible villains, suggested the plausible villain which has remained a stock feature of popular drama until to-day. It is true the pressure of middle-class morality makes the plausible villain come to a bad end, for the aim of modern melodrama is not to satirise villainy but to show virtue triumphant; but it is precisely that collapse of plausible villainy that every hearer of the "Beast Epic" wished which, lacking in the epic, made it satire—a form which the ordinary reader never really likes unless it touches others in his own home town. The

spirit is the same : the form and the intent are different ; that is all.

I envy those who will read old *Reynard* for the first time, filled as this edition is with Kaulbach's curiously illuminating illustrations, for there is abundant source of delight and, it may be, of edification. The magnificent audacity of Reynard, his resource, his cunning, his dialectic, the sheer brilliance and thoroughness of his hypocrisy, the way in which pure, if perverted intelligence, triumphs over foes, singly or combined, almost make one like him, especially when, as this version so cleverly suggests, these foes would have been just as cunning and as hypocritical if they had had the brains. Nine times out of ten it is their own viciousness which completes their downfall, till we wonder at the satire which can suggest that honest stupidity is perhaps the completest hypocrisy of all. It is a wonderful book. It has lasted nine hundred years. One need say no more.

III. France's Marvellous Boy¹

By C. K. MCKENZIE

WHEN in the middle eighties there came the great revolt of symbolism against the Parnasse, the rebels nailed to the mast as banner the name of an unknown poet, notorious mainly by the mad adventures into which he led Paul Verlaine, while the poet—poet no longer—was one of the best-known traders on the Somali coast, mingling with the language of barter furious imprecations against those who had printed that early work of his which he damned with the dismissing phrase : "c'était mal." For by that time Arthur Rimbaud had long since exhausted poetry as he had exhausted much else, and the fact that he had started a new school in one of the most fruitful of literary rebellions seemed infinitely less important than the price of skins in Harrar market or the possibilities of smuggling antiquated rifles to Menilek of Shoa.

There is no parallel to Rimbaud. His is the one unique career in literature. At the age of nineteen he definitely ceased to write poetry, having by then left behind him a body of verse and prose which not merely is stamped with maturity but marks an epoch. Some of his most significant work dates from his sixteenth year, the greatest from his seventeenth, and two years later the output ceased, without any but those who saw him suspecting that he was not a man of thirty. Thereafter he was an adventurer all over Europe and Asia and Africa until his death. It is that career Mr. Rickwood has sought to trace in detail for British readers, and he has made of it a fascinating story which puts much fiction to shame.

But the riddle of Rimbaud he does not unravel completely, nor is it likely anyone else will ever do so now that we have but recollection to go upon. He was a phenomenon in the inaccurate sense of that much-abused word, and it is no use trying to fit him into conventional frames or into the general stream of French literature. He is apart, unique, an inspiration rather than an example. For one thing he was born mature. The son of an army captain, an imaginative, sensitive army captain who could not abide his terribly bourgeois, conscientious, and puritanical wife, Rimbaud was brought up in an atmosphere which set itself to crush individuality, to subordinate tendencies and instincts to the cult of bourgeois duty. Had Rimbaud been psychologically normal his would have been the orthodox revolt, but he was—to use a silly but consecrated word—precocious. This revolt was founded on intellectual conviction, and at the age of eight the tug and strain of it was over, the implications accepted, the severance complete, before he was physically or economically able to take the orthodox method of displaying it to the public. His thought was mature : his body and all that means no more developed than those of his fellows.

He wrote poetry because he wanted to, not because he wanted to be a poet. No man had less ambition in the ordinary sense than this child who, while not yet in his teens, had ambitions not often granted to men in

¹ "*Rimbaud: the Boy and the Poet.*" By Edgell Rickwood. 12s. 6d. net. (London: Heinemann.)

their prime. He had naturally, as few others have had, "the feeling infinite." It was not acquired nor developed. It was simply part of him. At ten he was writing verses which, when one has said the worst of them and named all their obvious sources, were like no other verses that had ever been written in French. Not merely was their originality dictated by the intense desire to create art, or rather to get the uttermost out of artistic creation, but this youth argued out a definite theory of poetry which, elaborated and called by many names, has maintained a general hold on European writers.

Side by side with this abnormal maturity Rimbaud had all the defects of his upbringing and provincialism. His loathing—a loathing expressed in painfully direct speech—for his fellows in the little town of Charleville, on which was founded all his sympathy with rebels and Communists, was not unconnected with the humiliating knowledge that, intellectually totally different, he was in the superficial things of life their inferior. When Verlaine, overcome by the new rhythms and visions of *Les Effarés* and *Les premières Communions*, sent for him to come to Paris, he expected to see a poetical young man of thirty. Instead he found a lanky boy with a boy's face and all a boy's ferocious *gaucherie*, smarting under the knowledge that he could not hold his own in polite society despite his consciousness of superiority in mind and in experience, and shy because of that to the point reached under the stress of a few moments of violent rudeness.

The result was he found no kindred spirit. Even those kindly Bohemians, even the fantastic Verlaine, were outraged, and as tale succeeded tale of his blundering violence, Rimbaud, with the achievement of *Le Bateau ivre*, incomparably the greatest poem of the period, found himself despised as an irresponsible hooligan. And to crown all he had exhausted poetry as a means of fulfilment. There was no longer any thrill in achieving it, no longer any further increase of personality, and therefore no possible progress. There is no reason to doubt that he could have gone on producing work as good as *Le Bateau ivre* for many years, and prob-

ably greater work as the habit grew; but to Rimbaud it would have been merely machine-like repetition with worthless variations in non-essentials, and so he simply ceased to write—before he was twenty.

Everything about him is extraordinary; but surely there is no parallel whatever to this. Knowing himself—for his cool judgment, despite all his violences, embraced his own work—a true poet, and what is more an original artist, he deliberately ceased to write in order to pass on to further experience. It led him to that extraordinary Odyssey which ended in characteristic wise, when carelessness and violence led to the accident that ended fatally. It met him when he was a prosperous trader, with views on colonial imperialism, the desire for a bourgeois marriage and a son whom he proposed to train to be a civil engineer. And yet in the tragedy of that slow death at the Marseilles hospital so near to the spot where that Odyssey had begun, he is still with all the changes the boy of infinite aspiration whom Charleville disgusted. Pioneer of modernism, least compromising of artists, definitely done with tradition, he is still a romantic hero, one more type of divine discontent to whom no land is home, seeking eternally the inner meaning of a philosophical term like the fulfilment of the self. What he found we do not know; all we know is that his search, like every other, was unfinished, and only the accident that one road along which it led him was that of poetry do we owe the fact that his name ranks higher than the countless others, to that and the fact that death took him ere he gave the search up.

Rimbaud is, after all, an accident. He fits into no scheme of things. Accident made him anticipate the inevitable revolt against the Parnasse; accident made him one of the revolts' symbols. Hailed as a significant portent and figure in French literature, he angrily denied the claim made for him, rightly seeing that he stood by himself and that his poems were so intensely the result of the necessity for self-expression that they are meaningless apart from his life, and on that section of it he was completely dis-

illusioned. It is the extraneous about them that makes them marvellous, beautiful, and even great as they are in themselves, and his judgment of them, biassed and unfair as it is, betrays that same grasp of reality which, after all, was the really striking difference between him and his contemporaries.

Mr. Rickwood's book is incomparably the fullest and best account of Rimbaud in English; I am not certain if it is much sur-

passed by the classic works in French. It is accurate, discriminating, and eloquent, while the long appendix of translations is amazingly well done. Only on occasions he is betrayed into mistaking mellow-sounding words for criticism, and in the desperate attempt to fit sense to sound becomes unintelligible, the one sin to which the modern critic is particularly prone. But it is an achievement and a very brilliant and readable book.

Back Bedroom

THE dirty licht that through the winnock seeps
 Into this unkempt room has glozed strange
 sights;
 Heaven like a Peepin' Tam 'twixt chimley-pots
 Keeks i' the drab fore-nichts.

