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BOLINGBROKE

By CHARLES WHIBLEY

DR. JOHNSON in his Dictionary gives the words which follow as an example of irony: "Bolingbroke was a good man." The example fails from whichever point it be viewed. Irony, to be sure, is something more subtle than a direct opposite, and the "badness" of Bolingbroke, which Johnson would have us take for granted, is the result of an old and deeply rooted prejudice. No sooner had Henry St. John brought peace to England by the Treaty of Utrecht, than all his enemies began with one accord to malign him. "Chesterfield says," wrote Bolingbroke many years afterwards, "I have made a coalition of Whig, Tory, Trimmer, Jacobite against myself. Be it so. I have Truth, that is stronger than all of them, on my side, and in her company, and avowed by her, I have more satisfaction than their applause and their favour could give me." Bolingbroke was unduly sanguine. The truth takes an unconscionable time to establish herself, and even yet lags behind the swift slanders of the Whigs. To blacken the character of Bolingbroke was laid by Walpole as a solemn duty upon all his friends. Walpole's fribble son, for whom Bolingbroke was "this incendiary," loses no opportunity, which malice and falsehood might suggest, of insulting the memory of his father's great opponent. Macaulay, for whom the Whig tradition was a pious trust, denounces Boling-

broke as "a brilliant knave," at the very moment when he applauds the authors of the peace. In all the tabernacles, where the pure doctrine of the Whigs is still preached, the malevolence of Walpole persists. Nor have the Tories been eager to rally to the defence of their champion. The admiring eloquence of Disraeli has had far less effect upon the opinion of Tories than the theological rancour of Samuel Johnson. "Sir," said the doctor, when Bolingbroke's works were published by David Mallet—"Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward: a scoundrel for discharging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death." Truth, after two centuries, is still on Bolingbroke's side, slow-footed though she be, and since the Whigs' hold upon history is already loosened we may yet see some measure of justice done to the fame and character of a great man.

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was born when Charles II was on the throne. Of a noble and wealthy family, he carried in his veins the mixed blood of Cavalier and Roundhead. By a strange irony, he who was destined to lead the Church Party and presently to prove a scourge for the orthodox was guided in his first steps by Daniel Burgess, a fanatical and humorous Presbyterian, and was held so strictly in the leading-strings of Dissent that he was obliged, as he says himself, "while yet a boy, to read over the commentaries of Dr. Manton, whose pride it was to have made a hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm." That he happily outgrew this early training has been for his detractors a stubborn cause of offence, as though perpetual loyalty to the lessons of the school-room was the first and abiding duty of a man. A sojourn at Eton, which mitigated the severity of his early training, was an excellent prelude to the Grand Tour. And when St. John set out to visit France and Italy he was well equipped to profit by what he saw and heard. The letters which he sent

from abroad to Sir William Trumbull,¹ a statesman forty years older than himself, are saved from pedantry only by a boyish enthusiasm. A first sight of France, in May 1698, convinces him that she "has all the melancholy marks of war and absolute government, which are two of God's sharpest judgments, and which there is but one more can equal and that is a tyrannical Hierarchy; for I believe you will permit me to say that the servants of Heaven are the worst masters." Young as he was, he did not scruple to give Trumbull good advice, to regret his absence from public employment, and to remind him of Tully's admirable sentence: *non nobis solum, sed etiam patriæ nati sumus*. Having chosen Trumbull for a pattern, he assures him amiably that, "being resolved to draw as good a copy as he can after so excellent an original, he applies himself to that study in which he (Trumbull) became so perfect a master." In other words, he devotes himself to the study of Roman Law, and piously deplores the decline of the Roman spirit. "There was a time, sir," writes he with a boyish pomp which he presently discarded, "when their divine spirit (if I might use the expression) shed its influence on us; there was a time when *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* was imprinted on our hearts, when zeal for liberty, courage, integrity, and virtue were as much in fashion as the contrary vices are now."

Wherever he goes he sends to his elderly friend such news as he thinks will be welcome to him. He has all the contempt of youth for the learning of Italy, whose "knowledge serves so little to the advancement of a man that there is scarce anyone who aims at it." Not even the name and fame of Magliabecchi appal him. Believing him to be a man of erudition, he found when he met him "an old, vain, senseless pedant, a great devourer of books without any method or digest in what he reads, a kind of Bethlehem character, one that is always busy without proposing to himself any

¹ I am indebted for a sight of these letters, which are to be published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in the Easthamsted Papers, to the intervention of their editor, Mr. Parnell.

end." Here we have a St. John who is something of a scholar, eagerly intent to display his learning, and who yet foreshadows faintly what Bolingbroke is to be. And that which he brought back from the Grand Tour, more valuable than the mastery of French or the knowledge of foreign lands, was the habit of study and love of books, which died in him only with his death. "I have some of St. Evremond's works before me," he writes to Trumbull in 1699 from Milan, "and may apply that in general which he says in particular of an orator, that before a man ventures to produce himself in the world, he must have by reading enriched his mind, and not pretend to spend before he has got an estate." St. John could not have drawn his wisdom from a better source than St. Evremond. They were *honnêtes gens* both, scholars and men of affairs, who knew the grief of exile, and could bear with a good courage all the blows that fortune aimed at them.

Meanwhile, he was mingling with a love of study a love of life. His eager, apprehensive mind seized upon pleasure with the same greed wherewith it seized upon knowledge. He was eminent in dissipation in a dissipated age. He is said to have taken for his models Alcibiades and Petronius, and he has suffered ever since less for the vices in which he indulged than for the frankness with which he proclaimed them. Rochester had been dead less than twenty years when Bolingbroke came upon the town, and that man of wayward genius was still an example to the golden and lettered youth. But the old man, who assured his biographer that he saw St. John and another of his companions run drunk and naked through the Park, was making a theft upon the past, and ascribing to St. John the grosser sins which marked the restoration of Charles II. The lover of the famous Miss Gumley had, surely, something majestic in his frivolity, and liberal though he was in intrigue, disdained to outrage the laws of elegance imposed upon his generation. He was, indeed, the highest expression of the age of Anne. In him wit and gallantry went hand in hand. He was Mirabell in action, and might well have been

a member of that society whose conversation inspired *The Way of the World*, a society which, Congreve says in his letter of dedication to the Earl of Montague, "was so well worthy of you in your retirement last summer from the town."

As I have said, he did not allow pleasure to interrupt the graver business of his life. "The love of study," he wrote himself, with perfect truth, "and the desire of knowledge, were what I felt all my life; and though my genius, unlike the dæmon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of these passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them I harkened to him." In a passage in his *Essay on the Spirit of Patriotism*, he has made with the eloquent passion of regret an apology for his own career. "The service of our country," he writes, "is no chimerical but a real duty. . . . Superior talents and superior rank among our fellow-creatures, whether acquired by birth or by the course of accidents and the success of their own industry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he who possesses them repine at the obligation they lay him under of passing his whole life in the noblest occupation of which human nature is capable? . . . To be driven from hence by successful tyranny, by loss of health or of parts, or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in such a manner as to deserve pity and not to incur blame; but to degrade ourselves, to descend voluntarily and by choice from the highest to a lower, perhaps to the lowest rank of the sons of Adam; to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horses, the care of a kingdom for that of a parish, and a scene of great and generous efforts in public life for one of trifling amusements and low cares, of sloth, of idleness, what is it, my Lord? I had rather your Lordship should name it than I."

It was, in truth, tyranny, and not his own fault, which drove him from the service of his country. Much as he delighted in trifling amusements, he never was their slave, and it was his earliest, as it was his lasting if frustrated ambition, to engage in public business. No sooner was he married than he was

urgent to find employment at home or abroad. They who find monstrosity in every step of his career have been busy in condemning his treatment of his wife. They have condemned it without evidence. It is true that he made light of marriage, with his customary irony, when it came about. "That I was married last Thursday," he wrote to Trumbull, on Monday, May 26, 1701, "is a trifling piece of news, and yet it is the only thing I know of that has happened since you left London"; and thereafter he quotes in a spirit of gaiety, *vixi puellis nuper idoneus* and the rest of it. His wife was Frances, daughter of Sir Henry Winchcombe, and a direct descendant of Jack of Newbury. With her he kept house for many years, both in Golden Square and in the country. We see little more of her than an amiable shadow cast upon the page of history. She won the difficult heart of Swift, who was constant in attachment to her. When he took leave of her on April 10, 1711, she "gave him strict charge to take care of the Secretary in her absence; said she had none to trust but me; and the poor creature's tears came fresh in her eyes." There is no proof here of indifference, and when a few months later Swift visited St. John in Berkshire, he painted a pleasant picture, strangely at variance with that which other artists have given us. "Mr. Secretary," writes Swift, "was a perfect country gentleman at Bucklebury; he inquired after the wheat in such a field; he smoked tobacco with one or two neighbours; he went to visit his hounds, and knew all their names; he and his lady saw me to my chamber just in the country fashion." And then comes Voltaire, with the jest he is determined not to lose. "Seven thousand guineas a year, my girls, and all for us!" Thus a woman of the town is said by Voltaire to have welcomed St. John's appointment as Secretary of State. I prefer the evidence of Swift, at once intimate and credible.

And one good thing marriage did for St. John. It turned his mind, as I have said, to public business. He very soon discovered that, though in time his estate would be very considerable, yet he "must expect for a great while to be in

low circumstances, unless," as he told Trumbull, "I raise 'em myself, and that is what, to you I make nothing a secret, I long to do." It was not for him to despair or complain. "You know me well enough, I believe," he wrote to his friend, "to find that I have some spirit, and indeed I have too much to sit down easily under a strait fortune." So when his troubles "plunged him into a deep melancholy," Horace, "like a powerful magician," came to his aid. And though, happily for him and for England, he was not sent to a post abroad, he threw himself with all his energy into the work of the House of Commons. To that body he had been returned, at the age of one and twenty, by Wootton Bassett, and perforce became a strong partisan of the Tories. In the age of Anne none could hope for preferment who did not profess an unquestioning zeal for the success of his party, and of St. John it may be said that, while he played the necessary part with courage and address, he did less violence to the principles he had made his own than any one of them. "As far as I can recollect," he wrote to Swift in August 1731, "my way of thinking has been uniform enough for more than twenty years." With a clear conscience he might have carried the uniformity still further back. Assuredly, from his first entrance to the House of Commons to his enforced seclusion from that chamber, he remained, so to say, all of one piece.

He first showed his full activity in his reasoned and reasonable opposition to that cunning device known as "Occasional Conformity." St. John's attitude towards orthodox theology differed very little from that which Disraeli was destined to assume. He had a single-minded respect for the Church as a part of the State. He aimed honestly at statesmanship, and he thought it no more than his duty, and Swift, always a devout Churchman, approved his action, to take the early sacrament at St. James's. At the same time he held it a farce, naturally enough, that Dissenters should make an annual obeisance to the Church for their private and public profit. There was no suspicion of religious intolerance in this action

of the Tories. "The principle of the present Ministry," said St. John, "is neither to oppress the Dissenters under pretence of securing the Establishment, nor to suffer them, under the specious colour of moderation, to gain spirit and strength enough to provoke and insult the Church." For St. John the debate was important, because it served to reveal the gift of oratory, which is said to have been, of all his gifts, the greatest. Orators, like actors, write their names in water, and not a scrap of St. John's eloquence remains to support the general admiration. Perhaps it is enough for glory that the Younger Pitt said that he would rather had heard him than any of the orators of antiquity.

In 1705 his eloquence was rewarded by the office of Secretary at War. That he highly distinguished himself in these years of England's military glory is evident. With a man of genius commanding in the field, and a statesman at the War Office to support the army with sympathy and without stint, it would have been strange, indeed, had our arms not triumphed. St. John was rare among Ministers in standing by the General, who might be supposed to understand his own business, and he may well claim his share in the victory of Blenheim. In Marlborough he had a complete trust, and the two men worked together with a zeal and magnanimity which ensured the defeat of the French. However, St. John enjoyed but a few years of office. A difference with Godolphin kept him out of Parliament in 1708, and for two years he remained, willingly, in the seclusion of Bucklebury. He devoted his leisure to his favourite studies, and never forgot the debt which he owed to this time of retirement. When he came back to public affairs, he was ready to assume the heaviest burden of toil, and to fight with the courage which never failed him the enemies of his country at home and abroad. In 1710 he was appointed Secretary of State, and stood at the zenith of his genius and his charm. A few months after his appointment Swift painted him in such colours as seemed to promise him a long and splendid career. "I think Mr. St. John," he wrote to Stella, "the greatest young man I ever knew: Wit, capacity,

beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning and an excellent taste; the best orator in the House of Commons, admirable conversation, good nature, and good manners; generous and a despiser of money." Nor were St. John's gifts merely spectacular. The same witness who testifies to his wit and beauty testifies also "to the accomplishments of his mind, which was adorned with the choicest gifts that God hath yet thought fit to bestow upon the children of men," and greatly marvels at his prodigious application, "for he would plod whole days and nights, like lowest clerk in an office."

No sooner was he Secretary of State than he began to contrive that treaty with France which was at once his glory and his undoing. The task which he imposed upon himself was not easy. He determined upon no less an enterprise than to bring back England from the glamour of Marlborough and of victory. None knew better than he how to distinguish between war and the fruits of war. "Here let me say," he wrote in his eighth Letter on History, a vivid piece of autobiography, "that the glory of taking towns and winning battles is to be measured by the utility that results from those victories. Victories that bring honour to the arms may bring shame to the councils of a nation. To win a battle, to take a town, is the glory of a general and of an army! Of this glory we had a very large share in the course of the war. But the glory of a nation is to proportion the ends she proposes to her interest and her strength; the means she employs to the ends she proposes, and the vigour she exerts to both." England had, indeed, thought a great deal of military glory, and very little of the end which she hoped to reach. St. John estimated the cost of taking Bouchain at seven millions, and he would have been a clever man who could have measured the advantage which England had gained from the subsidies lavished, in ceaseless generosity, upon the Allies. "Ten glorious campaigns are passed," wrote Swift, "and now at last, like the sick man, we are just expiring with all sorts of good symptoms." Or, to use another image, when a town was

taken by our armies in Flanders, it was handed over to the Dutch, and we lit bonfires. The victory was not worth the faggots, and it was no wonder that the Tory statesman saw the instant necessity of peace. However, St. John did not underrate the difficulty or the hazard of his scheme, nor did he leave any point of the game to be played by others. In all respects, the peace was a personal and deliberate achievement. St. John reshaped public opinion, while he contested the Treaty, article by article, with de Torcy. At his behest, the Abbé Gualtier and Matthew Prior travelled backwards and forwards between London and Paris. With his collaboration and guidance, Swift's "wonder-working pamphlet" was written. The days spent at Windsor were not spent in vain; eleven thousand copies of that masterpiece of controversy, *The Conduct of the Allies*, were sold and read in two months, and Swift uttered no vain boast when he claimed that it opened the eyes of the nation, half bewitched against a peace. So in 1712 the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, calm was at last restored to a stricken world, and St. John was rewarded by a peerage. To-day nobody will pretend that it was a bad or unnecessary peace. If France were treated with moderation, England could not complain of the benefits which she derived from the tireless wisdom of St. John. The author of the Peace discussed it some years later in his Letter to Sir William Windham with an evident satisfaction. He admitted that neither treaties nor negotiations were without faults, some of them due, he confessed, to himself, many others to the opposition which they met at every step. Yet, said he, "I never look back on this great event, past as it is, without a secret emotion of mind; when I compare the vastness of the undertaking, and the importance of its success, with the means employed to bring it about, and with those which were employed to traverse it." To make peace single-handed is a supreme test of skill. To make it with Allies ready at every step to hinder and to thwart, is a desperate adventure. And, as St. John deplored, "each of our allies thought himself entitled to raise his demands

to the most extravagant height," relying upon reckless promises which had been made to them to persuade them to come into or to continue in the war, and boasting, each of them, that he had in truth won the victory.

In the years devoted to the making of the peace, St. John had found in Harley an enemy, who had to be fought at home. That they should ever have been friends is surprising, for they were in all respects the antithesis one of the other. St. John was a man of imagination, who took long views, and had already shaped in his mind a political philosophy. Harley, on the other hand, was timid and vacillating; a politician who thought he might succeed in playing off friend against foe, or foe against friend. By habit a Tory, he was in temperament a Whig, and though at the outset he dominated St. John by the mere weight of years, St. John presently discerned the inferiority of his mind, and regretted nine years afterwards that in 1710 he "was weak enough to list again under the conduct of a man of whom nature meant to make a spy or at most a captain of miners; and whom fortune, in one of her whimsical moods, made a general." Moreover, in his *Letter to Sir William Windham* he gave a clear expression of the hatred for Harley which, half-hidden, had long consumed him. In a sense a proof of weakness, this passion is easily explained. St. John knew, as Harley also knew in his heart, that he was the better and wiser man; that he possessed in full measure the qualities of leadership, which Harley lacked. He was supreme in the House of Commons, where Harley's credit ran so low that he was glad to take refuge in the Upper Chamber. Of St. John it may be said, what Disraeli said of Peel, that he played upon the House of Commons as on an old fiddle. "You know the nature of that assembly," wrote St. John; "they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged." Harley, never encouraging, was conscious of his defect, and this consciousness made the distance which separated the two men wide and

inevitable. St. John, at any rate, thought that Harley was doing his best to ruin him in the eyes of the Queen, and Harley, being a man of affairs, could not endure quietly the pangs of jealousy. The dark portrait which St. John, mixing his colours with a fury of contempt, painted of Harley, must needs be lifelike, because it seems to reproduce exactly the traits of the eternal politician. As we look upon it, we can but acknowledge its familiarity, and say to ourselves that many another name, set at its foot, would suit as well. Though Harley (or Oxford as he was then) was the undisputed chief of the party, he was so indolent that he negotiated only by fits and starts. "This man," wrote St. John, "seemed to be sometimes asleep, and sometimes at play." While the work of the treaty was going on, Oxford "broke now and then a jest, which savoured of the Inns of Court and the bad company in which he had been bred," and left it to others to make peace with France and to defend the Tory Party, vulnerable as it was, against the attacks of the Whigs and its own dissensions. Thus thinking the worst of everybody, the bubble of his own distrust and jealousy, he was a man, says St. John, "who substituted artifice in the place of ability; who, instead of leading parties and governing accidents, was eternally agitated backwards and forwards by both; who began every day something new, and carried on nothing to perfection." How well we know him! Truly Harley has not been without his successors, and Bolingbroke's ancient hatred may be justified by many a modern instance.