The folk that hed it last—the selfsame bed—
 Were a great hulkin' cairter an' his bride.
 She deed i' child-birth—on this verra spot
 Whaur we'll lie side by side.

An' everything's deid-grey except oor een.
 Wi' wee waugh jokes we strip an' intae
 bed. . . .
 An' suddenly oor een sing oot like stars
 An' a' oor misery's shed.

What tho' the auld dour licht is undeceived?
 What tho' a callous morn our shairly comes?
 For a wee while we ken but een like stars,
 An' oor herts gaen' like drums.

Mony's the dreich back bedroom whaur the
 same
 Sad little miracle tak's place ilk' nicht,
 An' orra shapes o' sickly-hued mankind
 Cheenge into forms o' licht.

HUGH M'DIARMID.

The Philosopher King at Home

BY JAMES A. SMITH

ONCE upon a time, as all good stories begin, there was a philosopher seated on a throne. Not that that in itself is extraordinary, for most monarchs, unless they are imbeciles or voluptuaries, have a philosophy of their own. Frederick the Great was an accomplished philosopher: he refuted Machiavelli to his own satisfaction; a King of Egypt was philosopher enough to force through a religious reformation which was really a philosophical revolution ranking among the great revolutions of history, and Solomon was one of the really original philosophers of the world. There is no reason why a king should not be a philosopher, since so many very commonplace people have earned so distinguished a reputation at the trade, especially when we apply the word so loosely, as we do, to include Socrates and T. A. Edison and even Henry Ford, who is as clever at turning out ethical systems as at turning out cars. To many of our most distinguished philosophers, Plato would deny the appellation altogether, for to him a philosopher was more than a constructor of metaphysical systems, more even than a thinker. He was a man who thought out or learned—and you cannot learn without thinking out—a system on which he based life and conduct, a system which made him a “good” man—*i.e.*, logically upright in his personal life—a man, as we might say, of principle and logically useful to the community—a most unpopular combination.

And of all the philosopher kings only one comes into a category so defined—Marcus Aurelius. To guide your life steadily on a recognised system of ethics—for Marcus was no original thinker—is difficult for anyone; for a monarch it is almost impossible to do so and retain your throne, and yet Marcus did so, and was at the same time one of the most efficient and beloved emperors Rome ever had. He would, one fancies, have given much to withdraw himself from mankind to

the society of a chosen few, wear the garb of Stoicism, and spend his life in contemplation. Instead he was called to govern a great empire in its decline, surrounded by men of inferior mould, with whom he was completely out of sympathy, cursed by family troubles and family cares, and compelled to spend most of his life in arduous campaigns. Yet he accepted it all, not merely with resignation but as a duty, in which he spent himself for others—a perpetual crucifixion of himself, out of whose anguish he produced the immortal *Meditations*.

There is no need to repeat that the *Meditations* is one of the great books of the world—the confessions of a soul of real greatness faced with problems of conduct beside which the problems of statecraft seem small. For Marcus never tried to reconcile philosophy with absolute monarchy. He was the philosopher king, and the philosopher—the lover of wisdom, the man of iron principle—predominated. The *Meditations* reveal the battle within him—a battle not with temptation to fall, but with the temptation to get out of it—a temptation all the more hard to fight by reason of the fact that he never for a moment condescended to formulate it. He was at the post of duty, and there could be no question of retreat, for he remained there as a Stoic, and Stoicism made it impossible for him to withdraw. He was the philosopher called to be a man of action, whose philosophy made the call a categorical imperative.

The *Meditations* are the inner man—the soul; they take for granted that what the soul decides the body, weak vessel though it is, will be driven—if need be—to obey; and they reveal an iron self-discipline easy enough in a monastery, but terribly hard in a world of which he was absolute master and had no one in whom he could confide. A most unpleasant person, one would say, for a king this man, bound hand and foot by a

rigid code which makes very ordinary philosophers in a hut difficult, and must have made a philosopher in a palace absolutely intolerable. Yet everyone loved him, even those who betrayed and thwarted him, and as few of them were in the least degree capable of understanding him, it was not comprehension and sympathy that caused their affection. It must have been the natural man, the actual man they met in daily intercourse who attracted them, and not the philosopher who, emperor though he was, bored them.

E. L. White in his *The Unwilling Vestal* has a picture of Marcus as emperor, a kindly, middle-aged gentleman, very wise, very understanding, very much in sympathy with youth's rebellions, a little weary, and unaccountably fond of feeble jokes. The picture is not a true one, for no one could ever have revered the man in his Marcus, and his contemporaries evidently revered the man as well as the emperor; but it is decidedly truer than that representing Marcus as a stern, cold, and forbidding formalist, separated by a great gulf from other men, regarding life as an unavoidable evil, and taking up its burden only because conscience said "Yes." If that were true, he would have been a poor Stoic not to have promptly committed suicide. It was his boast that the man, not the circumstances, were the decisive factor. He did not quarrel with his circumstances but with himself, because he required to fight so hard to bend them to his ideal—a very human person without a touch of the prig about him, and, on the whole, with a capacity for enjoyment which tempered all the rigours of his creed.

If one is to understand the *Meditations* one must read his correspondence. He was a voluminous and a somewhat self-conscious writer, but he could not help writing with absolute sincerity, though he couched it in hyperbolic conventions which he understood and we do not. To one man at least he wrote much—his old tutor in rhetoric, Fronto, dismissed characteristically enough with a line in the *Meditations* where intense affection is deprecated as unworthy the philosophic soul—many letters, and happy chance has preserved a good many of them.

In them is, perhaps, not the real but at least the actual Marcus, the Marcus whom statesmen and intellectuals and generals and the private soldier and the mob in Rome knew and loved. There is no evidence whatever that Marcus intended them for publication, though with Cicero's monumental collection before them most Romans with pretensions to greatness must rarely have written letters other than business ones without the equivalent reflection to "What will it look like in print?" Fronto probably had a hope, if not an intention, that his would survive, but it is very improbable if their publication—surely after Marcus's death—ever had the sanction of the Emperor, and his scoundrelly son, Commodus, was too occupied with gladiators and women to care.

And it is a very human figure the Marcus you find here, a trifle sententious Marcus, no doubt—he was old at twelve—but no hint of the patient self-tortured saint of the *Meditations*. He betrays the natural bent, doesn't like rhetoric because it gives him pleasure, doesn't like kindly, cynical, easy-living Horace, is not very sure of Vergil, but fully favours Cato. At ten he declared himself a Stoic philosopher, and when at eighteen he received Fronto to teach him the art of oratory which no Roman emperor dared lack, the old gentleman could not make those flowers of eloquence of which he was proud, and on which, on the whole, he wrote remarkably sensibly, appear other than tawdry blossoms. Marcus was Fronto's greatest disappointment, and yet a tie of real, almost passionate affection bound these two together.

The correspondence¹ dates from about that time. Right at the beginning we have evidence of this tender affection. Writes Marcus, acknowledging receipt of a task:

Farewell, breath of my life. Should I not burn with love of you who have written me as you have! Last year it befell me here to be consumed with a passionate longing for my mother. This year *you* inflame my longing.

¹ There is only one way of studying the correspondence, and that is in Prof. C. R. Haines' two excellent volumes, *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto*, in the Loeb Library.

There is a human ring even about a translation of that. Marcus the Stoic longing for his mother! A letter or two further on there is a touch that betrays the true gentleman. Herodes, the philosopher and orator, and Fronto were by no means friends, and Marcus urges Fronto to make up the quarrel, "even if you think me an ill-advised counsellor or a froward boy. I trust my advice will commend itself to you, for my goodwill you must commend. At any rate, I would rather fail in judgment by writing than fail in friendship by keeping silence." Fronto takes the advice in good part: "I realise your counsel is weighty and worthy of a greybeard, while mine is childish." And later comes the touch: "The son of Herodes, born to-day, is dead. Herodes is overwhelmed with grief at his loss. Please write him quite a short letter." To his credit Fronto did, but Marcus's is the greater.