Meanwhile, the hopes of the Tory Party crumbled. If something were not done to regain the public confidence the Ministers would stand in jeopardy of their lives. At last the long-wished-for security seemed to be at hand. On July 27, 1714, the Queen, not without much persuasion from Mrs. Masham, dismissed Oxford, and St. John, or Bolingbroke as he was then, saw a chance of strengthening the defences of his party against the well-earned resentment of the Whigs. In vain had Oxford been sent about his business. Five days

later the Queen died, and there was not a Tory of them all who did not stand within the danger of the implacable Walpole. "What a world it is!" wrote Bolingbroke to Swift, "and how does fortune banter us!" Truly fortune had bantered them. The Queen's death was the signal to many of instant flight. George I came to England, not as king of the country, but as the leader of the Whigs, and the Tories knew well that from him and his advisers they might expect neither justice nor fair-play. Swift made his way with what speed he could to Ireland, Oxford was sent to the Tower, and Bolingbroke, partly because he preferred not to lose his head, partly because he "abhorred Oxford to that degree, that I could not bear to be joined with him in any case," put the Channel between him and England, and sought an asylum in France.

When St. John was a boy of three and twenty, he confided to Sir William Trumbull that he was ambitious of pushing himself into business, because he had good grounds—*res angusta domi*—to desire an employment. "It would vex a man," said he, "to learn with pain and trouble how to serve his country, and yet not be able to do it, and this, I fear, is the case among those few that are honest in public station. Like a painter of whom I have read somewhere that went into a battle and lost both his arms, he came back with lively images of all he had seen, but without the power of putting them on canvas." That which St. John had suggested fourteen years ago had, by a cruel irony of fate, come true. Not only had he learned with pain and trouble how to serve his country; he had served her with zeal in time of war, he had brought peace to her with the rare skill and energy which were his. And he was able to serve her no longer. An attainted man, he suffered for his share in the Peace of Utrecht and for that share alone. The Whigs saw too good a chance to lose of ridding themselves for ever of the wisest and most eloquent of the Tories, and while they profited exceedingly by the period of calm and tranquillity which he had given to England, they made no scruple of ruining

him who had given it. Political history shows no starker tragedy, no more malign injustice. Bolingbroke had always maintained a lofty sense of duty. "Neither Montaigne in writing his essays," he wrote, "nor Descartes in building new worlds knew, nor Newton in discovering and establishing true the laws of nature on a sublime geometry felt more intellectual joys than he feels who is a real patriot, who bends all the force of his understanding and directs all his thoughts and actions to the good of his country." From these intellectual joys he was henceforth debarred. He was like the painter of whom he wrote in his youth, the painter who had lost both his arms. He was like an actor deprived of a stage, a singer robbed of his voice, a soldier maimed of his right hand. The mere opportunity of exercising his craft was taken from him, and he was no more than thirty-seven, the age at which many men are only beginning their career. There he was, a young man, with his gifts sacrificed to the ambition of a rival. Never again might his eloquence astonish or convince his peers. Never again might he fight with his voice against those who he believed were bringing this country to ruin. He was, moreover, of those who love the dust more than the palm. He had "from nature a mind better pleased with the struggle than the victory." As he pitied those who were prevented from serving their country by tyranny, so he despised the others who renounced that service for the pleasures of life or of the chase. And though he knew that he deserved pity, his pride resented it that anyone should take compassion on him. He bore his loss with the courage bred of arrogance. Bitterly as he felt his own failure and the triumph of Walpole, he refused to repine or complain. "I am still the same proscribed man," he wrote to Windham, "surrounded with difficulties, exposed to mystifications, and unable to take any share in the public service. . . . My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off." Bolingbroke was not hissed off: he went.

(To be concluded)

TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF F. DOSTOEVSKY

The following is the full text of Dostoevsky's letter, written on the day he was sentenced to death, December 22nd, 1849, to his brother Mihail. Only the first paragraph of the letter has been published before. It is now published in full for the first time. It is a document of exceptional importance.

The original letter cannot now be traced. But a copy of it, made by Madame Dostoevsky, is now kept in the Central Archives. It has now been made public.

Mihail Dostoevsky was, after all, allowed to see Fiodor before his departure for Siberia. In his *Reminiscences* (1881) A. P. Miliukov relates that Fiodor said to his brother at parting:

"During these three months I have gone through much; I mean, I have gone through much in myself; and now there are the things I am going to see and go through. There will be much to be written."

The letters following are included in the volume *Dostoevsky: Letters and Reminiscences*, to be published immediately by Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

I

THE PETER AND PAUL FORTRESS,
December 22, 1849.

MIHAIL MIHAILOVICH DOSTOEVSKY,
Nevsky Prospect, opposite Gryazny Street,
in the house of Neslind.

BROTHER, my precious friend! all is settled! I am sentenced to four years' hard labour in the fortress (I believe, of Orenburg), and after that to serve as a private. To-day, the 22nd of December, we have been taken to the Semionov Drill Ground. There the sentence of death was read to all of us, we were told to kiss the Cross, our swords were

broken over our heads, and our last toilet was made (white shirts). Then three were tied to the pillar for execution. I was the sixth. Three at a time were called out; consequently, I was in the second batch and no more than a minute was left me to live. I remembered you, brother, and all yours; during the last minute you, you alone, were in my mind, only then I realised how I love you, dear brother mine! I also managed to embrace Plescheyev and Durov, who stood close to me, and to say good-bye to them. Finally the retreat was sounded, and those tied to the pillar were led back, and it was announced to us that His Imperial Majesty granted us our lives. Then followed the present sentences. Palm alone has been pardoned, and returns with his old rank to the army.

I was just told, dear brother, that to-day or to-morrow we are to be sent off. I asked to see you. But I was told that this was impossible. I may only write you this letter: make haste and give me a reply as soon as you can. I am afraid that you may somehow have got to know of our death-sentences. From the windows of the prison-van, when we were taken to the Semionov Drill Ground, I saw a multitude of people; perhaps the news reached you, and you suffered for me. Now you will be easier on my account. Brother! I have not become down-hearted or low-spirited. Life is everywhere life, life in ourselves, not in what is outside us. There will be people near me, and to be a *man* among people and remain a man for ever, not to be down-hearted nor to fall in whatever misfortunes may befall me—this is life; this is the task of life. I have realised this. This idea has entered into my flesh and into my blood. Yes, it's true! The head which was creating, living with the highest life of art, which had realised and grown used to the highest needs of the spirit, that head has already been cut off from my shoulders. There remain the memory and the images created but not yet incarnated by me. They will lacerate me, it is true! But there remains in me my heart and the same flesh and blood

which can also love, and suffer, and desire, and remember, and this, after all, is life. *On voit le soleil!* Now, good-bye, brother! Don't grieve for me!

Now about material things: my books (I have the Bible still) and several sheets of my manuscript, the rough plan of the play and the novel (and the finished story *A Child's Tale*) have been taken away from me, and in all probability will be got by you. I also leave my overcoat and old clothes, if you send to fetch them. Now, brother, I may perhaps have to march a long distance. Money is needed. My dear brother, when you receive this letter, and if there is any possibility of getting some money, send it me at once. Money I need now more than air (for one particular purpose). Send me also a few lines. Then if the money from Moscow comes—remember me and do not desert me. Well, that is all! I have debts,¹ but what can I do?

Kiss your wife and children. Remind them of me continually; see that they do not forget me. Perhaps, we shall yet meet some time! Brother, take care of yourself and of your family, live quietly and carefully. Think of the future of your children. . . . Live positively. There has never yet been working in me such a healthy abundance of spiritual life as now. But will my body endure? I do not know. I am going away sick, I suffer from scrofula. But never mind! Brother, I have already gone through so much in life that now hardly anything can frighten me. Let come what may! At the first opportunity I shall let you know about myself. Give the Maikovs my farewell and last greetings. Tell them that I thank them all for their constant interest in my fate. Say a few words for me, as warm as possible, as your heart will prompt you, to Eugenia Petrovna.² I wish her much happiness and shall ever remember her with grateful respect. Press the hands of Nikolay Apollo-

¹ Money owed by Dostoevsky to Krayevsky, paid by *A Child's Tale*.

² Eugenia Petrovna was the mother of the poet Apollon Maikov, Dostoevsky's friend.

novich,¹ and Apollon Maikov, and also of all the others. Find Yanovsky. Press his hand, thank him. Finally, press the hands of all who have not forgotten me. And those who have forgotten me—remember me to them also. Kiss our brother Kolya. Write a letter to our brother Andrey and let him know about me. Write also to Uncle and Aunt. This I ask you in my own name, and greet them for me. Write to our sisters: I wish them happiness.

And maybe, we shall meet again some time, brother! Take care of yourself, go on living, for the love of God, until we meet. Perhaps some time we shall embrace each other and recall our youth, our golden time that was, our youth and our hopes, which at this very instant I am tearing out from my heart with my blood, to bury them.

Can it indeed be that I shall never take a pen into my hands? I think that after the four years there may be a possibility. I shall send you everything that I may write, if I write anything, my God! How many imaginations, lived through by me, created by me anew, will perish, will be extinguished in my brain or will be spilt as poison in my blood! Yes, if I am not allowed to write, I shall perish. Better fifteen years of prison with a pen in my hands!

Write to me more often, write more details, more, more facts. In every letter write about all kinds of family details, of trifles, don't forget. This will give me hope and life. If you knew how your letters revived me here in the fortress. These last two months and a half, when it was forbidden to write or receive a letter, have been very hard on me. I was ill. The fact that you did not send me money now and then worried me on your account; it meant you yourself were in great need! Kiss the children once again; their lovely little faces do not leave my mind. Ah, that they may be happy! Be happy yourself too, brother, be happy!

But do not grieve, for the love of God, do not grieve for me! Do believe that I am not down-hearted, do remember that

¹ N. A. Maikov, the father of A. N. Maikov.

hope has not deserted me. In four years there will be a mitigation of my fate. I shall be a private soldier,—no longer a prisoner, and remember that some time I shall embrace you. I was to-day in the grip of death for three-quarters of an hour; I have lived it through with that idea; I was at the last instant and now I live again!

If anyone has bad memories of me, if I have quarrelled with anyone, if I have created in anyone an unpleasant impression—tell them they should forget it, if you manage to meet them. There is no gall or spite in my soul; I would dearly love to embrace any one of my former friends at this moment. It is a comfort, I experienced it to-day when saying good-bye to my dear ones before death. I thought at that moment that the news of the execution would kill you. But now be easy, I am still alive and shall live in the future with the thought that some time I shall embrace you. Only this is now in my mind.

What are you doing? What have you been thinking to-day? Do you know about us? How cold it was to-day!

Ah, if only my letter reaches you soon! Otherwise I shall be for four months without news of you. I saw the envelopes in which you sent money during the last two months; the address was written in your hand, and I was glad that you were well.

When I look back at the past and think how much time has been wasted in vain, how much time was lost in delusions, in errors, in idleness, in ignorance of how to live, how I did not value time; how often I sinned against my heart and spirit,—my heart bleeds. Life is a gift, life is happiness, each minute might have been an age of happiness. *Si jeunesse savait!* Now, changing my life, I am being reborn into a new form. Brother! I swear to you that I shall not lose hope and shall preserve my spirit and heart in purity. I shall be reborn to a better thing. That is my whole hope, my whole comfort!

The life in prison has already sufficiently killed in me the

demands of the flesh which were not wholly pure ; I took little heed of myself before. Now privations are nothing to me, and therefore do not fear that any material hardship will kill me. This cannot be ! Ah ! To have health !

Good-bye, good-bye, my brother ! When shall I write you again ? You will receive from me as detailed an account as possible of my journey. If I can only preserve my health, then everything will be right !

Well, good-bye, good-bye brother ! I embrace you closely, I kiss you closely. Remember me without pain in your heart. Do not grieve I pray you, do not grieve for me ! In the next letter I shall write you of how I go on. Remember then what I have told you : plan out your life, do not waste it, arrange your destiny, think of your children. Oh, to see you, to see you ! Good-bye ! Now I tear myself away from everything that was dear ; it is painful to leave it ! It is painful to break oneself in two, to cut the heart in two. Good-bye ! Good-bye ! But I shall see you, I am convinced, I hope ; do not change, love me, do not let your memory grow cold, and the thought of your love will be the best part of my life. Good-bye, good-bye, once more ! Good-bye to all !

Your brother,

FIODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

Dec. 22, 1849.

At my arrest several books were taken away from me. Only two of them were prohibited books. Won't you get the rest for yourself ? But there is this request : one of the books was *The Work of Valerian Maikov* : his critical Essays—Eugenia Petrovna's copy. It was her treasure, and she lent it me. At my arrest I asked the police officer to return that book to her, and gave him the address. I do not know if he returned it to her. Make inquiries. I do not want to take this memory away from her. Good-bye, good-bye, once more !

Your

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

On the margins :

I do not know if I shall have to march or go on horses. I believe I shall go on horses. Perhaps !

Once again press Emily Fiodorovna's hand, kiss the little ones. Remember me to Krayevsky : perhaps. . . .

Write me more particularly about your arrest, confinement, and liberation.

II

BAD-EMS,
August 24, 1879.

To K. Pobiedonoszev

Much respected and worthiest KONSTANTIN PETROVICH,

I received your two letters and am deeply grateful to you for them, particularly for the first one, in which you speak of my spiritual state. You are perfectly, deeply right, and your thoughts have only strengthened me. But I am sick in soul, and diffident. Sitting here, in sad and utter solitariness, I have become depressed against my will. However, I'll ask you this : can one remain quiet in our time ? See, you yourself point out in your second letter (and what is a letter ?) all the unbearable facts which are taking place ; I am now busy with the novel (and I shall finish it only next year !), and yet I am tormented with the desire to continue the *Journal of an Author*, for there is, indeed I have, something to say—and just as you would wish—without barren, behind-scenes polemics, but with a firm and fearless word. And everyone now, those even who have something to say, are afraid. What are they afraid of ? Positively—of a ghost. The "common-European" ideas of science and enlightenment stand despotically over everyone, and no one dares to speak. I understand too well why Gradovsky's last articles, greeting the students as the *intelligentsia*, had such a tremendous

success with our "Europeans." The fact of the matter is that he sees the whole remedy for all the present-day horrors of our unsettledness in that very Europe, in Europe alone. My literary position (I never spoke to you about this) I consider almost phenomenal: as a man steadily writing against European principles, who has compromised himself for ever with *The Possessed*, that is, by his reaction and obscurantism—how that man, apart from all Europeanisers, their reviews, their newspapers, their criticisms—is yet acknowledged by our young generation, by that very unsettled nihilism-ridden young generation, etc.? This has been expressed to me by them, from many places, in individual declarations and by whole bodies of them. They have already declared that from me alone they expect a sincere and sympathetic word, and that myself alone they consider as their *leading writer*. These declarations of the young generation are known to the literary workers, to the bandits of the pen and the sharpers of the press, and they are very much impressed by it. Otherwise, how would they let me write freely! They would devour me, like dogs, but they are afraid, and wonder confusedly what will come of it all. Here I read the nasty rag *Golos*,—Lord, how stupid, how abominably lazy and stagnantly petrified. Believe me, that my anger at times is transformed into positive laughter, for instance in reading the articles of the schoolboy thinker, E. Markov, on the woman question. It is sheer stupidity, the utter nakedness of stupidity. You say you did not like Pouzykovich's paper. Yes, indeed, but it is quite impossible to speak to that man, quite impossible to advise him, he is so touchily self-confident. Above all, he cares only about the circulation; as to all the rest he does things with an extraordinarily easy conscience. Your opinion of what you read from the *Karamazovs* flattered me much (concerning the power and energy of the work), but you put at once the *most necessary* question: that for the time being I have not given a reply to all those atheistic propositions, but the reply is urgent. That is just the point,

and my whole trouble and my whole uneasiness is about that. For I had intended Book VI, *The Russian Monk*, to be as a reply to all this *negative side*; it will appear on August 31. And therefore I fear on its account: will it be a *sufficient* reply? The more so because the answer is, indeed, not a direct one, not an answer to the propositions expressed before (in *The Great Inquisitor* and elsewhere) point by point, but an indirect one. In my reply is represented something directly opposite to the world-conception expressed in the earlier book, but again it is represented not point by point, but, so to say, in an artistic picture. And that's just what worries me, that is, shall I be understood and shall I achieve even a particle of my aim? Added to this are still the demands of art: I needed to represent a modest character and a majestic one, whereas life is full of comicality and is grand only in its inner sense, so that against my will, because of the demands of art, I was compelled in the life-history of my monk to touch also on some rather frivolous sides so as not to injure the artistic realism. Then there are the monk's precepts, at which people will just shout that they are absurd, for they are too ecstatic; certainly, they are absurd in the every-day sense, but in the other, the inner sense, I think they are right. Anyhow, I worry much and I should very much like to have your opinion, for I value and respect it very much. I wrote the book with great love. But I see I have talked too much about my work. On September 1, or 2, I shall be in Petersburg (hastening to Staraya Roussa to my family), I shall call on you (I don't know at what time, I can't settle beforehand), and if I am lucky I may find you in, and see you if only for a short while. Good-bye, kindest and sincerely respected Konstantin Petrovich; may God grant you many years to live—there can be no better wish in our time, for such men as you must live. Now and then a silly and sinful idea flashes across my mind: what will happen to *Russia*, if we, the last of the Mohicans, die? True, I instantly smile at myself. Yet, nevertheless, we must live and work un-

tiringly. And are not you a worker? Apropos: Pouzykovich having heard from me the content of your letter concerning the despatch of the prisoners to Saghalien, pressed me to let it be published in the *Grazhdanin*. Of course I did not let him have it.

Wholly your

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

(Translated by S. S. Koteliansky.)

A PREFACE

By JULIEN BENDA

To walk on the tight rope is a difficult and dangerous thing. Must I walk on the tightrope?—EPICTÈTE, *Dissertations*, iii. 12.

I WAS in the act of writing the very story I am publishing this spring, when Eleutharius burst in upon me. His appearance amazed me: the most amiable of men was almost beside himself.

"What!" he cried, "what's the meaning of this? So you've taken to novel-writing? Genuine novels; with set scenes, village dances, fair ladies who sing Brahms's songs in the drawing-rooms of the Parc-Monceau. What will you be up to next?"

I felt Cæsar's pang under the knife of Brutus.

"And you, too," I murmured. "You, too? From other lips I have borne those remarks. But from you, You . . . Eleutharius!"

"Ah! yes; yes. I know that other people have told you! I know it all too well! and no doubt *you* know that since a certain *Dialogue* of your invention many people confound me with you! . . . To a degree that half the prods aimed at you stick in me. Oh, I can bear it; I've made up my mind to that, at all events."

"And it does you honour! for the chastisement of my sins is by no means near its end."

"Eh? What does that mean? Surely you don't dream of beginning again?"

"I have begun again," I answered, and I held out to him the interrupted page.