And this Stoic writes verses—no love-poems, we may be sure, but still verses of which he is more than half ashamed. "I remember," writes Fronto—he gives no opinion on them—"that you have often impressed upon me not to let anyone see your poems." Says Marcus later:

You very kindly ask for my hexameters, and I should have sent them at once if I had had them with me. But my secretary did not pack up any of my work when I set out. For he was afraid I would do as I usually do and consign them to the flames. But, truth to tell, these particular hexameters were in next to no danger, for, to tell my master the truth, I dote over them, and I pore over them o' nights.

They may have been pieces set as work, but I like to think they were original, spontaneous, unnecessary.

When he is away he writes Fronto of little playful incidents and subjects—the variable climate of Naples, how he scared a surly shepherd, the tiny temple at Anagnia and its inscriptions, requests for books and extracts, pathetic little notes on how tired he is of the daily round of compulsory enjoyment, and details of his life: "By a satisfactory arrangement from three a.m. till eight, and then for an hour padded about contentedly in

slippers before my bedroom," with the sequel:

I think I must have taken a chill, whether from walking about in slippers in the early morning or from writing badly, I know not. I only know that, rheumy enough at all times, I seem to be more drivelling than ever to-day. So I will pour the oil on my head and go off to sleep, for not a drop do I intend to pour into my lamp to-day, so tired I am with riding and sneezing.

Next day he is better, but able to eat only "a wee bit of bread," though taking his share at the grape-gathering in the Imperial vineyards, and—perhaps because of his cold, "had a long chat with my little mother as she sat on my bed." He evidently got worse, for we hear of an ulcer and doctors, and then the characteristic "it were shame if a disease of the body should outlast a determination to recover health." In the matter of illness, Fronto is not to be outdone. He was a chronic sufferer from rheumatism, and the exchanges of details on illnesses is one of the quaintest traits about the letters. Marcus's sympathy is more eloquent than Fronto's. Thus the former, when Fronto complains of pain:

What shall I say that is adequate, and how inveigh as it deserves, against this hard necessity that keeps me a prisoner here with a heart so anxious and fettered with such great apprehension and does not let me run at once to my Fronto, to my most beautiful of souls, above all to be with him at a time when he is so unwell, to clasp his hands and, as far as maybe without pain, massage the poor foot, foment it in the bath, and support him as he steps in? And do you call me a friend who do not throw aside all hindrances and fly in hot haste to you. . . ? Write and tell me quickly, I beseech you, to what waters you are going and when and how well you now are, and set my mind going in my breast again.

There is one really beautiful interchange. Fronto writes: "If you have any love for me at all, sleep those nights that you may come into the Senate with a good colour and read with a strong voice." Marcus answers in one line: "I can never love you enough: I will sleep."

Not less than Marcus's anxiety about Fronto is his anxiety over his children and his wife. Their progress is chronicled with evident feeling, and there is one doleful letter in which the humorist flashes out even in genuine anxiety :

This is how I have passed the last few days. My sister was suddenly seized with such pain in the intestines that it was dreadful to see her. My mother, in the flurry of the moment, inadvertently ran her side against a corner, causing us as well as herself great pain. For myself, when I went to lie down I came upon a scorpion in my bed; however, I was in time to kill it before lying down. P.S.—My mother feels easier now, thank the Gods.

Fronto, one cannot help feeling, got a certain enjoyment out of being ill. Marcus did not, and he hated the sight of others suffering, so much so that his earnestness and suffering seems out of all proportion to the twinges of a gouty old gentleman; but it is very tender and very kindly, and if Fronto's return sympathy is a trifle formal, still Marcus called him "man of the warm heart."

Men have had worse epitaphs; and there is evidence of a warm heart in his manner of sending news of his visit to Marcus's sons. "One was holding a piece of white bread like a little prince, the other a piece of black bread quite in keeping with a philosopher's son." And one was Commodus!

I could go on quoting, but I must not. In a correspondence that is limited in range—for much of it is, in its way, tutorial—it is possible to catch a glimpse of the Marcus men loved—a tender, considerate being, devoted to wife and child and friend, with no pride and no dignity, as friendly as emperor as when he was a lad; a very human person who evidently fought his battle out alone and told no one save that immortal diary; a man it does one good to know, who, even if he wore the purple and were all the sublime and dignified and accomplished hero Fronto with no flattery calls him, was a lonely soul clinging with eager hands to the little human intercourse and fellowship that brought him peace. Not great, this Marcus, yet he makes the Marcus of the *Meditations* greater.

The Brain

WITHIN its tiny chalice close withheld,
 Baffling conjecture as it balks our gaze,
 The human brain three-thousand-million-
 celled
 Guards well the secret of its working days.
 Just some grey matter in a bony cup!
 The quaint alembic, whence distilled pro-
 ceeds
 All that Man's moving story treasures up
 Of thoughts inspired and age-transforming
 deeds.
 Strange, strange, indeed, this cryptic Force
 unknown
 That breeds our daily thoughts, our nightly
 dreams,
 This viewless Form with whom—and yet
 alone—
 We walk from day to day. Yet stranger
 seems,
 Yea, passing mortal search, the mightier Brain
 Behind this wondrous world of joy and pain.

JOHN ANDERSON STEWART.

'Twas in September

BY QUINTUS DECIMUS

THAT "Never Again" League, of which I am a convinced and enthusiastic member. You have heard of it?—the League which binds together those who say we shall have no more war—a splendid, noble gesture like the flip of a sparrow's wing against the blast of a tornado, the damming of the ocean by a small boy and a spade. There are not many ex-Service men in our ranks—I mean front-line troops—and I wonder if ever that committee of ours, soulless in its fury of idealism, loathsome in its clear-cutting, condemnatory intelligence, ever try to look into our minds and understand. Horrors, heaped-up horrors, smashed bodies, scattered entrails, severed limbs, men shrieking and writhing, men gone utterly mad, quivering jellies of panic or red tempests of murder, cold, dreadful, killing cold, wet, dust, mud, starvation, weariness, danger, wounds, death—no wonder they think that we should be of all men those who would say "Never again." How should they know, how should they understand that we say "never again," not because we hate but because we fear—fear that, should the day come again, the mad music, the hellish revelry, would claim us again? How should they realise that in the days of quiet and civilisation, the days of the world's peace, when the barbarous anachronisms of Mars are put beyond the pale of the right and the fitting and the proper, that some of us would give up everything just to swing along in those long columns, just to feel the Lewis gun-butt cuddle into one's shoulder, and the queer little quiver down the spine into the secret depths of one's uttermost being as the bullets spit out into close, packed human flesh, to see the red sun rise on bright bayonets, gaunt cheeks and hard eyes, to stand, were it for the last time, in the dreadful fascination of fear under a rain of explosives, give up everything because there is no more terror in death and something has

gone out of life? "Well it is that war is so terrible, else we would love it too much"—but that was pity and not conviction, for Robert Lee was a great gentleman.

* * * * *

It is in September that it is worst. Wherever I go I can hear it—the tramp, tramp from careful feet up the road from Noeux-les-Mines, the discreet rattle of equipment, the muttered curse, the low laugh, the little ripple of excitement on faces preternaturally solemn, preternaturally exalted. Of course, it was a failure, a ghastly, horrible failure, badly planned, worse executed. It was also a baptism, an initiation. Materially, utter futile waste, pitifully uneconomic—no one can deny it. No intelligence can pardon it; no ethics excuse it. Religion may gild it over as splendid sacrifice, which is always waste—in the concrete. To us—but it may be there are things that had better be left unsaid. To those who were there, it was a draught of fire; to those who were not, an intoxication of memories.

* * * * *

There will be many tales told of what is, I believe, technically known as the fighting in Artois. There was much fighting and many were killed at one time and another. There was much fighting in September, 1915, and many were killed from many units, but no one will take from it its army name which the 15th Division gave it—the battle of Loos—an incident and, as it turned out, a very unimportant, somewhat stupid incident in a long campaign which settled nothing except the dubious possession of some hundreds of yards of smashed-up earth. That and some 30,000 casualties—nothing else. It already has its historians eagerly seizing on something picturesque like the Highland kilt to lighten up what to succeeding generations will be a pathetically dull narrative. They

will show you the line dressed from the 2nd Division on the left, through the 9th, the 1st, the 15th, to the 47th on the right. They will show that the 15th was the spearhead of the attack for the breakthrough between Loos and Haisnes. They will tell you how the 46th and 44th Brigades, with the 45th in reserve, went over—Black Watch and Seaforths in the van—at 6.30 a.m.; how at 7.5 they were in the German second line, and at 7.40 clearing Loos streets with the bayonet; how they swung round, and with Gordons and Camerons leading, poured over Hill 70 and then turned away led by the lure of houses to Lens, a fighting torrent far in advance of artillery and out of reach of supports, and how, fired at from four sides, they came back slowly in dribbles, in a wild mix-up of battalions, up Hill 70 again, and by midday were on the British side of it—what was left of them.

They will not tell all—of the deadly wounded in a low shelter blown to pieces by their own shells, of the Gordon and the German lying weaponless and dead, with strong white Scots teeth fast in a Bavarian throat, of the mad sergeant of the Seaforths, one eye a mass of smashed flesh, solemnly bayoneting gibbering prisoners to a lost tune of his own, of the boy Cameron officer who, last of the trickling line, bloodstained, wounded, insane, blew his tortured brains out rather than go back, of the transport officer, who, defiant of orders, drove his waggons over the smoking, battered ground, to come on a sergeant and a handful of men, to ask, "Where is the battalion?" and be met by the half-ashamed, half-proud answer, "This is it." They will tell much, but not all.

They will enlarge their tale and tell of the German side, how the 3rd Battalion of the 178th Regiment poured up Lens street and threw out the handful of Scots who had penetrated Cité St. Laurent, and how by a counter-charge as gallant as their foes' they retook Hill 70. Another gallant story, but it will not be all.

* * * * *

The story of Loos has only been told once ;

it will never be told again—told in a few minutes, in quaint, disjointed sentences, broken by emotion and by whisky, told in the pallid, jaundiced light of a guttering candle in a filthy, louse-haunted dugout—unreproducible, art. There was no warning, no beginning, and no end. We did not talk battles in those days, not even at home; one does not make journalistic use of one's own love-story; one never tells all, least of all the all that didn't happen. The day's work done, sleep difficult, rest impossible, we sat and ate and drank and talked, mixing religion up with obscenity and poetry with libidinous tales, keyed-up, nervous, excited, drugged by tobacco and inflamed by alcohol. And the candle flickered.

"Like a corpse light," said a dreary, far-away voice, not the voice of the most belauded stentor of the battalion—a voice as of someone else speaking that no one cared even in drunkenness to interrupt. "Just like that night outside Lens—there were hundreds of them, wee flickering bits of light above all the bonnie dead. They flickered, flickered, and we took potshots at them, but they went on flickering right through shell-bursts and everything; and the dawn was coming up, and they went out, one by one. . . ."

"I don't remember how I got there. It was early in the morning with the grand division. Kitchener said it was the finest division he had ever seen, and the most of us hadn't seen blood or a man die. The pick of Scotland, that division was; and there's never been anything like it in the world or the next than it going over, yelling, laughing, shouting, crying, and the kilts waving and the pipes playing and the sun on the bayonets and the brave, strong faces. And oh! the joy of it. Men falling and no one stopping, and over the first line and over the second and into Loos, running up the streets, and bayonet work here and bayonet work there, and wee corner laddies from the streets of Dundee, red, red from bonnet to kilt, and their rifles hot as fire and the blood sizzling on the muzzles. I mind I didn't care for anything or anybody. There was a wicked wee devil in my head beating a drum. There were dead men behind me and living men

around me, and we were going on, man-killers every one of us, drinking blood like mother's milk, and as drunk as hell on it, drunk enough to have taken heaven in our stride.

"War!—aye, it was war, the real thing, the thing in the pictures, as easy as a field-day, and when we came out of Loos and they began to snipe at us from the redoubt and the Lens road we just went on any old way up the Hill. A man dropped in his tracks, a bit of shell smashed arm or leg; if it hadn't been for that it would have looked a crowd at a football match—a game, a rare, rare game. And up the Hill, a bit of scrapping, tameless, easy killing, up the Hill and over it. Three miles we'd gone, and there we were all mixed up, Gordons and Seaforths and Camerons and Black Watch, and the others behind and alongside, and guns going and the Boches running into Lens. Whoop and away, and on we went. Dig in! Consolidate! Devil a fear with a stretch of open ground and houses and Huns in front. Nobody knew where we were going, nobody cared. And so down we went like a Hieland burn, stumbling, laughing, yelling; and it might have been Bannockburn for all I knew. It was just all history, all the battles jammed, banged into one—the biggest, the last; and I didn't care if we won, if we lost, so long as it went on.

"I heard after they tried to stop us. Maybe they did. I didn't hear or see anything then. And then it began to be different. We swung into Lens, and the streets were barricaded and the houses loop-holed, and back and front they shot into us. It was war now, and, my God! it was the best yet. Once they came at us out of a side street. It was bayonet and butt and men crying and the suck of a blade pulled out and the oozy smash of a cloth cap into a head. Man, it was grand, grand; and then somebody said 'Get back,' and we could see the lines getting

nearer and the bullets a bit quicker, but it was like leaving a girl before the night's half spent, and so we came back. Not beaten, mind you. We just wanted to come back; the play was getting nearly over, and we had to be getting home.

"And so we went back, and there was two hundred of us, and then a hundred, and then fifty. And so we went back suddenly tired and heeding nothing, and, as we went, we came on them, one or two, and then three or four, and then in a long line, and every man had on the Cameron kilt, and I began to cry, and I cried and I cried, and all I could think of was those boys in the Cameron kilts. And I cried and cried even when they came at us suddenly, and I was still crying although I was fighting like a crazed fool. And I couldn't remember where I was or where I had been, and there was no singing or no shouting, and the sun was shining down on the white faces and the kilts. Somebody pulled me into a trench, and I went on crying; somebody said 'fire,' and I fired away—I don't know what at. And then it is all a blank—just those white faces and the kilts—oh, my God! the kilts."

* * * * *

No one spoke. The candle spluttered, flashed up, gurgled, died. There was a harsh movement and the sounds of a man sobbing. And no one spoke. Yet if a prayer went up, and prayers, queer, tortured things that only an Omniscient God could ever hope to understand, did go up, it said, "Once again, dear God; just once again."

* * * * *

And so I cling to the "Never Again" League because it is all so uneconomic, so futile, so barbarous, so sinful. "Once again, dear God; just once again." The devils may laugh; yet God will understand.

Ireland the Dreamer

By RONALD CAMPBELL MACFIE

Who are you with the billowy bosom rising and falling? Asthore! Asthore!
 You with the dimpled feet aglimmer, like the surf on a Kerry shore,
 Eyes like stars in a cloud half-hidden, brimful of tears and ecstasies,
 Sloe-black tresses over your shoulders, floating like banners upon the breeze?
 Who are they who like mist are surging over the mountains and moorlands there,
 Pressing around you, calling you "Mother," kissing your hand and kissing your
 hair?

IRELAND

I am Ireland, and these the "rebels"—*loyal* "rebels" who fought for me—
 Boys who wore their fetters like garlands, went to prison to set me free;
 Wives and mothers who gave their dearest—all that passion of love could give;
 These are the men and women who perished—*chose* to perish that I might live.
 These are the faithful "traitors" who followed bravely, fearlessly, after "The
 Gleam";
 These are the fools of God who squandered all their youth for sake of a Dream.