Surely it was but reasonable to brace myself for a rekindling of his ire: but far from this, I read on his face a gravity and friendliness made up of that complete, indulgent comprehension which is the root of his nature. His eye softened, and, as he rubbed the glasses of his pince-nez, I heard him murmur in a moody undertone that touched me, a line of Boileau that he favours: "how rarely does a man dare to be what he is!"

He just glanced at my paper, and, handing it back, said: "I can't read your writing. Besides, it wouldn't be any use. My reasons for forbidding you to write fiction are principles."

He rose, and strode about the room. His severity seemed to have returned to him.

"And what principles?" I asked. "Are you, too, going to tell me that a philosopher can't possibly be a novelist? That the philosophic mind implies in its very essence the absence of gifts indispensable to the novelist?"

"That thesis doesn't seem to me very wide of the mark. I would rather say that it does credit to whoever propounded it to you."

"What!!! Aren't Bourget, France, Meredith novelists?"

"... Um. . . . They're novelists . . . um . . . well, because *outside* of the philosophic mind they happen to possess the novelist's gift. But the question put to you is this—Is not the philosophic mind, left to its own devices, producing by its own sole resources, the absolute negation of romance? . . . It seems to me very likely. . . . Spinoza will never write a novel!"

"Agreed, if you limit the novel to its current form. But let us see whether one can't enlarge its borders; whether one can't conceive a novel in which the philosophic mind not only does not check emotion but actually creates it—mind you, I define as a novel any attaching narrative, any exciting tale. Well, then, I maintain that it can be done. It's all very well to say: 'You're a philosopher, you're not a novelist: your characters have merely a borrowed life. They can have no

more on account of the turn of your mind. They can never be more than phantoms made up to illustrate an idea. This idea is your real subject, the thing that you have at heart!' I grant it. But supposing that the life that I don't breathe into my heroes I do breathe into my idea, and supposing that this idea—which is the idea of some human truth, some motion of the soul—that this idea is made living, moving, palpitating through the medium of my 'puppets'—living with a life it could never have in a dogmatic essay—supposing that I have the gift of realising human truth, of being moved by it myself, and of transmuting my feeling to my readers. Am I not, then, a novelist?—always admitting that any man who can write a moving tale may claim the title? Well, now, a certain critic slated a certain novel, constructed on this system. He says of it: 'when we close the book what remains in the mind is less the history of individuals than the universal human motion that they illustrate.' This is 'the philosophic blemish' of the work. And then he goes on to say: 'The writer has such a powerful gift of suggestion and animation that his book, which is not a novel, reads like a novel.' Well, I ask you, what is a story of human passion which reads like a novel if it be not a novel? And someone else says: 'You're a philosopher, you're not a novelist: the actions of your heroes, instead of being impulsive, contradictory, and thus appearing spontaneous and life-like, are links in a chain, governed by their forerunners, producing an effect of mathematical precision and mechanical constraint. This is an inevitable result of the turn of your mind which compels you to seek the logic of human impulses under their apparent incoherence.' Very well as far as it goes. But I may answer that this constraint, this fatality, does undoubtedly exist and does overrule men's conduct when one knows where to look for it, and that it is, moreover, a most moving spectacle. So why, if I can render it, am not I a novelist? Is only he a novelist who contents himself with outsides, with appearances, and who notes merely what is calculated to sur-

prise, excite, or tickle the fancy? Does a man cease to be a novelist so soon as he try to reveal the inner law of these motions and these passions, to sound the depths of the soul? Surely fiction has never shown itself so far beneath contempt? Was it not Renouvier who said that he had often found deeper thought in a novel than between the covers of a bulky tome?"

"Of course, thought can be expressed in a novel—even philosophic thought! We didn't need Renouvier to tell us that! But the author we are now dealing with will bring to it all the most strongly accentuated characteristics of the philosophic mind. Like a bath of etching acid he'll bite into it, infusing life into his Idea instead of his characters, arguing the general from the particular, turning the limelight on the *logic* of human passion and despising anecdote. I grant you he may produce stirring effects in this way. Mayhap he may even write a novel, yes, a real novel. But it will be the kind of novel that enrages all men of letters, most critics, and the mass of the public—everyone, in fact, whose sensibility is purely literary. *And in this case it is they who are the judges, for we are thinking of a novel.* They understand that you mustn't introduce a scientific standard into a form of literature defined as 'light,' and from which light morals are expected. They'd say of such a novel what a certain Churchman said of the Darwinian theory: 'It is not contrary to dogma, but antipathetic to it.' And they'd make the author pay for their antipathy. They have the means! You, maybe, could tell me something about that? And the better the novel, the more they are led on to read it, the more they'll make him pay! There's the future of the philosopher turned novelist! D'you wonder that his friends dissuade him?"

"How tragic! . . . And yet, and yet, there are novels queened over by an Idea, and beloved (for all that) by the very judges you evoke!"

"Name! name!"

"Sterne, Diderot, Anatole France!"

"No, no, my boy! Those are novels in which there are *ideas*: not novels ruled over by *one* idea. Ideas thrown out here and there are pleasing and literary (always supposing that you don't dig to the foundations of any one of 'em); but to take *one* idea and probe it to its depths—that's serious, that's thought, and as such frightens the novel-reader."

"All the same, I maintain that there are novels—popular novels, too—in which *one* sole idea claims to reign. There's *La Peau du chagrin*, *La recherche de l'Absolu*, *Résurrection*."

"An idea claims to reign, but it doesn't reign, because the authors of all those books are in truth pretty poor thinkers—for which they make amends by being jolly good novelists! Don't their heroes live! Isn't their fiction splendid! That's where they score! And the popularity of these novels 'of ideas' rests on the fact that, *as such*, they are failures."

"For the sake of argument, I'll concede them, for I can recall any number that are completely successful from that point of view and that have gone into their hundred-thousand—*L'Étape*; many another by the same hand."

"Ah! But there you have a *moral* idea, or a *political* idea! At a pinch you can call those literary! But the idea in the novel as you conceive it would be a *psychological*, even a *physiological* idea, and as such not literary, but scientific."

"Pitiless wretch! But I have you! Here's one even you won't contest. . . . Everything's here, everything. . . . Characters conceived solely to give life to the idea, idea which is the only living thing—for the heroes can scarce be called so—idea scientific if ever there was in novel a scientific idea. . . .!"

"And this marvel is?"

"*Wahlverwandschaften*."

"Hoist with your own petard! For 'tis a novel that not two critics in a hundred have opened! Good Lord! If it came out to-day it would get, in current parlance, a dressing down! He'd catch it, luckless author, with his pedantry,

and his extraordinary mania for arranging life to buttress up his chemical theories! And those wooden lay-figures! . . . I seem to remember one named 'the Captain,' and another 'Edward, rich Baron.' And his methods! How stale! . . . Doesn't he even quote Ottilie's journal to reveal her soul? And then the 'chromo' landscapes, the 'reach-me-down' descriptions; we read (I think I quote correctly) that: 'amid these fertile meadows a farm-house offered a peaceful retreat,' and that, 'seen from a certain knoll, the meres were marvelously beautiful' . . . And that's another thing we're forgetting: a novel, even the most exalted, must have a landscape—knocked off, it may be, with a few bold strokes; and there must be a few 'supers' lightly sketched in; but our philosopher, because he is a philosopher, will make of that a painstaking performance at the best; or he may stoop to the use of stereotype plates to express these 'casualties' which he despises in his heart. The brainy man so easily slides down into such weaknesses . . . the interest of his book does not lie *there*! But men of letters (and not all of 'em in bad faith either, mind you) will turn all the fire of their guns upon him and hoot him off the stage; above all in this Byzantine age which exacts that every detail in a work of art be rare and unconventional. And then there's the *setting*: our man will scarcely shine at that. The most commonplace seems good enough to him. For tuppence he'd say to the reader: 'Make it up to your taste; my business is with souls and states of mind.' Now that sort of thing, quite acceptable to lovers of thought, is less so to lovers of fiction. You have to paint the outside of human beings—one can't always escape it—and our man will hardly shine at that. What he can make tangible is the shape of souls; he would like to write his novel under the text of St. Paul: 'Mine eyes see only the things that are invisible.' One can guess how that would be received by a public to whom the novel is principally a magic-lantern flashing dissolving views. And here note the unpopularity of fiction written in letter form. Then look at style: your

philosopher will write 'what intensity of tenderness!' for 'what intense tenderness!' 'what perfection of union!' for 'what perfect union!' his lover in the presence of his mistress yields to 'a totality of expansion'; and all because, as he is a philosopher, he sees the quality of the thing more than the thing . . . the *intensity*, not the tenderness; the *totality*, not the expansion. He may perhaps get good effects with these abstractions, for the verb falls with all its force into the clean-cut zones that they carve out of the Real. But scientific precision brought to bear on such subjects puts off the literary reader . . . it's mere professional jargon, philosophic cant to him. For all these reasons (and for others I pass over) they give our man to understand that he has no place in fiction. He'll hit back, no doubt. But they'll have the last word; partly because they are the stronger, and partly, too, because no one listens to the author who takes up his own defence. Pluck up, old chap, but listen to your friends when they hallo out to you that you've got aboard the wrong boat!"

"Admit that you'd thoroughly despise me if I gave in to a line of argument addressed to my interests only, and not in the smallest degree to truth."

"Well . . . here's another thing of the same kind. . . . Look here, you're making the greatest possible mistake in publishing fiction after philosophy. You had a nice little public of dress-coat philosophers and tea-party intellectual ladies who were proud of admiring a philosopher, and who can't be proud of admiring a novelist. You say that there may be as much philosophy in a novel as in a dogmatic work, but you'll never get any worldling to admit it! A Renouvier may allow himself that luxury, but not the fashionable world. Look facts in the face: there is, perhaps, no hierarchy of literary species, but there is a hierarchy in their prestige. If you wanted to write fiction, you should have begun by writing fiction and have risen to philosophy: you would have mounted to a higher sphere and would have been esteemed for it—instead

of which you pass from philosophy to the novel, from the monastic to the parochial, from the hermitage to the boudoir. Look at the Illustrious Dead: what did they do? Do you find them giving *Phèdre* after *Athalie* or *Tristan* after *Parsival*?"

"The Illustrious Dead were guided, in this order, by their genius: I should be guided by my astuteness. It does not please me to be astute, and it does please me to write novels."

He sat still, nodding his head sadly, as who should say: "He's lost, poor chap! Nothing to be done!" And then suddenly he looked me straight in the eyes as though he fired his last gun, his forlorn hope:

"See here," said he, "as it's always a question of idea with you; what great advantage do you see in presenting it as fiction instead of treating it simply as idea? By the way, that's a question I should never put to Plato when he passed from the Idea to the Myth. For in his mind the Real has the first place and he hoped at one time to reach it through Ideas. . . . And then, when he realises the impossibility of grasping it all round by that means, he throws himself into the concrete, following, in fact, the true bent of his mind. . . . And I wonder whether a great many thinkers may not have mistaken their calling in not imitating him! We all talk about philosophers who betray their vocation by writing novels; we might say something, too, about those who err in not writing them. When I was a lad I heard M. Levy-Brühl say, in speaking of a German philosopher,¹ that a thinker who is so resolved not to sacrifice an atom of the Real should seek expression, not in ideology, but in artistic creation. . . . Who knows? perhaps M. Bergson has missed his path in not writing fiction! But that's not in the smallest degree your case; the Idea is the one and only thing that really exists for you, that your intelligence has carved out of Reality. And it's this, and only this, that you want to make clear. Wherefore, what interest can you have in dressing up your Idea as Fiction?"

¹ Jacobi.

If the story's good you risk turning the reader's attention aside from the very point on which you want him to concentrate it."

"What interest can I have? . . . Why! the interest of making my idea tangible, perceptible, *evident* to the sight. Need I tell you that this desire to make the abstract evident does exist, and that this desire is neither more nor less than the love one bears it, the thirst one has to make it a living thing. . . . I mean a thing perceptible to man, who, so far, perceives with his senses, not with his mind! You assert that my story hampers the reader who would fix his attention on the idea I wish to impress upon him: but that is precisely what it doesn't do if I succeed in the invention of a *philosophic* tale—if I individualise my characters enough to enliven my idea, and not enough to make them interesting for their own sake. Those are the proportions that Voltaire hit off so admirably in his novels, and that are missed by a young writer of our own times (evidently a juggler rather than a thinker!), who, trying to express in a novel the idea of a certain community of measure between the Teutonic soul and our own, presents the theme of his Siegfried and his Limousin under such luxury of detail that no one has been able to unearth it.

"I remember at the Lycée one of the mathematical masters who wanted to illustrate a property of numbers saying: 'Instead of explaining this by taking the indeterminate number *n*, I shall take 3; for, as my exposition has nothing to do with any special attribute of 3, it will serve as well as any other number!' By this introduction of the concrete we lost nothing as to the generality of the idea, and I need not say what a gain it was in ease of attention, animation of interest. And you mustn't forget that the idea that I dream of turning into a novel is neither a metaphysical proposition nor a social system. I don't write a *roman à thèse*, nor a theory of the nature of the passions, but the idea of a human motion, of an adventure of the soul. As such it seems to me absolutely suited for illustration through the action of

a man, the adventure of a soul—always supposing that I know how to respect its generality. What should you think of a man who asked La Bruyère what advantage he found, after expressing the idea: 'a cold woman is the woman who has not yet seen the man she is fated to love!' in adding the story of *Emire*—what advantage? Why, the advantage of incarnation. Would you ask God what advantage He found in the Incarnation of the idea of Redemption instead of simply presenting it to us as an idea?"

He reflected: then, after a silence:

"Incarnation! Yes," said he. "I understand the advantage of such an operation. But I think that I understand, too, that the advantage depends on the manner of the execution. Both instances that you recall (and especially the second) are conspicuously well done. But now, just let me hear some of the incarnations that you contemplate?"

This was surely his last cartridge. I did not flinch.

"Yes: all right, I'll tell you. . . . It's only a short story, but the principle is the same. I want to set forth the idea of a man who has success with women, and who, instead of boasting of this state of things, like the Lovelaces of d'Annunzio and Porto-Riche, realises its degradation and misery. And yet, for all that he feels in a way constrained to it. I incarnate in three moments; no more, but I hope that these moments are symbolic. (1) I show my man made use of (if I may say so) by a woman who, being at the same time sensual and moral, appreciates both a pretty mouth and masculine good conduct. She despises him for his weakness, and takes advantage of it. (2) I show him at the beck and call of two effete little women who are weaned from their taste for his kisses by a really virile man who, instead of beating about the bush, goes straight to the root of the matter. (3) I show him turning grey, seated in a garden waiting till midnight strike to enter the house of his new . . . lessee. Sitting there, in the lonely dark, he probes to its depth the wretchedness of his destiny of eternal lover. Then the hour strikes,

and he marches towards the villa like a galley slave to his oar. Will you grant me this incarnation? Does it yield more than the dry idea?"

His eyes fell: he stroked his chin. His enigmatic smile put me on the rack. All that he said was:

"Let me hear another first!"

"All right. This time I want to show the disorder that a woman insatiable for love brings into the life of thinkers, and how, goaded by the injury she does them, they make common cause against her, in spite of the grudge that, as males, they owe one another. Here I have only one act. A young sculptor, Pierre G——, is slowly climbing homewards up the steep streets of Montmartre after a night spent with Germaine Carrère, wife of his friend and revered master. . . . There is a clutch at his heart. Oh no! not remorse. What has he stolen from Carrère, who never loved his wife and who has neglected her since the first days of their marriage? Not remorse, but a well-known distress that weighs him down after each separation from this woman, but that is this morning an anguish that stops his heart. . . . He is but a few steps from Carrère's studio. The master, his mind renewed by peaceful sleep, has been at work, no doubt, these two hours, absorbed in art, in his idea. It is always painful to Pierre to clasp that trusting hand; still, he will go in and refresh his soul for an instant with wisdom, warm his frozen heart at the strong man's kindness. . . . Good morning, Master, you've been here since dawn, I'm sure, so I came in. . . . A life of thought, work, order, balance! . . . Ah! what marvels you have accomplished this last month. . . . I shouldn't have thought it possible to improve on your last year's Salon. But for fifteen years there's not been one halt nor backsliding in the maturing of your talent, in the moulding of yourself by yourself. It's wonderful!—But, Pierre, why do you say all this so sadly? as though artistic achievement were the Promised Land whence you were for ever banished! What is the meaning of the disenchantment

that I've observed in you for some time past?—Indeed, Master, I hardly know: a thousand things . . . the little chance that we unknown men have of rising in these days. . . . It's disheartening.—But you're not unknown, Pierre, and not ambitious. There must be something more.—The material side of life is difficult.—But not for you! You have few needs and many friends.—Master . . . there's Woman!—She can be a tower of strength to an artist, Pierre!—Yes, if she's reasonable in love, but if she's rabid for it, if no embrace suffice her, if love begets love so that on the morrow of the maddest night of passion she comes back to claim your day. And after that, two days later she's back again! That woman destroys your life, she sucks your brain. . . . Yet one doesn't leave her . . . because one fears her . . . because one loves her . . . and because such a rhapsody enthralls one and goes to the head so that all other kisses are tasteless after hers! . . . And time rolls on: the years come and go: one has done nothing while one's comrades have a great output behind them. Then comes despair. For one feels that one had talent, that one had a message. . . . Carrère has left his stool, he is standing in front of the divan where the young man, his head buried in his hands, has given vent to his grief.—The master raises his brow and says, looking him in the eyes: I know the woman who is killing you; she has a scar on the right knee, and she clenches her teeth when she's happy. Don't be cast down, but be advised. Don't go near her again, and set to work. Leave that kind of woman to another kind of man."

"You might add a second act," said Eleutharius, "showing Germaine at fifty, seated at the feet of her husband who is now a member of the Institute, and despising Pierre, who has degenerated into an old duffer on account of the time he used to waste on her. And then, isn't there a lateral subject? The drama of man and the vampire of love has always been treated from the man's standpoint . . . it is *La Femme de Claude*, it is *Amoureuse*. It's never taken from the woman's

point of view. Psychologists forget so often that woman too is humanity! I think that it might be very touching to show that the poor creature realises to the depths of her consciousness that she bores the man stiff, that she blasts his career, that he hates her, that he would fly from her, that he'd do well to fly from her! she understands that at all costs she must curb her nature, must leave the male intelligence its rights, and that if she don't she'll bring a cruel punishment upon herself. So she does strive, in all sincerity, and she can't succeed. Wouldn't it be touching to show this force of disorder realising what she is, hating herself for it, cursing herself for it, realising that in her own interest she *must* change, and yet feeling herself fundamentally unchangeable? Would not that, too, be a fine effect of fatality, eh?"

"Come," thought I. "My case is not so bad, since here he too is making up romances." Encouraged by this I insinuated: "Let me tell you a third 'incarnation.' . . . The idea that I want . . ."