Some were hunted over their homeland, prey of the Regicide's hounds of hell;
 Some in Limerick, Clare, Killarney, fighting the cohorts of England fell;
 These in Tuam, Balbriggan, Mallow, saw their cabins go up in flame;
 These with their blue eyes blind and bandaged dropped to a firing-party's aim.
 Never once did their purpose falter; never once did their courage fail:
 Each like a hero fought for his country, guarding the passes of Barna Baile.¹

This man, stabbed in a red reprisal, felt that he died for his country's fame;
 This man perished in gaol of hunger, rather than yield his heart to shame;
 This man, wounded, and weak, and weary, propped for the guns in a prison chair,
 Deemed it a throne, and felt like a crown the stiffened curls of his clotted hair.
 Dungeon and scaffold were no dishonour; gibbet and gallows were no disgrace;
 The scaffold seemed like a kingly court, and the halter became a queen's embrace.

ENGLAND

Sister, sister, what is this Freedom? What is this Dream they died to win?
 Dreamers drunken with dreams were they, who dreamed to conquer their mighty
 kin!

How can your dreamers build an Empire out of bogland, and rock, and moor?
 How can a little isle, in the ocean, buffets of Time and Fate endure?
 Lo, the Imperial Might of England marches along with banners spread,
 While your poor little Island of Dreamers dreams of its unborn or its dead!

IRELAND

What are we all but dreams and shadows—spectres haunting a ghostly Earth?
 What are we all but foolish dreamers? What are our best ambitions worth?
 Why do you scorn this dauntless dream, cherished for hundreds of hopeless years,
 True as sorrow, poignant as pain, and ever watered with blood and tears?
 Exiled, hunted, imprisoned, tortured, hanged like crows on the gallow's tree,
 The Irish dreamers suffered and dreamed, till Ireland to-day is Ireland free!

¹ Barna Baile = Gap of Danger.

Centuries seven the heroes of Ireland suffered, and fought, and died for a dream :
Dust of the dead is in every shamrock—blood of the dead is every stream.
Now from their graves are the dreamers rising—surgent mist at the break of morn ;
Mist of fire, for their hearts are burning : of such mist is a Nation born !
All the love that the dead dreamers gave, all that they paid in blood and pain,
Hallow to us the soil of Ireland, bog, and meadow, and hill, and plain.

Now we are free, let us work together : Ireland will dream, and England achieve.
Life for you is what you accomplish ; life for us is what we believe.
Dream we, and labour we, both together, doubly noble will be our lives :
Works he hardest who sometimes dreams ; dreams he fairest who sometimes strives.
Brother and Sister, Celt and Saxon, surely we both shall best succeed
When a strenuous Deed fulfils a Dream, and a noble Dream inspires a Deed !

Atticus: an Epitaph

REGARDING death, like life, with scorn,
He fears no resurrection morn.
The angels came and went off sighing ;
The devils came and left him lying.
ROBERT ANGUS.

Correspondence

“Meaninglessness” in Art

To the Editor of THE NORTHERN REVIEW.

SIR,

Unless I am in error, twice writers in THE NORTHERN REVIEW have quoted with approbation Mr. Edwin Muir's dictum that the end of art is “meaninglessness.”

I should like if Mr. Muir, or some of his admirers, would elaborate that, for it seems to me to be contradicted by the most elementary experience. Nor do I understand whether Mr. Muir means absolute or relative “meaninglessness.” If the former, then to an Englishman—or a Scotsman—select extracts from a Lithuanian or a Georgian news-sheet would be the highest art, for it would be absolute—to him, *i.e.*, relative—“meaninglessness.” If the latter, surely Mr. Muir would lead art to absolute negation. Is there any reader or thinker or ordinary person—and, after all, as one of the last-named I submit we are entitled to consideration—who would endure any so-called art that had absolutely no “meaning”—that is, had no relation to anyone or anything in the entire universe? Or are we to understand that Mr. Muir means that art shall be “meaningless” as music is “meaningless,” and how does he define such “meaninglessness”?

I submit with due deference that here we have another case of the hypnotic use of words for their own sake and for the sake of effect, which is the besetting sin of contemporary criticism, the more besetting in proportion as the criticism is more “advanced.” It is, in fact, an asseveration of the “meaninglessness” of words, and I feel that no renaissance can be founded on principles which their enunciators do not themselves clearly understand.

I own I should like enlightenment on this matter.

Yours, etc.,

WALTER MILLER.

PERTH, August 15.

Atlantis and Occultism

To the Editor of THE NORTHERN REVIEW.

SIR,

Mr. Wylie's article on Atlantis was a notable one, and fully recognised the new knowledge that has made the existence of

Atlantis an historical certainty. I deprecate, however, his sneer at the occultists', or more properly the Theosophists', view of history. Working on lines that I admit do not commend themselves to modern science, though it believes things far more incredible than the indestructibility of thought and world-memory or revelations from the spirit-world, they have given us the real history of Atlantis, a great empire, at a stage of development different from, but not inferior to, ours, and in physical conditions that obtain nowhere to-day. Owing to the increased density of the air, the Atlantians had airships which travelled only short distances and but a few yards from the ground, but their sea-going ships were little better than the Phœnicians'. They never discovered steam, for instance. The record is complete, and is as well supported or better than much so-called history, and I do not think Mr. Wylie need have sneered at it.

I enclose my card and remain,

Yours, etc.,

THEOSOPHUS.

GLASGOW, July 28.

A Note on Reviews

To the Editor of THE NORTHERN REVIEW.

SIR,

In common, I have no doubt, with many of your readers, I regard the reviews in THE NORTHERN REVIEW, under the headings “Books of the Month” and “Book Reviews,” as among the most valuable things you give us. But may I ask why you review so few Scottish books? You seem, if I may say so, to go out of your way to display the work of English writers and neglect our own countrymen. I have heard many comments on this, and so write this letter. In a Scottish review we expect *Scottish* books to be most fully commented upon.

Yours, etc.,

GLASGUENSIS.

August 3.

[In reference to the above, we review what is sent us by the publishers. If we seem to neglect Scottish authors, which, by the way, we do not, the neglected can remedy that by seeing that review copies of their works are sent to our offices.—ED.]

Book Reviews

The Return of the Saga

Dietrich of Bern and his Companions. By Katherine M. Buck. In shilling parts. Parts 1 to 12. (London: A. H. Mayhew.)

This is a most interesting experiment. The art of narrative poetry has been very largely neglected in these days—at least, narrative poetry at any considerable length, for I cannot at the moment recall any long and successful work of the type since Swinburne's *Tristram* and Morris's *Jason*, although narrative poetry used to be one of the glories of English poetry. It is, therefore, significant that a work of pure narration, planned on a truly generous scale, should appear—and appear serially—in these days of short, explosive poems which seem to tire their authors out if they reach to more than some fifty lines. Also, and this also has its significance, its subject is our old legends.

Miss Buck has had the boldness to conceive of nothing less than the retelling of the whole common body of Norse-Teutonic legend, the heritage of all the German tribes from the days when woe came to the earth in the wars and deaths of the *Volsungs*, of Wayland the Smith, of the coming of the Germans to Britain, and the rally of the Britons under the predecessor of Arthur, and there for the moment at Part 33 we end the first section of her tale without ever having reached its hero, Dietrich of Bern. Of this new form of the saga we have now twelve parts, and the completed work is like to prove a rich treasure.

Miss Buck's method is curious. The teller of the tale is an old crusading knight turned monk, who tells it originally to Richard Yea and Nay's Queen Berengaria of Navarre, and he in turn puts it into the mouth of the mysterious Nornaguest, of whom Mr. Johannsen has made such good use, who tells it to Olaf Tryggvason. The parts before me begin with the tale of Sieglinde and Sigmund, and the rearing of Sigurd to avenge his father and be Fafnir's-bane, of the ancestry of Wayland the Smith, whose saga forms the first part of the poem, and how he and his brothers came to Wolfsdale, where they caught, wedded, and lost the three Swan-maidens—and at that point for the moment we stop. Miss Buck has used the sagas and the epics with reverent care. All her details are culled from them—I leave the reader to find their individual names from her preface—and much of her narrative is pure translation. She concentrates entirely on telling the story as a man might tell it

at the hearth; she attempts no flights nor seeks to stress those features which have inspired men to write great tragedies. She rarely makes her heroes heroic; they are heroes, but the heroes of a minstrel's tale, not the heroes of Wagner, and toned down as in the *Nibelungenlied* from the stark greatness of the *Volsungasaga*, for to her they are not symbols of destiny with whom real gods fight, but our own authentic ancestors remembered by a talkative and exaggerating poet. The same restraint, the same deliberate avoidance of effect, is carried into her verse. It is frankly narrative, blank verse, varied by an occasional rhymed couplet and interspersed here and there with a lyric, easy, smooth, pedestrian, the language of a story and not an epic.

To some who remember the great stories this may seem tame, but, as a matter of fact, one reads with increasing fascination. One never gets to grips with the stern and tragic things of life and destiny as, say, Malory did, last and greatest of legend-makers, but one is quaintly charmed once one has yielded to it by the sheer artlessness of it, and one cannot read far without admitting that it was worth doing and has been done well, for these old tales were worth the telling, all of them, and this is, perhaps, the only way to do it.

It is unfair, possibly, to give a slice out of them, for the charm is not in the individual line or passage but in the steady progress of the narrative itself, but one must risk it. Here is the trying of Sigurd's sword:

Sigurd heaved up the sword and struck a blow
So mightily that now the anvil split
And brake in twain; aye! e'en the bed of it
Unto the stock was cloven, but the sword
Brake not, nor splintered. Sigurd cried o'erjoyed,
"This is in truth a sword for Odin's hand!
Well hast thou forged it, Mimer, Master-Smith."
So went he to the stream that is called Rhine,
And cast a flock of wool into the flood,
Holding the blade thereto. . . . And lo! its edge,
Where the wool came against it, sheered clean
through
The wool as though 'twere water flowing past.
Then Sigurd praised Smith Mimer, well content.

Not great epic verse, perhaps not great verse of any kind, you may say, but wonderfully fascinating verse if you sit down as I did and read on and on, and a wonderfully fascinating experiment.

C. K. M.

Mr. Leacock's Latest

The Garden of Folly. By Stephen Leacock. 5s.
(London: Lane.)

There is one thing you must never do with Mr. Leacock, and that is, sit down to read him straight through. The way to get all the enjoyment possible is to read or, preferably, have read to you, one of these sketches per night; then they are a source of sheer delight. These particular plants from the Garden of Folly, for instance, are very varied and not to be read in a bunch. Some of them, indeed, almost make one believe that their author is becoming a serious professional gardener of humour, and is beginning to wear that preoccupied air that gardeners do when they depreciate their blooms to save them from being cut. At any rate, some of his fun seems not quite so spontaneous as of yore, and the little bits of reflection strike one as almost seriously meant and not as assistance to the fooling. But on the foibles of contemporary humanity he recovers his best, and his best is without peer. The magnificent onslaught on modern psychology and psychopathy, its quacks, and its dupes, in "The Human Mind Up-to-date" and "The Human Body: Its Care and Prevention," are entirely priceless, both in their satire and their wisdom, and scarcely less successful are the brilliant skits on the correspondence schools, the art of "salesmanship," and truth in advertising. These are wonderful things in a care-ridden world, and Mr. Leacock is getting to be a power for rest and laughter which needs a League of Nations guarantee to secure uninterrupted production. And this bottled laughter of his costs only five shillings, and lasts many days.

A. T. M.

Three "Different" Novels

Ordeal. By Dale Collins. 7s. 6d. net. (London: Heinemann.)

The Green Hat. By Michael Arlen. 7s. 6d. net. (London: Collins.)

The Natural Man. By Patrick Miller. 7s. 6d. net. (London: Richards.)

There is a type of critic who would say these three novels are distinguished. It is a hateful meaningless word, though I have used it myself when I was at a loss for any other and so confessed my own bankruptcy, and I am not sure if "different" is much better. But it does describe one quality that marks them off from the general mass from which their difference is unmistakable. In all three there is marked care; in all three there

is originality of conception, of style, of thought; in all three there is no trace of best-sellerism, and none of them is by a popular novelist.

I hope Mr. Arlen will not feel offended, for he is a well-known novelist with a very appreciative circle of readers, but he will never be a popular novelist. His mind works too quickly, and his combination of criticism of his characters as men and women and criticism of himself as artist make his work intensely subtle and even baffling. In *The Green Hat* we are introduced to Iris Storm, the last but one of an old family, the friend of the last of old families, who has deliberately cut herself adrift to live the life of a lawless woman. Mr. Arlen begins her story with a seduction, a piece of clever malicious writing, that is robbed by sheer delicacy of language of any nastiness, and thereafter we study through pages of brilliant dialogue the reaction of her defiance of the ancient code—a code so strong that her drunken brother blows out his brains because of being mixed up in a trumped-up police scandal—on three or four men. None of them approve, whatever their relations with her, and yet they cannot but admit her fascination and her courage. The climax comes when she seeks to steal away a boy lover of her own from his fiancée. The council of her men friends face her who seems bent on ruining life after life, so cheaply bent that one begins to rise superior to unwilling admiration and affection for her. And then like an avalanche comes the revelation. Her husband's suicide, which all thought due to her wickedness, was due to his own, but, because men thought of him as another Rupert Brooke, a young Olympian, on whom was no stain, she deliberately yielded to the call of a passion-ridden body, and became a courtesan to keep the legend of his purity green. The carrying-off of the boy-lover, the ruining of a girl's happiness, and a man's life, was but part of the play, and with the play exposed she hurls herself to death, a death that seems accidental but which these friends of her know was self-contrived.

There is no wonder the reader never knows where he is with Mr. Arlen when he is thus hurled from sparkling cynical realism to deep and tender romance. He comes to the end with a deep-drawn sigh and the knowledge that this is a great tale, and yet knows that behind him Mr. Arlen is chuckling over the way he has been taken in. And Mr. Arlen can write. There is not a slovenly sentence in the book. The crisp, virile English is polished till it scintillates almost unbearably, and the descriptive parts are as good as the dialogue. The breathless horror, yet so quiet, of Iris's death, the quaint contrasts of that tragic hospital, and, above all, the magnificently vivid description of that reckless midnight ride to Maidenhead to bathe in the moonlight

are—well, they are unlike anyone else's work. They are like the whole novel, "different."

Even if Mr. Arlen were a poor hand at a plot, the brilliance of his wit would save him. Mr. Collins is not brilliant. His style is plain and unadorned, rarely becoming eloquent, save in his descriptions of the sea—the grilling calm of the Pacific, the wild scenes of the coming rain, and the truly Conradian magnificence of the storm. These things have been done before but rarely so revealingly, and they serve as background for a strange plot. In the galley of a pleasure yacht dwells a steward, a man with a twisted brain, a megalomaniac, a Napoleonic soul wearing a steward's uniform. Power is what he dreams of; not the power of the story-books but actual power over the men and women he works for, hates and despises. In the calm, when heat sears their souls, he alone remains unruffled. He becomes epic in his malevolence as he whispers to the crew and sets man against man, and as the nerves fray and ugly uncivilised passions appear, stripping off the outer skin of decency and control, so his hold becomes deeper and more terrible. Ere his schemes have come to fruition, they fear him. His calm suavity dominates them, and when, having risked murder and then tricked the hired crew into leaving the ship, he fronts them, he is like a sultan fronting the slaves in the seraglio. His revolvers are potent, but far more potent is the pressure of that dominating personality which makes his wretched victims lose the steward in a strange dæmonic figure of evil power. All but one old aristocrat, to whom he is but a steward, and whose calm contempt brings him to death. *Ordeal* is a strange and sombre study of almost painful intensity, the story of a few haunted weeks into which and out of which the characters pass, as in and out of a nightmare, an experience so unbelievable that it is soon forgotten. It is a veritable triumph, a very great novel which owes nothing to its setting.