"You needn't tell the idea, I shall know where to find it. Tell me the 'incarnation.'"

"Well, here we have a young woman: two years ago was the mistress of a great painter, who left her after a few months. She hears that he is about to exhibit a 'Diana Bathing' that she knows to have been painted from her. Ah! She recalls it all. For it was not only her beauties that he copied, but the slight fall of the breasts, the over-rounded line of the hip. In the name of art she had gently protested. But he . . . he covered her with kisses: 'for all that is of thee is lovely, my beloved; believe me, I know best.' . . . He had justified himself, the light of love had dazzled his artist's eye, usually so sure. Thus, a proof of her power will remain for ever, fixed on the canvas. She longs to see it again, but alone, before the crowd gathers in front of it. So she goes to the painter's studio at an hour when she knows he will be out, and from the old servant, who remembers her, she gets admission. She walks along the corridor, enters a large room

full of light, and here she is before the picture. But she has seen in a flash . . . the breasts are younger, the line of the hip more virginal. The artist has possessed himself again. The disorder that a mistress produced in his imagination had not lasted long, and nothing has been left to her who had given all. She stands before the canvas motionless and dumb. 'I see that Madame is proud of Monsieur,' says the servant. 'Yes,' she answers, peering into the canvas to hide her tears."

I awaited uneasily for the verdict of my judge.

"I must admit," said he, "that you enclose your general considerations on human passions in some striking instances. But beware lest you let your symbols overshoot the mark. Your heroes ought to live only through the general motion that they incarnate. No, I'm wrong! They'll always live by something else!—by the sympathy you feel for them. . . . For that's at the bottom of it! It's borne in upon me! That's what's driving you to fiction! You needs must sympathise with human trials instead of merely understanding them! Your sympathy, that oozes out as it were against your will, is what makes one put up with your intellectuality. A strange case, this of the philosopher so filled with a craving for affection that he has to incarnate his ideas as living beings, while he yet remains so implacably a philosopher that he tries to say nothing beyond the idea, either through his style or through his characters. Rather a sad case, too; for as surely as he attracts novel-readers he enrages them! There, I'll let you write one or two novels (and all the more because nothing I can say would induce you to forgo them). But as for the stories you've just sketched out, I shouldn't advise writing the two last. In the *Tale of Two Sculptors* you'd have to brush in a little picture of daybreak on the heights of Montmartre, and you'd get yourself rapped over the knuckles again about it. As for your *Diana Bathing*, you'll have to show a studio-interior with play of light on the nude, and all the rest of it. At the mere thought I tremble for you. I concede your first story, your man in penal servitude to the

ladies. . . . I've even found a title for it: *A Cross of Roses*: still, I bet it will earn you more kicks than ha'pence, for your 'two effete little women' will revive all the old storm about your absurd mania for precision in things sexual . . . like the *Dialogue* in which you compromised my reputation ten years ago. Ah, I know what you're going to say; the lady-killer succeeds because he ministers to their sentimental complications, and so you are obliged to show some of these complications, but, say what you may, no one will listen to you. And let me warn you, the author who paints these dashing, gay Lotharios always has the air of telling you that what he writes he knows; so that, short of being an Adonis (and that's not your case), he seems rather fatuous. Another thing: won't your three moments, each quite short, produce a headman's axe effect, disconcerting to votaries of the agreeable? However, every trade has its drawbacks, which one must accept. But avoid . . . oh, I well know that it isn't always possible . . . try to avoid descriptions and scene-painting. You referred just now to a tale by La Bruyère. I think that it begins: 'Once there dwelt in Smyrna a very lovely girl'? 'In Smyrna': there you have the scene-painting that I advise for you. Then there is the 'Poland' of *Adolphe*, the 'Westphalia' of *Candide*; both are worth meditation. But, above all, you know, only one or two novels: no more. Then, for the love of ideas, back to the essay! For between ourselves, novelists' ideas can never be anything but pretty poor ideas, and the most brilliant successes of the genus, Voltaire's tales, Renan's plays, hang on very slight ones. Yet, slight as they are, you can't light them to their depths (you've seen it yourself) without doing violence to the genus. There's a pitch of analysis that literature won't stand. No novelist could say of love what is said in Spinoza's *Ethic*, or in the famous page of Herbert Spencer. Come, you'll admit that if Renouvier was right in saying that there is more thought in certain novels than in a bad essay, there's less than in a good one."

Then, rising, and taking up his hat, he added :

" Why on earth do I say all this to you ? . . . I'm quite upset by my discovery that it's your human sympathy that impels you to write novels ! Maybe that's really your ' dominant,' and stronger in you than the love of ideas. But then, again, I wonder if I'm finding very far-fetched reasons for your writing fiction : whether, after all, it isn't merely the pleasure of telling a tale or of leading up to a situation that diverts you. For that, too, may be a deep root of your being. In fact, from time to time I think that I was altogether wrong in taking you for a philosopher ! Good-bye, I leave you, a wiser and a sadder man ! "

NOTE.—This dialogue refers to M. Benda's latest novel, *Les Amourandes* (praised in *The Times* of July 2, 1922), which was violently attacked by certain French critics. The dialogue is a preface to *La Croix de Roses*, which has recently appeared (ed. Grasset) as a volume in the *Cahiers verts*, which are edited by M. Daniel Halévy. M. Benda's work, especially his two essays on Bergsonism, and his *Belphégor* (one of the most remarkable essays in criticism of our time) will be the object of study in later numbers of THE CRITERION.

IN THE ORCHARD

By VIRGINIA WOOLF

MIRANDA slept in the orchard, lying in a long chair beneath the apple-tree. Her book had fallen into the grass, and her finger still seemed to point at the sentence " Ce pays est vraiment un des coins du monde où le rire des filles éclate le mieux . . . " as if she had fallen asleep just there. The opals on her finger flushed green, flushed rosy, and again flushed orange as the sun, oozing through the apple-trees, filled them. Then, when the breeze blew, her purple dress rippled like a flower attached to a stalk ; the grasses nodded ; and the white butterfly came blowing this way and that just above her face.

Four feet in the air over her head the apples hung. Suddenly there was a shrill clamour as if they were gongs of cracked brass beaten violently, irregularly, and brutally. It was only the school-children saying the multiplication table in unison, stopped by the teacher, scolded, and beginning to say the multiplication table over again. But this clamour passed four feet above Miranda's head, went through the apple boughs, and, striking against the cowman's little boy who was picking blackberries in the hedge when he should have been at school, made him tear his thumb on the thorns.

Next there was a solitary cry—sad, human, brutal. Old Parsley was, indeed, blind drunk.

Then the very topmost leaves of the apple-tree, flat like little fish against the blue, thirty feet above the earth, chimed with a pensive and lugubrious note. It was the organ in the church playing one of Hymns Ancient and Modern. The sound floated out and was cut into atoms by a flock of field-fares flying at an enormous speed—somewhere or other. Miranda lay asleep thirty feet beneath.

Then above the apple-tree and the pear-tree two hundred feet above Miranda lying asleep in the orchard bells thudded, intermittent, sullen, didactic, for six poor women of the parish were being churched and the Rector was returning thanks to heaven.

And above that with a sharp squeak the golden feather of the church tower turned from south to east. The wind had changed. Above everything else it droned, above the woods, the meadows, the hills, miles above Miranda lying in the orchard asleep. It swept on, eyeless, brainless, meeting nothing that could stand against it, until, wheeling the other way, it turned south again. Miles below, in a space as big as the eye of a needle, Miranda stood upright and cried aloud: "Oh, I shall be late for tea!"

Miranda slept in the orchard—or perhaps she was not asleep, for her lips moved very slightly as if they were saying, "Ce pays est vraiment un des coins du monde . . . où le rire des filles . . . éclate . . . éclate . . . éclate . . ." and then she smiled and let her body sink all its weight on to the enormous earth which rises, she thought, to carry me on its back as if I were a leaf, or a queen (here the children said the multiplication table), or, Miranda went on, I might be lying on the top of a cliff with the gulls screaming above me. The higher they fly, she continued, as the teacher scolded the children and rapped Jimmy over the knuckles till they bled, the deeper they look into the sea—into the sea, she repeated, and her fingers relaxed and her lips closed gently as if she were floating on the sea, and then, when the shout of the drunken man sounded overhead, she drew breath with an extraordinary ecstasy, for she thought that she heard life itself crying out from a rough tongue in a scarlet mouth, from the wind, from the bells, from the curved green leaves of the cabbages.

Naturally she was being married when the organ played the tune from Hymns Ancient and Modern, and, when the bells

rang after the six poor women had been churched, the sullen intermittent thud made her think that the very earth shook with the hoofs of the horse that was galloping towards her ("Ah, I have only to wait!" she sighed), and it seemed to her that everything had already begun moving, crying, riding, flying round her, across her, towards her in a pattern.

Mary is chopping the wood, she thought; Pearman is herding the cows; the carts are coming up from the meadows; the rider—and she traced out the lines that the men, the carts, the birds, and the rider made over the countryside until they all seemed driven out, round, and across by the beat of her own heart.

Miles up in the air the wind changed; the golden feather of the church tower squeaked; and Miranda jumped up and cried: "Oh, I shall be late for tea!"

Miranda slept in the orchard, or was she asleep or was she not asleep? Her purple dress stretched between the two apple-trees. There were twenty-four apple-trees in the orchard, some slanting slightly, others growing straight with a rush up the trunk which spread wide into branches and formed into round red or yellow drops. Each apple-tree had sufficient space. The sky exactly fitted the leaves. When the breeze blew, the line of the boughs against the wall slanted slightly and then returned. A wagtail flew diagonally from one corner to another. Cautiously hopping, a thrush advanced towards a fallen apple; from the other wall a sparrow fluttered just above the grass. The uprush of the trees was tied down by these movements; the whole was compacted by the orchard walls. For miles beneath the earth was clamped together; rippled on the surface with wavering air; and across the corner of the orchard the blue-green was slit by a purple streak. The wind changing, one bunch of apples was tossed so high that it blotted out two cows in the meadow ("Oh, I shall be late for tea!" cried Miranda), and the apples hung straight across the wall again.

THE NATURE OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

By HERBERT READ

AN examination of the many diverse theories of poetry current since the romantic revival of a hundred years ago would reveal unanimity on one point at least. Rhetoric and thought have been expended, often with ingenious results, on the manner and style of poetry—on questions of the necessity of metre and rhyme, on the relative merits of the ode and sonnet, and on such external subjects as the propriety of realism or the ethical confusions of romanticism. But the poetry thus generously treated approximates in every case to that type known as the lyric; if it is not exactly a lyric, it is a "lyrical passage" from some other kind of poem. In short, poetry has been identified with lyricism. There is, of course, a very good reason for this universal confusion, and my first intention is to make it distinct.

The etymological significance of the word *lyric* is largely lost, but generally it now connotes that quality in writing which we may for the moment be content to call "emotional." A lyric poem has in addition certain formal characteristics, such as brevity, simplicity, and directness, and for this reason it is commonly held that a good poem cannot be long, or that a long poem can only be good "in parts." It may further be noted that those poems the world agrees to call lyrical are exclusively concerned with the record of sensibility—of direct sensibility, as in "The Solitary Reaper," or of those vaguer reactions of direct sensibility that are "the bliss of

solitude." Some lyric poets are sensible of the beauty of the actual phenomenon, others are sensible of the ideal associations of phenomena. But they agree, and it is essential to bear this in mind, in deriving their emotions from a direct awareness of the world—of its women, its flowers, its atmospheres, and its subtleties.

The occasionality of such emotional awareness has resulted in the practice, and then in the theory, of an emotional unity in the poem. An emotion is fleeting and must be seized in its uniqueness; all elements that do not contribute to its expression must be rigorously excluded: clarity, succinctness, simplicity—these are the virtues of the lyric, and, in modern minds, of all poetry. All the elaborate rules, and even all the revolts against any rules, exemplified in modern poetry, have their origin in the peculiar needs of the lyric.

The occasionality of the lyric does not, however, deprive it of a more general utility; a lyric is simply a perception, and all thought is based primarily on perceptions. From the accumulation of selected perceptions, expressed as lyrics, it is obvious that a general view of life may be constructed, and this general view may possess great ethical and æsthetic value. But it will remain a view, a *weltanschauung*; it cannot become metaphysical until it is converted into concepts. But, in the mind of the modern theorist, to convert perceptions (i.e. emotional perceptions) into concepts is to destroy their poetic quality. In reality, however, such a result is by no means inevitable.

Let us examine more carefully the use of the word *emotion* in this connection. I gather from the critics who have established the lyrical standard of poetry that they use the word in its general psychological sense. Even in psychology any exact scientific use of the word is difficult, as McDougall has shown;¹ and while our critics do not normally expect poetry to embody or inspire primary emotions like anger or fear,

¹ *Social Psychology*, chap. iii.

the emotions they do demand of poetry differ in degree rather than in kind from these. The tenderness expressed and induced by a lyric may even be so influential as to cause a "lump in the throat," even as fear is accompanied by certain visceral disturbances; and physiology may yet identify and classify the various glandular excretions and their appropriate lyrical responses. Nor am I disposed to deny that the state of attention or contemplation induced by metaphysical poetry may not also have its basis in some material agitation of the human cortex or glandular system. But the business of the literary critic is to identify the mental rather than the physiological significance of the material in his hands, and in this sense a more useful distinction can be made in the content of the emotions; though immediately we desert the field of a material science we are driven to the use of inexact terms. But terms are inexact only because they mean different things to different people: to those who are willing to understand, they can convey an exact meaning; and when I contrast the abstract and the concrete contents of emotions, I do not thereby imply that an abstract content is something vague and indefinable. To the scientific poet, as to the scientific philosopher, abstract conceptions have their exactitudes. With this understanding, I may distinguish the concrete character of the content of the lyric, which in its purest state is concerned with the direct awareness of phenomenal environment, from the abstract character of what I am going to call metaphysical poetry.

Metaphysical poetry is abstract because, like metaphysics, it deals with concepts. But, as poetry, it is no less "emotional" than lyrical poetry—though, since the emotion is differently manifested, it is a question whether that state of vivid contemplation inspired by metaphysical poetry had not better be described by another word. For my present purpose I do not think so, for it is necessary at all costs to maintain a nexus between lyrical poetry and metaphysical poetry in the word *poetry*; and since I despise all distinctions based on the

technique or *décor* of poetry, I prefer to justify this nexus in the word *emotion*, which denotes a common foundation in physical fact. Later I shall illustrate the actual character of metaphysical poetry. For the present I will define it as the emotional apprehension of thought—or, to use words suggested by Dante, as thought transmuted into vision:

"e il pensiero in sogno transmutai."

But first it is necessary to indicate certain misconceptions, the most important of which is to imagine that metaphysical poetry is didactic, *and nothing but didactic*, in the deadeast sense of the word. It is assumed that metaphysical poetry is the writing of metaphysics or science in the manner of verse, and that while as such it may be a wonderful display of technical virtuosity, it is not poetry in the strict (that is, the lyrical) sense of the word; and some frankly didactic poem, such as *The Botanic Garden* of Erasmus Darwin, is given as an illustration. Lucretius and Dante are slighted by implication. Now it is very difficult to dissociate the idea of didacticism from the idea of metaphysical poetry, but it is essential to any understanding of the subject that this should be done. *The Botanic Garden* is didactic and is not poetry; the *Commedia* is didactic and is poetic. Can we completely disengage the two ideas and say, for instance, that the didacticism of the *Commedia* has nothing at all in common with its poetry? The question is clearer when it is made more general: when it is said, for example, that the *art* of the Middle Ages was didactic.¹ In this case we do not mean that didacticism was of the essence of art; we only mean that

¹ Cf. Émile Mâle, *L'Art Religieux du XIII^e Siècle en France* (Paris, 1910, p. 1): "Le moyen âge a conçu l'art comme un enseignement. Tout ce qu'il était utile à l'homme de connaître, l'histoire du monde depuis sa création, les dogmes de la religion, les exemples des saints, la hiérarchie des vertus, la variété des sciences, des arts, et des métiers, lui était enseigné par les vitraux de l'église ou par les statues du porche."

the artists of the Middle Ages, urged perhaps by their own religious consciousness, and certainly by the consciousness of their religious environment, inevitably expressed themselves in religious subjects. The result was didactic, but was the process? Surely the process was simply one of *feeling*—of feeling for the significance of the subject in hand—and rarely one of purpose. The purpose perhaps only existed in the minds of the ecclesiastical syndicate that ordered the general design of a cathedral: the artists executed their orders with quite a different intention. In the same way the design of a poem may be didactic, and the fact that design and execution are alike the work of one mind does not alter the fact that æsthetically they may be distinct. Design is generally a question of reasoning—perhaps from given premises—whereas expression is a question of instinct or emotion. But the design may obviously have logical beauty, and it might be held that such beauty is the only æsthetic quality that a metaphysical poem can have. In this connection it is valuable to note Dante's attitude as expressed in the dedicatory epistle to *Can Grande* (Epistola X of Mr. Paget Toynbee's edition of the Letters of Dante). In § 9 he describes the form or manner of treatment of the *Commedia* as "poëticus, fictivus, descriptivus, digressivus, transumptivus; et cum hoc definitivus, divisivus, probativus, improbativus, et exemplorum positivus."¹ The conjunction of these several epithets shows either that Dante did not regard the "poetic" as incompatible with the definitive, the analytical, the probative, etc., or that otherwise he used the word *poeticus* in the sense we should use the word *lyric*, and did not see any reason why his poem should be wholly, or even mainly, lyrical. In § 15 of this epistle he states the aim of the whole and of the part as being "to remove those living in this life from a state of misery, and to bring them to a state of happiness"; and he goes on to say (§ 16) that "the branch of philosophy to which the work is subject, in the whole as

¹ My quotations and translations are in each case taken from Mr. Toynbee's edition (Oxford, 1920).

in the part, is that of morals or ethics; inasmuch as the whole as well as the part was conceived, not for speculation, but with a practical object." This emphasis on the doctrinal purpose of his poem, *totius et partis*, seems to prove very clearly, as the peculiar use of the word *poëticus* had indicated, that Dante did not regard his philosophy as inconsistent with his poetry, and this fact should be given its due weight, especially since there is a tendency nowadays to regard the intellectual structure of the *Commedia* as irrelevant to its poetry. But nevertheless Dante nowhere presumes that his poem is poetical *because* it is philosophical, and the conclusion of the matter is, that while metaphysical poetry always exists in association with a mind that is didactic, inasmuch as its life is a life of thought, yet it derives its poetic quality from another source, which is emotional. As an illustration we might represent thought and emotion as two separately revolving pulleys: one, emotion, has a revolution a thousand times greater than the other; but by the operation of a lever the two pulleys are connected, and immediately thought is accelerated to the speed or intensity of emotion.

In the case of Lucretius there is throughout a vigour and a resonance that are very attractive; in fact, the more his great poem is read the more it seems to cohere and become a unity, a part of one's mental life. And it is tempting to abandon all other pretensions and claim that this coherence of design and thought and unifying vitality is the sign and proof of the possibilities of metaphysical poetry. A sufficient case could be made out on this basis, but here I prefer to follow a more exact distinction, finding the nature of metaphysical poetry in the intensity rather than in the vigour of expression. For when the vitality of Lucretius's poem is analysed it is found to proceed from one of two causes: it is due either to the frequent interpolation of lyrical phrases, or, when these are absent, to a rather masterful rhetoric, a rather too facile manipulation of elemental metaphors. But he remains a very great poet, the most *interesting*,

perhaps, of all the Latin poets. His lyric moods are very pure :

"nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta
lanigerae reptant pecudes quo quamque vocantes
invitant herbae gemmant ror recenti,
et satiat agni ludunt blandique coruscant;
omnia quae nobis longe confusa videntur
et velut in viridi candor consistere colli."¹

The peculiar dichotomy of Lucretius's poem is seen when it is realised that lines so simply lyrical as these serve as a metaphor to explain the invisibility of atomic movement. Lyrics are embedded like jewels in the chain of an argument. The argument remains :

"inque dies quanto circum magis aetheris aestus
et radii solis cogeant undique terram
verberibus crebris extrema ad limina in artum,
in medio ut propulsa suo condensa coiret,
tam magis expressus salsus de corpore sudor
augebat mare manando camposque natantis,
et tanto magis illa foras elabsa volabant
corpora multa vaporis et aeris altaque caeli
densebant procul a terris fulgentia templa."²

Science was never so effectively written, before or since Lucretius's day. But though it is impossible to seize all the subtlety of lines written in a language we never speak, all the same I think it is evident that this beauty is a beauty of force ;

¹ II. 317-22. Munro's text (1864), who translates thus: "For often the woolly flocks as they crop the glad pastures on a hill, creep on whither the grass jewelled with fresh dew summons and invites each, and the lambs fed to the full gambol and playfully butt ; all which objects appear to us from a distance to be blended together and to rest like a white spot on a green hill."

² V. 483-91. Munro translates thus: "And every day the more the heats of ether round and the rays of the sun on all sides compressed the earth into a close mass by oft-repeated blows on its outer edges, so that thus buffeted it was condensed and drawn together about its centre, ever the more did the salt sweat squeezed out of its body increase by its oozeings the sea and floating fields, and ever the more did those many bodies of heat and air escape and fly abroad and condense far away from earth the high glittering quarters of heaven."

it is an aural clarion and deceives, and even deafens, the mind, whereas it should pervade it convincingly.

As the lyric lies like an episode breaking into the intellectual flow of *De Rerum Natura*, so in the case of the English metaphysical "school" we find an inverse process, giving rise to another possible misreading of the term "metaphysical poetry": a metaphysical metaphor or concept is included in a poem predominantly lyrical in mood. In reality very few of the metaphysical school were metaphysical in any sense, and the name only adds confusion to literary criticism. Their characteristics—"stranger than seven antiquaries' studies"—are well enough known ; and their faults have been ably summarised and controverted by Johnson in his *Life of Cowley*. But the quality that was really distinctive in the experiments of Donne and some of his followers Johnson missed altogether ; all that he could grudgingly allow to "this race of authors" was a virtuous erudition: "To write on their plan it was at least necessary to read and think." In this way he did considerable injustice to Donne, as is shown by the quotations he uses, which never represent the Donne that appeals to a modern mind. In Donne we do as a matter of fact find the first consciousness of felt thought, and his compasses and mandrakes are small matters in comparison to this. The new consciousness is so incidental that at first it seems accidental ; but it continues to be incidental, not only in the metaphysical school, but in others that came after them, and we must ascribe its rarity to its difficulty. It begins to be present in lines like the following :

"Earths hollownesses, which the worlds lungs are,
Have no more wind than the upper vault of aire.
We can nor lost friends, nor sought foes recover,
But meteorlike, save that we move not, hover.
Onely the Calenture together drawes
Deare friends, which meet dead in great fishes jawes."¹

It may be asked : what metaphysics is there in a passage

¹ From *The Calme* : Oxford Edition, 1912, p. 178.

like this? The only answer is that only a metaphysician could have written it. Only a mind habituated to thought would visualise its thoughts in precisely that way. Donne's metaphors, even when they are most "poetical," are still a part of his thought:

"All their proportion's lame, it sinks, it swels,
For of Meridians, and Parallels
Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne,
Upon the Heavens, and now they are his owne.
Loth to goe up the hill, or labour thus
To go to heaven, we make heaven come to us.
We spur, we reine the starres, and in their race
They're diversely content t'obey our pace.
But keepe the earth her round proportion still?
Doth not a Tenarif, or higher Hill
Rise so high like a Rocke, that one might thinke
The floating Moone would shipwracke there, and sinke?"¹

Poorer poets bring lights into their rooms, but Donne, like all true metaphysical poets, strikes fire in the very process of his reasoning.

If we turn to a contemporary of Donne's—to George Chapman—we discover an even better augury of what the metaphysical poet might be. It would, in fact, be difficult to exaggerate the wealth of possibilities that came into existence with Chapman's individual poetry; but after Chapman came Milton, destroying this indigenous growth. Although a contemporary of Donne's, Chapman was not at the time often associated with Donne; he was not considered one of the metaphysical school—which shows, indeed, how prone contemporary opinion is to judge authors by their superficialities: Donne by his conceits and Chapman by his "full and heightened style." When we get to the essence of these authors we find in Donne a mind poised at the exact turn of the course of philosophy—drawing his inspiration right back from scholastic sources, and yet at the same

¹ From *An Anatomie of the World: The First Anniversary*: Oxford Edition, pp. 239-40.

time eagerly surveying the new future promised by the science of Copernicus and Galileo. Chapman, on the other hand, is in a remarkable degree the forerunner of humanist philosophy—of Hume and Spinoza in particular. He is aware, above all things, of "the consent and sacred harmony of life." He brings ethics even into his title-page (e.g. *Caesar and Pompey*: A Roman Tragedy, declaring their Warres. Out of whose events is evicted this proposition: *Only a just man is a freeman*). And his theory of tragedy, as expressed in the dedication of *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, is more definitely didactic than Aristotle's even, and more uncompromising than Dante's theory of poetry: "And for the authentical truth of either person or action, who (worth the respecting) will expect it in a poem, whose subject is not truth, but things like truth? Poor envious souls they are that cavil at truth's want in these natural fictions; material instruction, elegant and sententious excitation to virtue, and deflection from her contrary, being the soul, limbs, and limits of an authentical tragedy." But who, in reading *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, pauses for an instant conscious of the boredom of its ethical purpose? It is, on the contrary, one of the most sustained poetic dramas in English literature. But his poetry is not "easy"¹; it is musical, like lyrical poetry, but it has an opacity, or "charged" effect, characteristic of all good metaphysical poetry; as though behind each word lurked considerable processes of thought:

"And know ye all . . .
That in this one thing all the discipline
Of manners and of manhood is contained;
A man to join himself with th' Universe
In his main sway, and make (in all things fit)
One with that All, and go on, round as it;
Not plucking from the whole his wretched part,
And into straits, or into nought revert,
Wishing the complete Universe might be

¹ Had space permitted, I should at this point have made observations on the dedicatory epistle to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, which embodies Chapman's very direct affirmations on the subject of his metaphysical poetry.

Subject to such a rag of it as he;
 But to consider great Necessity,
 All things as well refract as voluntary
 Reduceth to the prime celestial cause,
 Which he that yields to with a man's applause,
 And cheek by cheek goes, crossing it no breath,
 But, like God's image, follows to the death,
 That man is truly wise. . . ."

The philosophical spirit in both Donne and Chapman was, I think, derived directly from Dante and the early Italian poets¹; and it is to these, and particularly to Dante and Cavalcanti, that we turn for the most obvious illustration of the nature of metaphysical poetry. In reality there existed at that time a perfectly conscious theory of metaphysical poetry. It had come into existence with Guinicelli, who succeeded in escaping from the convention of direct lyricism, giving to his poetry a depth and beauty definitely related to a philosophical interest. "Amore e cor gentile" is not only one of the most beautiful love poems ever written: it is also one of the most metaphysical. Love is no longer an affair of the heart, but is rather an affair of the brain. It is a symbolism in which the most abstract ideals of the intellect can be made personal and actual. And it was this symbolism that became the sustaining element in all Dante's work. In the *Convivio* (Trattato Secondo, cap. i) Dante distinguishes the four values or interpretations of literature—the literal, the allegoric, the moral, and the anagogic. The first three are normal values and present no novelty. In the fourth value we have the whole meaning of metaphysical poetry. Dante defines the *senso anagogico* as occurring "quando spiritualmente si spone una scrittura, la quale, ancora nel senso litterale, eziando per le cose significate, significa delle superne cose dell'eternale gloria."² In effect, this value depends on a form of personi-

¹ To find predecessors in Du Bartas and other obscure French or Spanish poets, as some commentators have done in the case of Donne, is surely an instance of not seeing the wood for the trees.

² "When a writing is spiritually expounded, which even in the literal sense, by the very things it signifies, signifies higher matters of eternal glory."

fication which we have not developed to any extent in England (Donne's *Anatomy of the World* is the only example that occurs to me), and which consists of a bold interfusion of thought and actuality. The common idea of "personification" in literature is peculiarly bloodless: there is not, in fact, any idea at all of actually associating thought with a living person: personification is merely a convenience that enables us to address a virtue or an abstraction in the third person singular. It was far otherwise with Dante and Guido Cavalcanti: they in perfect seriousness identified their love of philosophy with their love of women; and in singing of their love of women they made an allegory that expressed their love of philosophy. In that manner they made their writings *sovra senso*, or anagogic. Or, more exactly, all experience, whether intellectual or sensual or instinctive, was regarded as equally and contemporaneously the subject-matter of their poetry. The result was a desirable continuity or coherence; imagination, contemplation, and sensibility becoming fused within the perfect limits of a human mind. "The poet was inspired with an overmastering desire to link the present with the past and with the future, to blend all knowledge into one coherent system, and to bring the experiences of life into one harmonious whole. For this purpose allegory was an indispensable instrument. But the basis of the allegory was no mere fancy. His conception of allegory postulates the existence of facts, for allegory is the agency by which earthly passion is brought into relation with Philosophy and Theology, and becomes their servant and interpreter."¹ In modern lyrical poetry this degree of coherence is never reached; we have instead a consciousness of the divorce of personality from the processes of thought. All the poet's senses and thoughts radiate from and return to one minute centre of self, and as a result he becomes disparate and insignificant in the process of nature, and a prey to *acedia* and despair. Thought, if indulged in

¹ William Walrond Jackson, D.D., "Introduction" to his translation of the *Convivio* (Oxford, 1909), p. 18.

at all, is not related to experience, though psychologically it may be a ratiocination balancing the abnormal exploits of the personality. But with Dante and Cavalcanti, and with Donne and Chapman, and even with Wordsworth, thought is the expression of experience—of all the experiences registered by the brain; and on the capacity of that brain for analysing its experiences, and even more on its capacity for selecting its experiences, will depend the value of the thought. If in addition that brain has the ability to reduce its thought to the emotional unit of the poem, we shall have the purest kind of metaphysical poetry as a result.

Dante achieved this result. The *Commedia* is the complete expression of a very complete mind—a mind that saw as much beauty in the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas as in the episode of Paolo and Francesca, and did not find these beauties inconsistent. It is in every sense a metaphysical poem, complete and unified, and as a whole is a perfect demonstration of the sufficiency of metaphysical inspiration. That the groundwork of the poem is metaphysical would not be disputed, but it is possible to show that the metaphysics is itself poetic, in detail as well as in design—that there exists at one and the same time abstract thought and feeling for that thought, expressed in poetry. I am not going to claim that this unity is to be discovered at all frequently in the *Commedia*. It is a difficult achievement, and in Dante's case there was even a special difficulty in that one of his "features" is the almost complete unoriginality of his thought: the world was not a problem to him, to be resolved by experimental effort, but the particularly neat scheme so amply provided by Thomas Aquinas. This vicariousness is not without its effect on the metaphysical quality of Dante's poetry, for the fusion of thought and emotion is surely more apt to be produced when thought has all the freshness of a personal discovery. But only *more* apt: that freshness is not exclusively the condition of emotion in thought is evident enough to all who enjoy an abstract argument. Besides, the

exposition of a philosophy to which are attached no considerations of personal pride or vanity makes for the exclusion of all kinds of subjective impurities—makes, in fact, for that very objective clarity that is so distinctive of Dante's poem:

"O abbondante grazia, ond'io presunsi
Ficcar lo viso per la luce eterna
Tanto, che la veduta vi consunsi!

"Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
Legato con amore in un volume,
Ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;

"Sustanzia ed accidenti, e lor costume,
Quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,
Che ciò ch'io dico è un semplice lume.

"La forma universal di questo nodo
Credo ch'io vidi, perchè più di largo,
Dicendo questo, mi sento ch'io godo."¹

The history of Guido Cavalcanti's Canzone beginning "Donna mi priega" is the history of all metaphysical poetry. It is an analysis or definition of love, and was the most admired of Guido's poems in his own day. In the fourteenth century it inspired several elaborate commentaries, some of them by distinguished philosophers of the time. It passed into obscurity with the renaissance; it probably had a brief revival of interest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but in the nineteenth we find it the object of almost impassioned scorn. D. G. Rossetti describes it as "a poem beside the purpose of poetry, filled with metaphysical jargon, and perhaps the very worst of Guido's productions. Its

¹ *Paradiso*, canto xxxiii, 82-93. Wicksteed translates as follows: "O grace abounding, wherein I presumed to fix my look on the eternal light so long that I consumed my sight thereon! Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe; substance and accidents and their relations, as thought together fused, after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame. The universal form of this complex I think that I beheld, because more largely, as I say this, I feel that I rejoice."

having been written by a man whose life and works included so much that is impulsive and real is easily accounted for by scholastic pride in those early days of learning. I have not translated it, as being of little interest. . . .¹ Even Gaspari cannot stomach it, and sarcastically remarks that the lady who had questioned Guido "must have been very learned if she was satisfied with his reply. . . . Here we have the apparatus of the scholastic philosophy, the logical divisions and distinctions, the definitions, syllogisms, and terminology of the schools. Image and sentiment, the foundations of all poetry, are entirely lacking."² This latter sentence is entirely untrue, and I am indeed content to quote this famous poem as an example of true metaphysical poetry. The second stanza reads:

"In quella parte, dove sta memora,
Prende suo stato, si formato, come
Diafan dal lume, d'una oscuritate,
La qual da Marte viene, e fa dimora.
Egli e creato, ed ha sensato nome:
D'alma costume, e di cor volontate:
Vien da veduta forma, che s'intende,
Che prende nel possibile intelletto,
Come in soggetto, loco e dimoranza.
In quella parte mai non ha possanza,
Perche da qualitate non discende.
Risplende in se perpetuale effetto:
Non ha diletto, ma consideranza;
Si che non puote la gir simiglianza."³

¹ *The Early Italian Poets*: Introduction to Part II.

² *The History of Early Italian Literature*, by Adolph Gaspari, translated by Hermann Oelsner (1901), pp. 207-8.

³ It is difficult to translate such concentrated poetry as this. Charles Lyell (*The Lyrical Poems of Dante Alighieri*, London, 1845) has made the following attempt (p. 134):

"Within the soul's recess where memory dwells
Love has its seat, there formed as brightness is
By light, in thing transparent that was dark;
Which darkness is from Mars, and permanent.
Love is produced, and has its name from sense;
A habit of the soul, a will of the heart;
It springs from beauty seen and contemplated;

One might leave the subject there, counting on the sufficiency of Cavalcanti and Dante, and of Donne and Chapman; but there are certain "obvious" poets that one can't neglect to mention if only to disclaim them—I mean particularly Milton, Shelley, and Browning. Wordsworth is different. But Milton perhaps did more to destroy the true tradition of metaphysical poetry than any other agent. He prostituted poetry to the baser uses of his crude prejudice, and in his too forceful fashion crushed the life out of an only too subtle advance of human consciousness. He did not think poetically, but merely expounded thought in verse: psychologically he was conscious all the time of a dualism—on the one side the thought to be expounded, on the other side the poetic mould into which this thought had to be smelted. The true metaphysical poet is conscious of no such dualism: his thought is in its very process poetical. This distinction so briefly expressed may seem a trifle upon which to dismiss so established a reputation as Milton's is in this particular sphere, and it must be admitted that the whole matter needs careful analysis and consideration; for the present I prefer not to endanger a good cause by enlisting a doubtful ally. Shelley, too, I prefer to leave unquoted: his sentiments were too vague to bring him within the scientific definition of philosophy underlying the assumptions of this essay; and when he meant to be metaphysical he was merely mystical. As for Browning, he was neither mystical nor metaphysical, and I am not sure that it would not be legitimate to say that he was just wordy. It may be admitted, however, that he has very definite claims to be considered as a psychological poet; and if "Bishop Blougram's Apology" is not so good of its kind as is Cavalcanti's

Which takes, in the receptive intellect,
A dwelling-place, as in a subject fit.
There, matter it has none, nor has it weight;
For purely spiritual is its quality.
Love shines transplendent, long as beauty charms.
In contemplation is its whole delight,
Hence it can yield no likeness to itself."

canzone beginning "L'ardente fiamma della fiera pesta" (it is not so sincere), yet "Bishop Blougram" and parts of *The Ring and the Book* and certain of the *Parleyings* are good enough to establish the *genre* in its own rights. But the *genre* is definitely psychological, consisting of the analysis of motives and personalities, and differing entirely from the metaphysical, which should confine itself to the statement of ideas. Leibniz has defined an intelligent author as one who includes the most of reality in the least possible compass,¹ and it would be difficult to improve on this definition. And in that case it is difficult to see how psychological poetry, which is descriptive, can compete with metaphysical poetry, which is synthetic. It is for this reason, if for no other, that Wordsworth tends to emerge out of the immediate welter of his epoch with something more of solidity than we can associate with the merely descriptive evocations of his contemporaries. In fact, I might go a long way to find a better example of metaphysical poetry than certain lines from the fragment of *The Recluse*:

" . . . I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed, Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my song.

" . . . if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of man, and see ill sights
Of madding passion, mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity, in fields and groves

¹ *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § v.

Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding over the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of Cities; may these sounds
Have their authentic comment,—that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!"