Mr. Miller has no affinities with either Mr. Arlen or Mr. Collins, and yet his story is no whit less impressive. It is a war-story, perhaps the nearest approach to the real thing in certain aspects that any novelist has given us. Peter Blaven is an artillery officer, who is "keen" on war as a man's work, almost a creative occupation, a point of view which possibly occurred to numerous artillery officers but which in Blaven's case is the honest belief of an enthusiast. *The Natural Man* is not so much the history of his experiences, though there are plenty of these which are obviously drawn from life, as the history of the reaction of war on Blaven himself and his brother officers. It is a baring of the souls of these men, done almost with reverence and yet with little toning down of actuality, and it breathes the very atmosphere of the front, despite its intensely personal analytical and restricted note. Mr. Miller felt before he wrote, and that is what enables him to make his very ordinary officers so extraordinarily real. To say it is interesting is very

mild praise. It is far more than interesting; it is life and it is true, and in his one solitary sex-episode Mr. Miller has done what none of his rivals have succeeded in doing, getting down to the genuine depths of personality. Slight, ineffective, a little stupid, it is just these qualities that make that episode, so fatal to others, a triumph, and so perfectly in keeping with its hero. *The Natural Man* will be read and re-read, despite its entire lack of the qualities of the ordinary novel. It is the real thing, and Mr. Miller, it would seem, has a future before him.

A. T. MORRIS.

The Playgoer at Home

Which? By Henry Bowskill. Plays for a People's Theatre, No. 25. 3s. 6d. net. (London: Daniel.)

The Light of the East. By Louis Arundel. 5s. net. (London: Palmer.)

Boccaccio's Untold Tale and Other One-Act Plays. By Harry Kemp. 8s. 6d. net. (London: Brentano.)

The Sin-Eater's Hallowe'en. By Francis Neilson. (New York: B. W. Huebsch.)

It is advantageous to sit far away from theatres and read the plays one is never likely to see, but it has its disadvantages. If I had lived near Theatreland I should probably have known if Mr. Bowskill and Mr. Arundel have other plays to their credit and something about them. I have to confess I never heard of either, which may augur myself trebly unknown, or it may be I share this ignorance with everybody else. At any rate, it is with due hesitancy that I think I may risk saying *Which?* and *The Light of the East* are first or very nearly first plays. Neither of them has that somewhat jaded niceness of technique which seems gradually to overtake all our modern dramatists. They are robustious and daring, and care not a whit for the audience. Mr. Bowskill is the more earnest; Mr. Arundel the cleverer. Indeed, the latter comes within an ace of being very clever, for he nearly combines effective satire with tender romance, only the romance is a little far-fetched and the satire too heavy. He began by annoying me because his disciple of Tao the Hermit-Prince, who is a latter-day Buddha, insists on addressing his deity in pidgin English—a slight mistake, but one which jarred heavily. When we get into the plot, however, Mr. Arundel makes no such mistakes. We are in the remoter future, and East and West are but two great leagues. The West is ruled by six Semitic capitalists, vulgarer, coarser, and uglier than the average, and they plan to add to their riches by declaring war on the East. The plan is frustrated by the appearance of Prince Tao, though his plan of

using the main villain's brother as a sham black-mailer seems a little thin, and the general conversions of the end a little out of character. But the earlier scenes, when the plot is being worked out, and the first clash between the peacemaker from the East and the capitalist is virile, good stuff, which would go well on the stage. It is vigorous, hard, killing satire, and with distinct power of its own.

Mr. Bowskill is, as I have said, much more in earnest. I confess to be a little tired of conscientious objectors in the flesh and on the stage, but Mr. Bowskill makes his rising young politician, who sacrifices himself for conscience's sake, a noble figure. The other figures, however, are, one hopes, caricatures—the loathsome Territorial major and the equally loathsome clergyman, and the rapid, evil Enid—while surely the unmasking of the manager and partner of the munitions work as a German, who makes the shells too big for the guns, is a touch of needless melodrama, quite different from the equally melodramatic but sound deaths of the munitioneer's two sons. There is much savage writing and much effective rhetoric, but a fine play is spoiled a little because of its exaggerations and by the fact that its characters seem to mistake orations for conversation, and its undeniable power is weakened. Mr. Bowskill has, however, a real sense of the stage, and *Which?* is full of promise.

British readers should be glad to make the acquaintance of Mr. Kemp and these exquisite little verse plays. In his chatty preface he lets us into the inner history of the non-commercial American drama, and how he staged these plays in a rough-and-ready theatre with a minimum of scenery. The plays themselves are very charming, the most successful being the least ambitious. *Boccaccio's Untold Tale* is a remarkably fine piece of work of real delicacy combined with power of the poet, who, falsely told that the woman of exceeding beauty whom he loves has become hideous through the plague, tears out his eyes to keep her beauty unimpaired before his mental vision. It is a pitiful, haunting little play of great beauty. The others are less little masterpieces than this. The Don Juan tales I did not find very satisfying, but the *Judith* is an interesting new conception and *The White Hawk* a satisfactory adaptation. Mr. Kemp thoroughly understands dramatic values, and the two plays of quite imaginary plots, *Their Day* and *The Peril of the Moon* abound, despite their shortness, in situations whose clever handling is an object lesson. The verse is easy and flowing, and, while charming to read, must also, I fancy, be really effective on the stage with actors who understand how to speak verse. Effortless and invariably beautiful, the plays form a wholly delightful volume curiously unlike anything we have here.

Mr. Neilson sadly disappointed me. From his astonishingly good first scene, with the "Sin-eater" engaged on a colossal task, I imagined I was in for a real folk-drama, strong and satisfying. Imagine my horror when I found it turning into a political

tract, and discovered that the mysterious people whose sins were to be "eaten" were the Kaiser, Mr. Asquith, Viscount Grey, M. Poincaré, and Mr. Lloyd George—a satire, in fact, on Liberal Imperialism, from which I conclude the author is the Mr. Neilson who was once Mr. Neilson, M.P. As a pacifist tract on war-guilt, this is shrewd and effective, but, when I think of that first scene of humour in the village inn, the sinister figure of the scape-goat and the anticipatory thrill of a colossal orgy of sin, I feel aggrieved and did not relish the satire half as much as my political principles urged me to do.

STEWART GORDON.

Problems of Government

How France is Governed. By Joseph Barthélemy, translated by J. B. Morris. 6s. net. (London: Allen and Unwin.)

The Economic Condition of Soviet Russia. By S. M. Prokopovitch. 7s. 6d. net. (London: King.)

Soviet Russia: Legal and Economic Conditions of industrial and commercial Activity in Soviet Russia. By various authors. 3s. 6d. net. (London: King.)

Policy and Arms. By Lieut.-Col. C. à Court Repington. 18s. net. (London: Hutchinson.)

How other peoples are governed is always a fascinating study, were it not that the facts are generally contained in large, technical, and hence formidable tomes which the ordinary reader finds no little difficulty in understanding. The plain, everyday account is what is wanted, and, if a publisher is seeking a series of the kind, he could not do better than take M. Barthélemy's little book on France as a model. It is not merely sound—M. Barthélemy is a world-known authority on constitutional law—and illuminating; it is supremely easy to read, and if any reader wishes to know just how France and Frenchmen are governed, there is no better source of information. A good deal of our misunderstandings of France is due to ignorance of her methods and forms of government. We have no clear idea of the function of the President, of ministerial and cabinet responsibility, of the formation of ministries and the continuity of policies. Above all, we have only the very vaguest ideas of the French party system. I doubt if one man out of a thousand could correctly name the various groups in the Chamber. To all these questions as well as to still less understood ones of local government, M. Barthélemy gives clear but comprehensive answers. He writes critically, for he is one of those who think France might be more republican than she is, and he gives a very clear account of the compromise of

the constitutional laws. This is an admirable book and deserves many readers.