The first part of this quotation is a gesture, and it may be advanced that as such it comes dangerously near to being rhetorical. But rhetoric is only reprehensible when it is hollow, as it mostly is; when it is compact with thought, as this rhetoric of Wordsworth's is, it is powerful beyond any other mode of expression. Blake recoiled in horror from three of these lines: he saw in them a rebellion against the very basis of humanistic religion. And if to-day we can no longer share Blake's apprehension we can instead appreciate the profundity, the intellectual significance, and the emotional power of these verses. The second part of the quotation does not lack something of such qualities also, but I use it rather with the special intention of illustrating how words like "confederate" and "authentic comment" can be lifted from their prosaic origins and made the very keywords of a poetic vigour.

With Wordsworth the metaphysical tradition in English poetry for the time being ends. The possibility of recovering this lost tradition remains to be considered.

I began by defining metaphysical poetry as the emotional apprehension of thought, and I am not sure that I can do better than leave the definition simply so, trusting that the quotations I have meanwhile made use of may quite sufficiently illustrate my meaning. It has been seen very noticeably, I hope, that a degree of economy is implied in the word "apprehension"—that economy of thought, in fact, breeds its corresponding intensity, which is to be identified with the poetry itself. More anxiously I hope that it has been seen in exactly what sense the epithet "emotional" has been used. Now that my illustrative matter is complete, as far as the limits of space allow, "emotional apprehension" should

appear as a fairly "hard," even as a necessarily "dry," process. It is important beyond everything, in this era of emotional or "common-sense" philosophies, not to confuse this mental process in which emotion is the product of thought, with that other vaguer, easier process, which is the emotionalisation of thought, or thought as the product of emotion. Metaphysical poetry is determined logically: its emotion is a joy that comes with the triumph of the reason, and is not a simple instinctive ecstasy. It is, finally, but the precise statement of such abstractions as the poet derives from his experience. Perhaps, in the scholastic sense, it is the poetry of universals.

As for an ideal of present service, I would gladly refer the reader to Mr. Santayana's formulation of it in *Three Philosophical Poets*—a work of a grace and fervour that makes this brief apology a halting appendix. I would not have ventured even upon this appendix but for a point of departure I wish to make. "Throw open" (Mr. Santayana concludes) "to the young poet the infinity of nature; let him feel the precariousness of life, the variety of purposes, civilisations, and religions even upon this little planet: let him trace the triumphs and follies of art and philosophy, and their perpetual resurrections—like that of the downcast Faust. . . ." There is a Latin generosity about this formulation, a certain expansiveness that does not seem to accord with our present ideas. Infinity is a dangerous word, in art no less than in philosophy, and we should do well to avoid it—or give it a definite meaning. But to define an ideal in any exact way is very difficult. For what, after all, is the material of poetry, and particularly of metaphysical poetry, but just vaguely "life"—i.e. the poet's life, the compound of all his experiences? But from another point of view we can see that the poet is in a very real sense the product of his age—witness especially Dante. It is perhaps worth while, then, to refer to the characteristics of our own age, and in that way arrive at some more definite idea of the possibilities of metaphysical poetry to-day. This

leads us on to every opinionative ground; we strike deeply into subconscious prejudices. But, generally, we can recognise the disintegration of religion, and even of more secular crowd-emotions like patriotism, and with this disintegration the disappearance of some of the most powerful sources of poetic inspiration. To what degree this disintegration is permanent is another question, and not one to be discussed here. At the worst we may trust that the crowd, as an organised society, will find an equivalent outlet for its emotional forces; and it does not yet seem necessary to admit the extreme pessimism of so much recent German speculation on this subject. And for our immediate concern we may even claim a certain independence for the poet. If he is the product of his age, yet he is not generated by the pressure of a specific unanimism, but rather stands within his environment and absorbs the spectacle around him; and in this sense negation is as good a sounding-board for thought as any more positive state of society. And however pitiful our social life may be, yet there does exist an intelligent minority of considerable vigour and positive achievement: I refer particularly to the modern physicists, whose work would seem to provide a whole system of thought and imagery ready for fertilisation in the mind of the poet. For if the assumptions of this essay are accepted it will be seen that science and poetry have but one ideal, which is the satisfaction of the reason. *Æsthetic* satisfaction is not, as is too often assumed, the satisfaction of the senses (the senses are never satisfied), but *is* the satisfaction of the co-ordinating judgment of the intellect—in symmetry, in rhythm, and in all the properties of universal truth. For science we accept without question the axiom that logical method and the satisfaction of reason are the final tests to be used in the attainment of a system of truth, but for art such an ideal appears at first sight to be paradoxical and detrimental—even as science, in another age, found the ideals of religion inimical, and nearly fatal. Ideals, however, survive only so long as they serve the interests,

economic or emotional, of the multitudes among which they exist: they, as all human attempts at fixation, are at the mercy of more brutal forces. Very few ideals—perhaps only those immuring the instincts of self-preservation—are so old as history; and such an ideal as scientific method in poetry must be accepted subject to the contingency of all ideals. The scientific ideal does at any rate carry us into the full stream of all that is valuable in our age. Science has established a large number of “phenomena,” but these phenomena remain discrete. They lack harmonic unity. Perhaps mathematical philosophy is working in one direction to establish this unity; metaphysical poetry, working in a different direction, can, without presumption, aim at the same end.

THE SERPENT

By PAUL VALÉRY

BREEZE-ROCKED, in the Tree there hangs
 The viper that I clothed, and it
 Smiles: and its smile, that the fangs
 Piercing with appetites have lit,
 Ventures the garden, fancy-led,
 And my three-angled emerald head
 Darts here and there the red tongue's cleft. . . .
 Beast I am, but a barbed beast,
 Whose common venom has yet left
 Wise hemlock like a harmless feast. . . .

Soft is this time of ravishment!
 Tremble, mortals! Strong am I,
 When, never to my full content,
 I yawn until the springs would fly!
 Clear-cut in azure splendour lies
 This snaky form that's my disguise
 Of animal simplicity.
 Come to me, unreflecting race!
 I rise, and stretch my thawing grace,
 The equal of necessity!

Sun, Sun! O thou resplendent fault!
 Sun, who on death a mask doth set,
 Beneath a gold and azure vault
 That roofs the flowers in council met;
 By rapture veiled in mysteries,
 Proudest of my accomplices,

THE CRITERION

And highest snare that's known to me,
 Thou guardest lest the heart should guess
 The universe only to be
 A blemish in Pure Nothingness.

Great Sun, who the Rouse dost sound
 To being, and lendest him thy fires,
 Yet in a sleep dost hold him bound
 Which Nature with deceit attires ;
 Provoker of happy ghosts, who roll
 Away the darkness from the soul
 And to the eyes its presence bring ;
 Always that lie delighted me,
 Spread o'er the absolute by thee,
 O made of flame, yet shadows' King !

Pour thy raw heat over me,
 Where all my frozen sloth I lay
 To brood on some calamity,
 As is my twisted nature's way. . . .
 Dear is this garden of delight
 That saw the flesh fall and unite !
 My frenzy, here, to ripeness grows.
 I guide it, heat it till it boils,
 I nurse my thoughts, and in their coils
 My meditation murmuring goes. . . .

O Vanity ! First Cause ! For He,
 Who reigns supreme in Heaven, spake
 With voice that was the light, and the
 Wide-opening universe did make.
 Tired of the purity He saw,
 God Himself broke down the law
 Of His perfect eternity ;
 He became He who squanders His
 Principle in consequences,
 And in stars His Unity.

THE SERPENT

His mistake, Heaven ! His ruin, Time !
 The yawning animal abyss !
 In origin, what fall sublime
 Flashes in place of nothingness !
 But, the first word of His verb,
 I ! . . . Of stars the most superb
 The mad Creator's word inspires,
 I am ! . . . I shall be ! . . . I have bent
 On the divine belittlement
 The light of all the Seducer's fires !

Radiant object of my hate,
 Thou whom I loved distractedly,
 Thou who wast forced to allocate
 Hell's empire to this lover of Thee,
 See Thyself mirrored in my shade !
 Thy dismal image, so displayed,
 Pride of my sombre looking-glass,
 Caused Thee such profound dismay
 That Thy breath upon the clay
 A sigh of desperation was !

Vain has it been for Thee to mould
 Facile children in the mire,
 Thy triumphant acts to quire,
 All day to hear Thyself extolled !
 Moulded, their breath no sooner came
 Than Master Serpent whistled them,
 These fine children of Thy hand !
 Ho ! ye newly-come ! said he,
 Naught but naked men are ye,
 O ye beasts all bleached and bland !

In the curs'd likeness made were ye,
 And my hate upon you lies,

THE CRITERION

As on the Name that caused to be
 So many faulty prodigies !
 He who modifies am I,
 Mysterious, sure, I qualify
 With touch to heart who trusts therein !
 We shall change these pliant works,
 And this grass-snake that timid lurks,
 Into a raging reptilian.

My innumerable intelligence
 In the human soul commands,
 Drawing a means of vengeance thence,
 An instrument fashioned by Thy hands ;
 And Thy veiled Paternity,
 Though, in its starry chamber, it be
 To incense only it inclines,
 Yet will the excess of my charms
 Be able, with far-off alarms,
 To mar its all-powerful designs !

I go, I come, I glide, and dive,
 Vanish into a heart that's pure !
 What breast could ever so endure
 That no dream lodged therein would thrive ?
 Be who you may, is that not I,
 The dawn of your soul's complacency
 Whenever to self-love inclined ?
 I am at bottom of its favour
 That inimitable savour
 That only in yourself you find !

Eve, as once I came on her,
 Among her first thoughts stood forlorn ;
 To spirits her lips parted were,
 Spirits of cradled roses born.

THE SERPENT

Before me stood this perfect one,
 Her flank, vast, and with gold o'errun,
 Of sun or man without a fear ;
 Offered to any air that scanned,
 The soul still stupefied, as it were,
 At a loss on flesh's borderland.

O mass of blessedness, you are
 So beautiful, the just reward
 Of the all and every care
 Of the best minds, as of good !
 To your lips that they be led
 Enough for them that you should sigh !
 The purest stoop most abjectly,
 The hardest are the deepest bled. . . .
 Me even, me you have softenèd,
 Whom vampires are governed by !

Yea ! from my leafy post above,
 Reptile, tasting bird-like bliss,
 Even the while my chattering wove
 The network of its wiliness,
 Unlistening Beauty, I drank you in,
 Heavy with charms, limpid, serene ;
 I dominated, furtively,
 Eyeing your burning golden wool,
 Your nape, inscrutable, and full
 Of all your motion's secrecy !

I was present like a smell,
 Like the aroma of a thought
 Of which vainly were it sought
 The insidious depth to tell !
 And I perturbed you, Innocence,
 O flesh that never had known its will

Had I not fed you fears until
 You staggered in the bright intense !
 My life on it, I'll have you, soon,
 Your thought already changes tone !

(Such superb simplicity
 For great consideration prays !
 Her transparency of gaze,
 Silliness, pride, felicity,
 Guard the lovely city well !
 Learn we chances to impart,
 And to this, the rarest art,
 Be the pure heart susceptible !
 There is my forte ! That is my game !
 Be mine the means to reach my aim !)

Then, light systems let us spin
 For Eve so leisurely, Eve so sweet,
 Spin with a dazzling dribble, wherein
 Vague perils may entoil her feet !
 Beneath a load of silk then may
 Be trembling the skin of this prey
 Wont open to the sky to be ! . . .
 Gauze there is not known whose guile,
 Thread's strength, invisibility,
 Excel a weaving in my style !

Golden, make her golden the
 Sweetest sayings, tongue, you know !
 Subtleties, fables, hints, but so
 Let many a chiselled silence be ;
 Use all things that may work her ill :
 Only what flatters, or what will
 Lead her to lose herself in my toils,
 Docile to those slopes that call
 To the depths of the blue pools
 The streams that from the heavens fall !

O what prose beyond compare,
 What of wit have I not thrown
 Into the labyrinth of down
 Of this marvel of an ear !
 There, thought I, is nothing vain ;
 All to the faltering heart is gain !
 Sure triumph ! if the tales by me
 For siege of the soul's treasure told,
 Like corolla's siege by bee,
 Leave never more that ear of gold !

" Nothing," I breathed to her, " is less
 Sure than the divine word, Eve !
 A quickened knowledge is to reave
 From this fat fruit the heinousness !
 Heed not the Being, pure, old, who says
 His curse is on a bite so brief !
 Your mouth has but a dream to weave ;
 This thirst that dreams the sap to receive,
 This delight's forestallèdness,
 This is luscious Eternity, Eve ! "

She drank in each little saying,
 Words that built a building strange ;
 Her eyes from an angel at times would range,
 Back to my branches would be straying !
 The wildest animal that goes,
 Mocking you, that so hard you be,
 O faithless woman, big with woes,
 Is but a voice in the greenery !
 —But how grave was our Eve, as she
 Listened to him under the tree !

" Soul," said I, " sweet place of rest
 For all forbidden joys to stay,

THE CRITERION

The sinuous love have you not guessed
 That I from the Father stole away ?
 I have it, this essence of the skies,
 With nicety it ready lies
 For ends more sweet than honey-dew. . . .
 Take of this fruit. . . . Lift your arm higher !
 To gather what you may desire
 Your lovely hand was given you ! "

What silence an eyelash beat upon !
 But what breath, under the dark breast
 That the Tree's nibbling shade caressed !
 The other like a pistil shone !
 Whistle ! Whistle ! it sang to me !
 And of a tremor I was aware,
 The length of my whip-like subtlety
 In all these many coils I bear :
 From beryl of my crest they rolled,
 Perilously uncontrolled !

Genius ! O patience sorely found !
 At last, at last, the times we greet
 When towards the Knowledge new a bound
 Is thus to spring from these bare feet !
 To marble, breath ! To gold, arched grace !
 Sombre or amber, each fair base
 Is poised o'er movement, tremblingly ! . . .
 It is tottering, this great urn,
 Whence the consent is now to flee
 Of her who seemed so taciturn ! . . .

To its lures, as you would attain
 The pleasure, yield, dear body, yield !
 Your thirst for change, and change again,
 Around the Tree of Death be revealed

THE SERPENT

In postures, linked as on a chain !
 Come without coming ! Make steps unsought,
 Vague, as though burdens of roses restrain. . . .
 Dance, dear body ! Banish thought !
 Here delights will well explain
 Whatever follows in their train !

O madly did I gloat to see
 (Though barren the enjoyment were)
 So pure and fresh a back to be
 With disobedience all astir ! . . .
 Its essence already delivering
 (Of wisdom and illusion bred),
 The Tree of Knowledge is quivering,
 With its vision-towsled head,
 Through all its mighty frame, that dives
 Sunwards, and thence the dream derives !

Tree, great Tree, Shadow of Heaven,
 Irresistible Tree of Trees,
 Who in the marble's weaknesses
 To hunts for luscious juice art given,
 Who sinkest mazes in the deep
 Whereby the close-hugged shadows creep
 To lose themselves in sapphire bright
 Of never-ending morn above ;
 Sweet loss, if scent, or zephyr light,
 Or if it be predestined dove,

O singer, O drinker in secrecy
 Of the profoundest precious stone,
 Cradle of reptile dreamer, he
 By whom Eve into dreams was thrown ;
 Great Being moved by lust to know,
 Who, to see better, still must grow

THE CRITERION

To topmost off-shoots' summonses ;
 Who in the purest gold dost raise
 Thy hard arms, thy branches' haze,
 Conversely, delving towards the abyss ;

Thou canst repel the infinite
 That lives not from thy growth apart,
 From tomb in pit to nest in height
 Canst feel that Thou all Knowledge art ! . . .
 But this old lover of failures, by
 Suns that are leisured, golden, dry,
 Comes in thy boughs to make his lair ;
 As at his eyes thy treasure quakes,
 Down from it the fruit he shakes
 Of death, disorder, and despair !

A Serpent fine, in azure swaying,
 Hissing daintily, I bring
 My gift, before God's glory laying
 The triumph of my sorrowing. . . .
 Enough for me that the large hope
 Of bitter fruits in air finds scope,
 Whence sons of muck are frenzy-torn. . . .
 This thirst, that made thee huge, no less
 Lifts to The Being the strangely-born
 Omnipotence of Nothingness !

Translated by MARK WARDLE.

CONTEMPORARY SPANISH
LITERATURE

By ANTONIO MARICHALAR

IT may appear surprising that, in unfolding the existing state of the ensemble of Spanish letters, we should begin by presenting the writers of the generation called 1898, they being the eldest, or senior. Nor are they thus classified because this group, so recently considered the young revolutionary, has exhausted its powers or become defective in their greater number, but solely because here in our country they constitute the oldest group, because the writers of that past generation, who are still living, consider their mission finished.

Let us respect the silence of men like Picon or Palacio Valdés, who retired in the midst of popularity, and the delicate example of those who preferred to remain mute because their comrades no longer cared to speak.

The demolition already mentioned was brought about violently towards the beginning of 1898 by a group of reconstructive spirits, who—faced by the disaster that swept our country owing to its artistic, social, and political decay—struck a reactionary note that we still acknowledge with gratitude and sympathy.

This movement was organised on the edge of disaster by masters such as Giner, Ganivet, Costa, who crystallised the nucleus that would carry out the needed renaissance. Very soon the writers of 1898 arrested public attention—that of a thirsty minority—then of the majority—but not yet the academies—to whom they preached their crusade ; reaffirm-

ing the true value of national feeling, revising classical writers, purifying and giving a new orientation to public taste, intensifying the cult of artists such as Góngora and Greco, obscure through lack of appreciation; pointing out the intrinsic value of basic tradition and fostering it—while bringing them into touch with modern European thinkers—importing principally the works of Nietzsche, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Brandès, and A. France.

It was necessary to make a beginning! Let us see what remains to-day, characteristic and permanently impressed by their labour, as a vehicle for the evolution of modern ideas that we find interesting to consider.

Although it may be said—as one says of the French school of impressionists—that the achievement and glory belong to the group of '98 as a whole rather than to any one individual member, yet we should mention first of all the most tumultuous revolutionary spirit of the group: Miguel de Unamuno.

From his first works, especially in *El sentimiento trágico de la Vida* and in *Ensayos*, one finds the seal of the sorrowful thinker, ever restless, a fervent spirit, deeply religious, who found no satisfaction in existing forms—incapable of expressing his troubled soul. This leads him to feel that the great and lonely figure of *Don Quixote* expresses him, and he dedicates to him his best commentary, or song or prayer—it might be called—in which he tenderly revives “that Christian Cavalier Mirror of the well-born,” ridiculed and humiliated only by scornful ignorance. In breaking a lance for him—and for himself—Unamuno awoke a spiritual quality and taught, in the midst of a sad and oppressive rationalism, the possibility of flying, even if it were only with the aid of the deceptive and revengeful arms of a windmill.

This professor of Greek of the University of Salamanca does not find it necessary to evolve in order that he may retain touch with existing ideology.

Unadapted to his environment, rebellious, anti-academic always, because he does not aspire to ideals that are concrete and within reach, his is the temperament of the perfect

heretic—heretical in himself—a harassing chastiser of smug consciences.

His noble and uncompromising attitude of fecund opposition has been qualified as egocentric, inconsequent, paradoxical—like Whitman's.

And if to-day he has abandoned literature and given himself to politics, we have to thank those who have compelled him to write *in words of speech*, systematically opposing him as “Paradoxical”! They who ignore that, in the words of the great savant Capal, “paradox constitutes an infallible revulsion against mere routine of thought,” and thanks to those who are capable of producing great paradoxes, many countries—England very especially—have visualised in the history of their ideas the rapid advancement of these, in that weary round that can only be fully experienced when realised in themselves.

The highest point reached by Unamuno is to be found in his mystic philosophy, where the Biblical seer wrapt in solitude utters his prophecies, showing repeatedly an affinity with Tolstoi; but whereas the Russian “never resists,” the Spaniard wars on, for he is one tortured by the spirit of Christianity after the fierce manner of those apostles who hold up the Cross . . . on the hilt of a sword. For him, like Michael Angelo, Christ reveals Himself with upraised arm—angry at the judgment—as He was in the temple when He cast out those who bore false witness.

In the Basque, Miguel de Unamuno, the knight-errant of Ideas, author of *Paz en la guerra*, throbs that pathetic paradox of Christianity that R. H. Benson and G. K. Chesterton commented upon in their essays.

His revolutionary mysticism, wayward, unlike Verhaeren, but with a touch of religious feeling very like Savonarola or Lamennais, has impelled him to produce another work, the result of ten years' stubborn labour, and this he has recently offered to his indifferent contemporaries: *El Cristo de Velasquez*, a lengthy poem hendecasyllabic, difficult, and harsh,

wherein glossing sacred texts he definitely faces the divine embodiment of that *Mystery* that throughout his work obsesses him, crystallising at the end in a fervent Catholicism, heterodox and profoundly Spanish; but owing to his anxiety to find expression in exalted, plastic images, he reminds one at times of the irritating mysticism of Blake, Patmore, Thompson, Claudel.

Another important writer of '98, who has not evolved further, but who, nevertheless, possesses to a greater degree than any other, modern values, is Azorin. His work, measured, refined, controlled, offers throughout a sustained broad character, without inequalities, and a serene expression without forced or violent contrasts—perfectly poised—we might call it clean-shaven in effect. We have here the reason why he still remains young, and also why, in that famous hour of reconstruction of 1898, it was he who struck out farthest from the point of departure. The transcendental mission of Azorin was pruning, modifying, and otherwise moderating—in a word, opposing the excessive rhetorical literature, pompous and florid, that obstructed the true ways.

Similar to the work done in France by Francis Jammes, but more completely centralised and intensive, effecting at that time in Spain a labour that involved pruning and simplifying forms to which he gives vigour and salutary direction, his methods are those of the primitives, presenting in his books small pictures or scenes that follow in succession, like a *predella* exposed with sensitive puerility. He inaugurates a style, gloomy, cold, and short-phrased, scattering with timid, daring touches that seem to scandalise the writer himself, his delicate, hidden emotions, obtained by evocation; a style in appearance vulgar and drab, but very original, the kernel of which is true, delicate, enchanting.

Is it necessary to dwell on his love for France? In the thorough revision he has made of classic writers and in his evocations of *Castilla*, it is evident that this artist has not created, but revived things that were truly unknown. To

revive, to purify, to prune until the essential good reappeared—thus in his last novel, *Don Juan*, in which he presents to us the unexpected, a Don Juan *désabusé* who discreetly retires, he also shows us all the kindness the man's heart is capable of expressing—and the strength of his breed when once he rends the veil of sensuality that had obscured his vision: even as stilled waters, but a moment since storm-tossed, offer a limpid mirror by which corrections may be made.

Pío Baroja effected a work resembling Azorin's and completing it, but with methods quite unlike the former's.

Rough-spirited, distempered, he wielded the axe to bring about the disruption. He produced a great deal of noise that soon died out, and he is heard less and less. Baroja, not being a man of refined mentality, could not be expected to orient public taste in the right direction, but he very cleverly drove it from the purely bad, awakening new feeling values.

He began to promulgate the knowledge of artistic and social principles, well-known to-day but hardly expressed in those days, and yet his work did not reach beyond the mark of passing opportunity. Possibly because his attempt was premature.

Through him came, it is true, the first influencing touch of Russian novelists and German philosophers; very interesting, but done rather tactlessly, without exerting the critical faculty—he did this possibly before he himself had assimilated and chosen carefully—giving temperamentally an incomplete expression—external and partial—in anarchy and dispersion.

It would be unjust, however, to undervalue his powerful novels which will remain, and in them a personal technique, an appealing tone, a "neutral style" all his own, and the "prose of a diagnostician" that will make the name of the author of *La Busca* live; the man who looks down upon the ground.

Another figure of this generation is Valle Inclán, an unusual man and artist, whose most interesting trait is

form. A harmonious form, in whose poetry one senses the master of prose, whose prose—of a quality that will make a mark in the history of Spanish prose—transcends the music of the poet who weaves it.

The external perfection of the form glides over the rhythmic cadence of the words strung like roses in the classic style—a majestic rhythm of sweeping melody—Celtic and noble. And these are his typical characteristics; if one penetrates beyond the predominating beauties of form in the distinguished work of Valle Inclan, we find the temperament of an hidalgo of Galicia, passionate, sudden, haughty, despotic, but ceremonious, grand, even melancholy and sweet also, if you will. Thus out of a bristling, hoary mediæval castle have come forth heroes, saints, adventurers, who unite in themselves a mingling of conquerors and bandits in whom the love of tradition and rebellion brings out the romantic legitimist.

The one best known for his many conquests, sung in four sonnets, is the *Marques de Bradomin*, rare Don Juan that he is—according to the phrase of Bartry, “ugly, Catholic, and sentimental.”

If this author were not one of those to whom “affectation is natural,” one could believe that his æsthetic development (first sensual, then serene, now burlesque) has been superficial and false. But he himself, his attitude, his air, that also give the impression of pose and concealment, corroborate—man makes his own form—the legitimacy of this theatrical element that is part of him and that logically draws him now towards comedy and burlesque, farce and *esperpento*.

Valle Inclan was the man who attracted especially the friendship and influence of Ruben Dario, the true poet of that generation who revived Spanish poetry; but owing to his being an American and not a Spaniard, we cannot discuss him here. The other writers of '98—Benevento, who after unanimous triumphs is requited to-day with bitter criticism, Bueno, Cijes, and Maeztu gave themselves almost entirely to journalism, and the latter, an old breaker of idols, now

returns from England converted to a grave, austere Catholicism, surprising in him.

“The true object of life is to make better roads for those who follow after.”

These words of G. Meredith could be applied to the generation of '98, who broke ground, cleared it, and sowed the seed for the younger generation, eager and ready, who soon appeared in 1900.

But of this avalanche of writers, scattered and unequal in quality, among whom move the chiefs of those maturer groups, and young men who to-day retain power, one could not possibly attempt a study. We shall limit ourselves to a few names, or rather books recently given and already established, the work of the Young Masters who, full of hope and courage, appear to us to be, if not the best—who can really say that?—at all events the most representative of the modern movement effected in our country, parallel with others. That is why these have established a closer bond of mutual sympathy with beginners and those who bring diverse trends and orientations, accomplishing together a difficult task of crystallising and defining which their well-known prestige makes powerful.

Juan Ramon Jimenez represents the innate lyrical temperament with perfect purity of expression. This poet, intensely sensitive, became known as a writer of bitter elegies, desolate and troubled during his passionate youth filled with the fragrance of his own poetry—scented like the jasmine, with flowers and women.

Recovering from this intoxication he continues his way, full of beauty and charm. His sorrow is softened, his sentimental dreams turn to Nature for nurture, his pain is changed to melancholy, and he intones the faint music of *Arias Tristes*.

But as time chastens his heart, the poet disciplines himself and intensifies a condition of extraordinary intellectual depuration. He becomes a recluse, hermetic, difficult, esoteric even, but never obscure: crystal clear, concise; like Mallarmé

he renews his art. From his tower of ivory he distils his poetry drop by drop, animated by a fervent longing to produce the perfected expression.

At the same time that he subjects his published works to a searching and well-discussed revision, he prepares for the new the strictest sifting. We might say that the poet of *Eternidades* lies in wait and, seizing the new-form fancies of his heart, lifts them on high and proceeds to cleanse, filter, and remove every trace of blood or corruption they may show, that purified, cauterised, given form, and harmonised with the whole in this *alchemy of the emotions*, they may pass on into eternity.

Then only does the poet exalt that which he has given pure and transfigured; because that alone is the essential spirit that, like Shelley's heart, resists cremation.

This high standard of inspiration is difficult and dangerous in its execution. How often the pulsing sentiment trying to escape will appear forced, bloodless, truncated, and, if weak, dry, asphyxiated, or in ashes!

Hence a restricted choice—but what remains deserves to be classed as perfect. Let us admire the high aspirations of this poet, who without being a *Montreur* preserves his own expression, and without being a dweller of Parnassus chastises and makes perfect: romantic and at the same time classical, uniting the intimate, emotional, personal, and popular qualities of his meridional temperament, creator of Becquer, to a masterly touch of exquisite refinement that strongly reminds one of Paul Valéry.

One finds in him, as in Yeats and Russell, traces of R. Tagore, whose complete works he has translated.

Although we cannot stop to analyse these books, let us mention one by this author that I consider of the highest value in the history of Spanish prose, and poetry—*Platero y yo*, which the poet has written in such prose that he may have excelled but which cannot be forgotten. In this book written for children (to-day used as a textbook in some American

schools) he celebrates the prowess of an ass, but not after the manner of Apuleius and those writers of fables, or Hugo, Claudel, Barrès, Jammes . . . here the poet consecrates himself to *Platero*, offering him his style, his tender tones, and in the hollow of his hand, like a small morsel, he proffers a new image—that charming conquest of the modern spirit.

The poet talks to the ass, caressing him, protecting him, leading him away from the general dull incomprehension that surrounds him, drawing him with kindly tones that do not resemble the brotherly Franciscan tones, but wholly paternal and protective—of a master to his servant.

The poet talks to *Platero* (the carnival scene rousing memories of the blanket-tossing of Sancho, and of that other scene: "Neither he nor I know anything of worries of mockeries").

Yes, the poet talks to the ass just as Don Quixote talks to Sancho . . . and also like the clown to his mate.

This book should be known more widely because it teaches one to love—from whose pages only God is missing, because He stayed "in His crystal Palace." But *Platero* has died, and is now in a "heavenly meadow"; do not let us forget him, especially when we know that a bearded French poet, who seems to visualise him beyond the Pyrenees, prays humbly for him and for us.

After the manner of the first symbolists who revived popular poetry with their lyrical sentiment, essentially evocative and sympathetic—Juan Ramon Jimenez and Machado have oriented the modern lyric back towards its origin—legitimately Spanish, mediæval, and popular poetry, which has usually shown traces of foreign influences of a later date.

Antonio Machado is a poet—"perfectly serious." His volume of *Poesias completas* in its tone of austerity leaves the tang of that hard, drab, bitter impression evoked by the country of Castile. His brother Manuel is less of a purist, and does not rise to the same heights owing to his having diffused his elegant and graceful form. As a poet he gives us

the result of his facile and masterly artistry in one short volume that he now desires to close with, *Ars Moriede*.

If we find the excellent work of Machado all too brief, the same is to be said of Gabriel Alomar, the fiery and powerful spirit who produced *Verba*; of Enrique de Mesa, enamoured of the spirit of the sierras of Castile; of M. Abril, Enrique Diez Canedo, "modern humanist," whose work we must pause to consider, for not only is he a calm critic of true values, orienting with subtle distinction, the faulty or incipient; but his name should be mentioned before any other when an occasion such as the present arises, and one's objective is an international literary relation.

One's gratitude goes to the man who with a fine gesture sets aside the refined poet and gives himself to essays, critiques, and translations, with which he has largely contributed to widen the knowledge of modern foreign literature.

The masters are of especial interest in this study, but none more so than the respected Mendez Pidal, Altamira, and Cossio, those who in spite of being masters are also young. One of these is José Ortega Gasset, who represents the ideal type of the clever lecturer, facile and charming—Bergsonian, capable of expounding his learned philosophical meditations with a delicate understanding, being not only a thinker, but more especially an orator, in his relation to public life; and often in his speeches, leaving the deep and intimate vein of speculation, he projects himself along the line of his oration to the subtlest heights, and the spectator, carried away by the spectacle, obtains an effect graceful, agile, baroque; not to be confounded with the ivory hardness of the stone.

In the latest editions of his philosophical essays he has engraved the silhouette of a primitive archer—well, then! Among my readers there is one perhaps able to handle the bow and arrow—who has not resisted the temptation at times of firing wide of the mark—sending his shaft into the blue and sensing the keenest delight in simply watching it rush through the air—he will grasp my meaning. Ortega has no need of

penetrating, and when he does so it is with the first shaft, negligently as it were—usually he prefers to indicate the direction merely by a graceful *estela* that, responding to attraction, goes speeding on its way, drawn by different forces.

Another is Ramon Perez de Ayala, who cultivates a taste for that rather disconcerting bitter-sweet flavour found in the apples of his native country—Asturias.

This strong spirit, critical, keen, pointed at times, like Clarin, has obtained a unanimous consensus of opinion in the classification of his talent. Ayala is admittedly an intellectual. He is gifted with keenest perception and a masterly style in the elaboration of literature; this is conceded, but he is supposed to lack sensibility, cordiality, tenderness, simply because he does not reveal these qualities *volontiers*. Still, we believe that this defensive and aggressive attitude is too marked, adopted purely to conceal the exquisite sensitiveness of a deeply tender nature that prefers to remain hidden and beyond reach. The bitter irony cultivated by the Spanish, English, and some French classical writers, like Anatole France, who used it to conceal the pure, fresh emotions of his first strong and healthy poetry, seems to preserve them from giving that drop of blood that the public craves but does not deserve. It is far better to inspire timid admiration than morbid or careless pity, determinately.

The title *Las Máscaras*, given by Ayala to his critiques of the theatre, might be applied, perhaps, to all his productions.

We should like to ask, as in the case of Cervantes, "Does he suffer with his hero?" or "Does he laugh, bitter and sceptical, with the reader?" Because when this disciple of Galdos creates personages in his novels he does it after the grotesque, exaggerated, caricatured style of the satirists and moralists. Thus he has written in his last work—*Belarmino and Apolonio*—which is a model of rich language, involved, of subtle ideology.

Among the humorists who have distinguished themselves are: Julio Camba, Fernandez Flores, Bello, and Ramon

Gomez de la Serna, who is also the one who especially has contributed in Spain to the acceptance of modern art and helped to extend the new spirit of the time; owing to his being a seasoned wrestler of the newspaper world and café this genial writer was able, a few years ago, to begin a living campaign in which he has triumphed.

We are now able to appreciate the changes his work brought about, now that the war is over and we see the producers of so many isms—contending factors too late to establish themselves, without harming one another by imitation.

We must bear in mind that this writer, isolated and without preparation, anticipated the situation, scattering elements analogous to those that in France were to provoke the success of poets like Apollinaire, Morand, Giraudoux, Cocteau, Cendrars—so intensely modern did he show himself at a given moment that he might have endangered his continued advancement, but without losing his place he continues to keep abreast with the tide.

Ramon Gomez de la Serna was the first to introduce rare and unexpected analogy—and in this has been compared to Jules Renard—but this likeness is too obvious. Rimbaud is the writer to whom he is more truly related on account of his mission and his innate taste. With his formula *la Gregeria* he revealed a new point of view from which, with his keenness for something more than a "one-dimensional view," he endeavoured to give new impressions that, spontaneous in themselves, should appear involved to the spectator until he found the right focus with the writer.

His formula is a true vehicle of expression—for it presents not only the thing in itself from a new angle but also its true reflection—altered; elevated, open to a state of being, unrevealed, but essential and permanent.

Hence the author does not create, he invents, discovering, finding new and unsuspected psychological aspects that may be disconcerting in their newness, but affect us as possible and probable.

Here one observes an original, intuitive temperament whose self-expression appears to us to contain many possibilities (like many secular beliefs—Freudian hypothesis). They say he works all night during long continuous hours, without rest of any kind, and it appears that at times, having fallen asleep, he continues writing—penning, like a somnambulist revealing, entranced; producing strange flashes of light out of the darkness, and incoherent, fleeting glimpses, illogical, but rising out of the reality of the unconscious.

Thus, in one of his recent books—*El Doctor Inverosimil*—it would be interesting to discover what there can be of verisimilitude in this arbitrary, amusing doctor who constantly demolishes with absurdities truths beyond the proof of reason, leaving us disquieted and vexed.

The author also reveals himself far more in this book than in *Disparates y Caprichos* with the gesture of the moralist who wishes to free us from the physical and mental mould that destroys us; and like a true descendant of the Spanish line of Goya, and more especially of Quevedo, for whom apologies were made during his life as being an "apprentice and the counterpart of the atheistic painter, Geronimo el Bosco."

We will now mention two defects attributed to this writer, characteristic of his genial personality, therefore good qualities rather, or as Duhamel would say, "les défauts des qualités." Too prolific—his style. Just as one finds writers who never synthesise, not because such a thing is impossible, but simply because, as the phrase goes, "I have not had the time to make it shorter," there are others, whose exuberant geniality is of such a nature that in spite of prolix minuteness it is difficult to say exactly what is expressed too abundantly and yet appears lacking.

This happens with Proust and with our author and with all those who strive "to tell it all," without first thinking whether "to tell it all is to say nothing."

In these cases of excessive temperament the choice is difficult, but previous auto-selection impossible, or so formid-

able that we should prefer the whole work. As for his style—he has been reproached for carelessness and vulgarity—it suits his work, therefore it is good.

Ingres used to say that there was no such thing as a correct or incorrect drawing—but simply good or bad.

Our author needs the ready word, new, rare; when he cannot find it, he abuses the word *thing* to designate something newly discovered. And he accumulates analogous and distinct words to give weight to an idea (something after the style of Péguy and Amiel), and with it gives flavour and colour to his effort. His style is a strong condiment, Spanish, good in form, that incites, seasoning, the image that the French cuisine suavely introduces. A well-known judge of our letters, Valéry Larbaud, whose opinion of these caused surprise in Spain on account of their finesse, as, for example, when he said: "Gabriel Miró est avec Ramon Gomez de la Serna et Juan Ramon Jimenez les plus remarquables poètes espagnols." To-day he says that these three have impressed the Spanish language and literature to the extent that J. Joyce has the Irish. This is so true that we can only add that perhaps the alteration effected has not been as sudden in Spain, where syntax had undergone modifications in the time of Góngora Quevedo or Gracian, and was changed in construction very completely by the moderns.