M. Prokopoviz has set out to analyse from Bolshevik sources the economic measures of the Red junta, a critical analysis, for, as he says very truly, the greater part of the scientific literature regarding Russia's present position is merely propaganda inspired by that National Lie Bureau, which is becoming so melancholy a feature of all civilised governments. It is, in fact, an indictment of Bolshevism as a financial and economic failure in Russia, and a very searching estimate of the possibilities of the retreat from Communism. Lavishly supplied with carefully checked statistics and details of all the relevant decrees, this an invaluable little book, which, in view of our new commitments, ought to be very carefully studied. Not the least damaging method of criticism is the sort of scientific moderation which Professor Prokopoviz successfully maintains.

Equally valuable but less soberly scientific is the collection of articles on legal and economic conditions of trade. The standpoint of the authors, all "Whites," is that the private enterprise which has succeeded in existing in Russia is the sole thing that prevent total bankruptcy, and that loans to Russia are loans to maintain Communism as a political government. M. P. Apostol's "The Economic Balance-Sheet of Bolshevism" is a formidable indictment, and the article by Prof. Michelson on the financial situation tears away the veil of propaganda and shows in what desperate straits Red finance is. Equally worth studying, especially by the business man, are the other articles, and particularly the acute criticism of the currency reform by Prof. Bernatzky and the legal study by Prof. Pilenko.

It is on the whole a pernicious practice to try to secure double payment for ephemeral journalism by reprinting it in book form, and an extraordinarily varied collection of hastily written articles will not add to Col. Repington's reputation. He does attempt to give it unity, but the attempt fails, for no amount of connecting sentences will secure unity between the diplomacy of Mary Stuart and the Spanish adventure in Morocco. Much of it, again, is sheer compilation, which can be got in any source book, and when it is not mere compilation it is as often as not only a newspaper article or review which is of no use to the student, while the reprints of the recommendations of Imperial Defence Committees look remarkably like padding. There are traces of the acute military critic whom we alternately liked or disliked during the war in the essays on French aerial policy, and the French theory of war preparation, but they are only traces, and the hasty review of Mr. Churchill's work leaves one very cold. There is a lot of quite interesting reading if one has not read it before, but nothing one can see justified of this immortality within the bound covers of a book.

R. T. CLARK.

The Earth Before History

Ancient Hunters. By W. J. Sollas. Third edition. 25s. net. (London: Macmillan.)

There is a quaint story told of the first edition of this book of how a much-hurried literary editor sent it to the racing reporter under the impression it had some connection with the most barbaric survival of our modern life, and that the reporter, equally hurried, reviewed it as "an interesting introduction to the history of the art of John Peel." The story seems to be apocryphal, for I never met a racing reporter with such pretensions to literary knowledge; but it has its point, for it is in the passing of the hunter before the farmer that Professor Sollas sees the change which marks the beginning of civilised life.

It is unnecessary to remind the reader that *Ancient Hunters* is a monumental work, the most up-to-date and comprehensive account of man up to the dawn of history. It is a fragmentary, disputed story, resting on evidence that is often flimsy and contested by rival experts, and involving deductions which do not always seem justified by the data. Through the controversies and difficulties Professor Sollas placidly steers his way from the days when man was not, when by some mysterious process he evolved, becoming less and less ape-like, till *Homo sapiens*, our original ancestor as men, emerges, constructed out of a few teeth and some bones. Thereafter, as we pass down the ages which bear but arbitrary names, and whose duration is estimated with variations of thousands of years, we find race succeeding race, or perhaps culture succeeding culture, till the day when man settles down; he thinks in terms of a city; he is *civilised*, and history has begun.

It is a fascinating story, and in these pages Professor Sollas builds up the details of what we may call the hunting phase when man as a whole was an animal of prey, though an animal of such culture as to leave those marvellous works of art behind him that in their way have never been surpassed. Not merely does he recreate the man, but drawing analogies with caution and skill from survivals tells us what that life was like. That is the really fascinating part of the book, but its value from cover to cover is undoubted. Professor Sollas always speaks with deliberation equal to his authority, and on disputed matters one, while sometimes demurring, is disposed largely to accept on the evidence adduced. What we need is more evidence, for nothing is franker than his avowal of its present meagreness. This third edition should prove a valuable stimulus to archæology, for much of its evidence was in the first instance secured by amateurs, and, reading very much as amateur, I found it an equally valuable stimulus to thought. It is a book for everyone, though it is not easy; a very great book about the greatest of all historical subjects.

C. K.

One of the most interesting of the side lines in which the aeroplane can work is in archæology. From the air it is possible to detect traces of ancient works which are quite invisible to the eye of the pedestrian. These are works so slight as earthworks around a field or field and village boundaries, which, if carefully studied, yield very valuable historical information. To their credit be it said our Ordnance Survey, with its energetic archæological officer, Mr. Crawford, are pushing on the work of discovery with zest, and the first results, with an account of methods and possibilities, have just been published through the Survey by Mr. Crawford in a most interesting little monograph entitled *Air Survey and Archæology*. (5s.). It is lavishly supplied with maps and photographs, and, if the results at Stonehenge are to be taken as a criterion, no student of our early history can afford to neglect so new and so reliable a witness. It may well mark a new era in British archæology, and even these first results merit the closest study.

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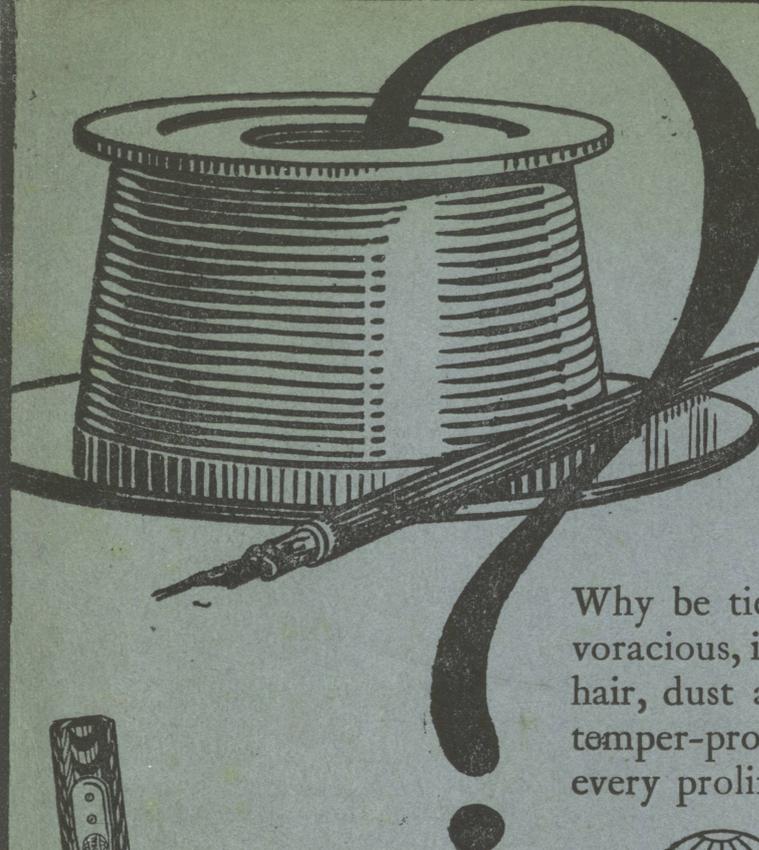
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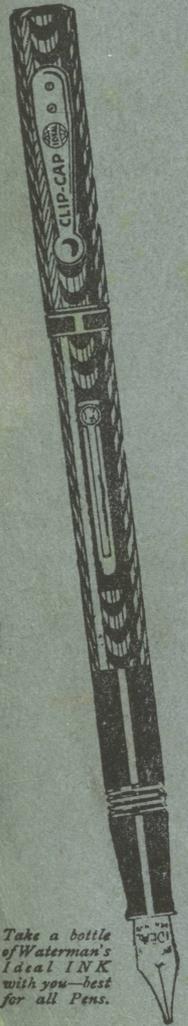
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