Those we have mentioned—Azorin, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Valle Inclan, Miró—re-created it immediately after.

Gabriel Miró unites in his style the vivifying teaching of symbolism raised upon the classic foundation of our best writers of prose—the mystics.

He reflects in those mist-like images he evokes, created like those of Azorin, on the Levantine coast, the desolation of those leperous lands, and the almond-blossom whiteness of his own provincial corner from whence he recently has sent us *Nuestro Padre San Daniel*.

Another young writer full of promise is Moreno Villa, author of *Evoluciones y Patrañas*; another is—but we must no longer

discuss the younger ones here, with the exception of one master whom we have intentionally left for the end, as we consider him a recent acquisition to Castilian literature. We speak of the Catalan philosopher, Eugenio d'Ors, famous monitor of the Novecentismo, who, adopting the Castilian tongue, has begun to write in it his new work. While d'Ors was known as a professor of philosophy, his *dæmon* (Xenius) was becoming famous by writing, year after year, his *Glosario*, in which, and in the capacity of a spectator (like Feijoo, Addison, Gourmont, Ortega, and Gasset), he culled the daily anecdote to give it a higher type, making of time eternity. This work is so natural in him that one realises that the man has the physical constitution of the glosser: a strong, upraised head, a veiled expression, a level, steadfast gaze profoundly absorbing—like a distant sea-line—a powerful skull and a brain that crushes out the last drop of juice, a small mouth, half closed, that through it may escape like a puff of smoke only the finished concept, synthesised, concrete, delicate—where "the indecisive to the precise may be united," leaving to the idea the distinction of subtle meanings. Around his work a topic has been formed: "d'Orsian serenity." But might not d'Orsian passion be discussed? Referring to Beethoven, A. Suarez says that "the man is wholly romantic, and his art wholly classical"; but we cannot say of d'Ors that he is romantic, because he endeavours, precisely, to control his impulse. Now then, if the fear of love is already love itself, the fear of passion is already passion, and this is what interests us in d'Ors. He loathes intoxication—he realises, fortunately, that he has not a strong head, and the vibration of passion obsesses him like original sin.

Now does this controlled passion, to retain clearness and not lose it in ideological speculations, give an impression of timidity? By no means: it gives the impression of culture, distinction, of an impetuous nature under control and repressed. His most interesting book has never been published, the intimate diary that lives between the lines of his *Glosario*.

And now the reader will say, what of the youths, the writers who are arriving—those of to-day? Of these I can tell you nothing. Little is known of them to-day, but much is expected; because they are the future. One would be obliged to prophesy, and, apart from the truth of the proverb that no man is a prophet in his own country, I content myself, like the monkey of our Quixote, with knowing a little of the past and of the present, because what is yet to happen, says Cervantes, not even the devil himself really knows.

August 1922.

THE NOBEL PRIZE AND BENAVENTE

THE concession of the Nobel Prize to Benavente caused surprise both abroad and within his own country. Abroad he is hardly known—here . . . scarcely more so, as he was passing at the time through a difficult period of transition. He has no completed expression—he is not definitely *placed*. When the Nobel Prize was granted to Echegaray, Benavente and his generation showed a marked hostility. To-day the generation preceding his looks upon the present award with a certain indifference to which his actual position contributes.

In his youth Benavente fought against the theatre as it then existed, and imposed himself upon it, triumphing for the moment; but later an adverse critical force (especially that of Ayala's), combined with his own decadence to remove him from popular favour, from power, and from his native land. . . . At the present moment we should be grateful that, thanks to him, foreign literary appreciation is directed to Spain, and offer homage to much that is of value in his work, without reviewing or criticising definitely.

When that is done we trust that the result may show, as in similar cases, that the best of his work is not precisely that part of it most highly eulogised by his admirers without discrimination: because those who do not admit defects are incapable of realising the true qualities of a work. His apologists cite, apropos of the renaissance effected by Benavente in the theatre, the names of Domay, Capus, Prevost, Lavedan. But assuredly the benefic influence attributed may be found in his previous studies of Oscar Wilde, Ibsen, Strindberg—and the classics; Molière, Musset, and, above all—Shakespeare (whose works he has translated almost in their entirety), rather than to having imported the *théâtre boulevardier*.

Then one may be able to judge the truest values of Benavente's work—whether it is the comedy of provincial customs, the cosmopolitan, the rural drama depicted, such as *Señora Ama*, or *La Malquerida* (enjoying a great vogue in the United States), or the satirical farce, *Los Intereses Creados* (translated and acted in a British prisoners' camp during the great war).

A. M.

(Translated by Mde S. A. Middleton.)

THE OBSEQUIES

By B. M. GOOLD-ADAMS

THE wind blew sheets of rain along the platform. The car was waiting. Of imposing size, with a good deal of glass, a nickel-plated vase that had never held flowers, an unused timepiece, it had been purchased from an income most of which had found its way annually into the pockets of bookmakers. On the right-hand side of the wide inside seat, the fawn corduroy cushions were pressed down into a flattened hollow, as though from some heavy, perpetual weight. Two years' dropsy had preceded the heart failure.

Wheels swished through puddles in the neglected drive; a lake was forming on the gravel sweep in front of the Priory. Above the door, the family arms on a dingy hatchment were being newly varnished by the damp. Over the peach-like bloom of the wet grass, a string of ducks, quacking mournfully, proceeded in the direction of the monks' fish-ponds.

In the low-raftered hall the deaf mute sat beside a hissing acrid smoking wood fire, scarcely visible, apathetic, red-eyed, holding a shivering griffon on her knees.

Millicent passed. The cleanly starched nurse, tired, but with thinly firm lips, wafted an atmosphere of disinfectant as she leant across the library tea-table to help herself to more cake. Stout, flushed, with untidy iron-grey hair, Mrs. Merton, in black voile blouse and a skirt too tight for her fifty-five years, held a steaming tumbler of whisky and soda; and was unrecognisable as the original of the photograph of a pretty girl in a sailor jumper, in a tarnished silver frame on the writing-table.

The family solicitor had not arrived, and for the first time in thirty years entire authority of decision rested with her. It had taken nearly forty-eight hours for this idea to penetrate. Her unstable arrangements for the funeral had to be placed before Mr. Filey. She did not miss her husband. They had quarrelled noisily and perpetually, and had disliked being away from each other. She still possessed the well-formed legs and ankles which had originally attracted Mr. Merton, and to the end he was proud of them as against all competition from younger women. He held himself no poor judge. His son, returning six weeks later, found foreign post cards by the dozen, which justified this claim.

The new mistress of the Priory had not yet recovered from the shock of Saturday's telegram. She began to cry as she kissed her mother-in-law, who said: "Dear, dear, Millicent, you really ought not to have come."

The air on the staircase was heavy with the semi-darkness of two days' drawn blinds, the wide landing outside the locked door scarcely lit by a night-light on a chair. Shadows swayed with the splash of rain. Through the baize door ajar at the top of the back stairs, faintly came the rattle of crockery and an echo of laughter, from the servants' quarters. A song which the gramophone had ground out night after night in the hall, her previous visit, rang persistently in the daughter-in-law's head:

"Every evening I am seen
Walking with my Angeline,
She's the girl I i—do—lise,
For she's got such dreamy eyes."

She heard the nurse say: "You would like to see him for your husband's sake. I think, if you feel up to it, you had better do so to-day. You see he died early Saturday morning, and in these cases it is always advisable to screw down the coffin early." She added that Mrs. Merton had been very difficult after the death; she had refused to allow the body to be touched for some hours, there had been a great deal of

trouble in bandaging the knees down and getting things done. Everything considered, he really looked very well now.

There were daffodils and narcissi on the dressing-table and on the mantelpiece among photograph frames; arum lilies and three small bunches of violets on the sheet which covered the rigid outline on the wide brass bed. The persistent odour of burning cresoline caught her nostrils and throat. Two candles smouldered in china candlesticks. The nurse lit the gas and blew out the candles.

She turned the sheet back. The heavy face with stubbly moustache had gained in dignity. It struck Millicent that it had a remote resemblance to her baby son. A sudden pity for its being kept thus behind a locked door smote on her. She bent down and kissed the swollen forehead; realising shiveringly, by its chill, the sentimental futility of her act.

Mr. Filey arrived at nine-thirty. Remembering swift and untrustworthy variations in the Priory cooking, he had decided to dine in town, and charge it to travelling expenses. Bald, kindly, forty-five, patient, except when suffering as at present from a slight indigestion, he unwound a wool comforter, and as a caterpillar emerging from its cocoon, disembarrassed himself from two travelling coats. He replaced in his attaché-case a paper-backed edition of *His Excellency the Governor*, with which he had been struggling during the last hour of his journey. In it the part of the Colonial Secretary had been heavily underscored. He knew that he would look the rôle, but that dignity of bearing, even on the amateur stage, could not atone for more than a certain number of lapses of memory. He was missing two rehearsals at least through his present visit. Saturday—Monday—Wednesday—if the funeral were to take place on Wednesday—

Later in the evening it became obvious that the funeral would not take place on Wednesday. Mrs. Merton had not made up her mind whether to deposit Henry in Holiwell Churchyard, where many of the Mertons had been buried, or the family vault at Saffron-le-Change, eleven miles distant.

Whichever it was, it involved her future burying-place. Saffron-le-Change would mean delay, application would have to be made to, and permission received from, the Home Office, before the vault, closed some years previously, could be reopened. Mr. Filey urged Holiwell. The vault was full—was known to be full—had been closed because it was full. Mrs. Merton left the library to stop the whimpering of her youngest son's fox terrier tied on the landing. The nurse abruptly insisted on the necessity for a leaden shell within the next twenty-four hours, whatever was decided upon.

Against this unnecessary expenditure, of no interest from the point of view of his firm, Mr. Filey took a resolute stand, on the grounds of extravagance. Moreover, the flower of England's manhood was in khaki and all lead was needed for other and more important purposes. His opponent went into details with the accuracy which had secured her recommendation from the Cavendish Square specialist, and rising to her feet expressed her willingness to conduct him to the death-chamber, so that he might there judge for himself. Mr. Filey said that he would take her word for it, and she might telephone to the undertaker the next morning as soon as the establishment was open.

By the next day the odour of cresoline had passed through the locked door. One noticed it on the landing. A white mist lay over the grounds, a shroud through which no noise from the outer world could penetrate. Silence, broken only by a sudden outburst of voices in which Mrs. Merton's dominated, or by a strange female, with clinking pail and crushed bonnet, who was scrubbing down interminable back stairs and stone passages.

A stylish young woman in black, from Palmer & Yarvell, the principal ladies' outfitters in Casterham, occupied the dusty little boudoir during part of the morning, sipping sherry and crumbling seed-cake, as she fitted the maid-servants with ready-made mourning, and measured Mrs. Merton and her deaf daughter. On her knees, amidst scattered pins

and back numbers of the *Delineator*, she advocated a skirt ten inches off the ground and five yards round the hem, as the last number of *Vogue* showed that they were wearing in Paris. Millicent escaped to the library, and found *The Garden of the Soul* strangely comfortless. Mr. Filey had taken charge of the dead man's keys, and was going through the contents of the writing-table.

"I suppose Mrs. Merton will not alter her mind again regarding Thursday? . . . It is absolutely necessary for me to be back in the office by Friday morning at latest. . . . You must find it very monotonous here with this detestable weather. . . . You are looking a little depressed to-day. . . . I wish I could take you to a cinema."

The smell of cresoline descended from the landing.

Afternoon brought the Vicar, prepared to rearrange his engagements round the date and hour of the funeral. He was worried at not having been called to the bedside. An Italian iron crucifix on a side-table in the library had for many months encouraged him to believe that something might have been done professionally for the late squire, had a favourable opportunity arisen for touching on such matters. It had not. He expressed his willingness to hold a special celebration of Holy Communion for the bereaved household at eight o'clock on the following morning; and suggested that any guests staying under the Priory roof should also be invited to attend. Mrs. Merton had been interrupted in the midst of voluble reminiscences. The milliner had brought up an assortment of widows' bonnets on approval, from Palmer & Yarvell. She said that there was so much to be done between then and Thursday that she was afraid that no one from the Priory would have time to go. Her husband had always been the best of men, truly religious, though he had not had as much time as some other people for thinking about spiritual things. The Vicar left before sherry and seed-cake arrived.

A leaden shell was delivered at eight that evening. Little

light glinted from badly cleaned silver and tarnished frames of indifferent family portraits in the dining-room. It had caught something of the atmosphere of the room above, across whose floor heavy footsteps were heard moving to and fro, punctuated by lighter, quicker ones of the nurse. Some hours previously a fire had been lit up there, to heat the requisites for soldering the lead. There was an unpleasant ringing in the daughter-in-law's ears—Mr. Filey, as he pushed away his cutlet and drained his second glass of wine, faded momentarily from her vision, then reappeared again. The deaf-mute, conscious of something amiss, stopped eating. Her anxious eyes moved from Millicent's to the solicitor's face. Mrs. Merton helped herself for the second time to mashed potatoes. The chink of the spoon and a further creaking overhead occurred almost simultaneously. The daughter-in-law again found the room filled with mist.

"It is outrageous," said Mrs. Merton suddenly, a piece of mutton poised on her fork, "that Ford should send his men at this hour. Nurse's dinner will be cold. What is the matter with your cutlet, Millicent? Don't you like them? Well, well, Mr. Filey, it's what must come to all of us, when all's said and done. Only sixty-three. Still, one might say, quite a young man."

Light and time surged together for Millicent and disappeared. Later she realised that she was lying on the hall sofa. The nurse was rubbing her feet. The local doctor stood between lamp and fire, putting a hypodermic syringe into its case.

"People who are invalids have no business to turn up uninvited in other people's houses, and collapse on their hands at a time like this," remarked Mrs. Merton's voice with justice, from somewhere near the stairs. "Had you finished your dinner, Doctor, when nurse telephoned? Are you sure you won't have some ham and a glass of claret?"

The funeral was to leave the Priory at two-thirty on Thursday. Question of reopening the Saffron-le-Change vault had been waived, but the interment was to take place there in

the churchyard. Colour and scent splashed into the hall all day Wednesday. Wreath after wreath arrived, and the shining elm box in the upstairs room was almost wholly hidden beneath tuberose, violets, gardenias, and lilac. The car took Millicent to the florists in Casterham after lunch. The rain had stopped, a west wind was blowing, there were glimpses of blue between drifting spring clouds. She ordered a wreath of yellow tulips, instead of the cross of carnations and arum lilies that had seemed appropriate at an earlier hour.

Thursday morning the car travelled, at irregular intervals, between the house and the station. John Merton, late of the Indian Civil Service, small, dapper, with grey moustache, bearing his sixty-odd years with dignified precision, arrived earliest. He had come down overnight from the home he shared with a spinster sister in Northumberland. He had cordially disliked his late cousin. His feeling towards the widow was even more positive. But respect for his own family made it correct for him to attend the funeral of its head.

That the younger Mrs. Merton, whom he had not previously met, was anæmic-looking and had little conversational ability, was of small moment to him once he discovered that her voice and manner belonged to that social stratum from which the deceased, had he possessed a sense of what was due to those who bore his name, should have chosen his wife. The old man conducted her to the drawing-room on the pretext of reinspecting woolwork executed by his grandmother, there to impress her with the fact that from now onwards she had the right to style herself "Mrs. Merton." "Charles" should be omitted from the visiting cards she would doubtless order on her return home. What the order of precedence at the funeral would be, as far as she and her sister-in-law were concerned, he could not tell her. But she must insist on her right to a seat in the first carriage behind the hearse. Millicent handed him over to Daniel Merton, naval lieutenant, who entered at that moment, bearing with bored decorum a floral

cross and a Jaeger travelling rug. She then went upstairs to tack a clean white collar into her black dress.

At one o'clock, eighteen people lunched in the dining-room. Mr. Filey, and Ford the undertaker, had difficulty in impressing Mrs. Merton with the unsuitability of presiding over the party in person. She insisted that her husband would have considered her absence a failure in hospitality. She also had to be reassured that etiquette presupposed her daughter-in-law too incapacitated by grief to make a public appearance until the arrival of the hearse, before consenting to cold salmon, veal pie, and whisky and soda, on a tray in her boudoir at a quarter-past one. The younger woman, agitated and neuralgic, ordered tea and biscuits in her room for the same hour. Two o'clock had struck before an apologetic housemaid appeared with black coffee, three éclairs, and a macaroon.

A quarter-past two. Millicent tied a veil over her heavy crape hat and slowly struggled with a new pair of suède gloves. Her knees shook a little. She glanced at her trunk, which was packed and ready for departure that evening. Murmur of voices and hurrying footsteps on the landing, then an abrupt knock and summons for her. Half-way downstairs the interior of the library was visible, filled with the lunchers talking and smoking. The dead man's felt slippers still lay beside the couch on which painted little Mrs. Heath, the doctor's wife, sat, her knees crossed, a cigarette between her lips. The old brown sherry for which the cellar was noted had not made its appearance on the luncheon-table, Mr. Ford having announced that white wine was the only kind permissible on these melancholy occasions. Sir William Burney, who had come down from town, counting on the excellent liquor the house usually offered as the one thing likely to make a distasteful day bearable, emerged to greet his daughter, coffee-cup in hand, in a state of overfed irritability, expressing doubts as to whether his sciatica would after all permit his attendance at the church.

There was a sudden movement amongst servants grouped

at the foot of the stairs. The drawing-room door opened and the shining elm box was borne through it on six men's shoulders. It was carried out under the Merton hatchment. The hall was crowded. Smouldering fire and the shabby pair of slippers in the library showed suddenly deserted through the doorway up the first flight of stairs.

"Mr. Ford," said Mrs. Merton, who had acquired a tone of excessive formality with her swathings of crape, "does Mrs. Charles accompany me, or go in the second carriage?"

"Your daughter only with you, Mrs. Merton," was the reply. "First carriage, Mrs. and Miss Merton. Second carriage, Mrs. Charles Merton, Mr. John Merton, Lieutenant Merton, Mr. Filey. Third carriage——" The spring afternoon reeked of petrol as the enumerated scrambled, according to precedence, into motor broughams, which then, cutting the damp gravel, moved slowly behind the hearse.

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out——"; the tolling bell had stopped, the bald-headed clergyman, clutching his flapping surplice, preceded, book in hand, the six staggering men, with their flower-decked load, up the narrow pathway to the Norman porch. The dark church seemed full. "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, seeing that is past as a watch in the night——" Small boys in the choir eyed the black-robed figures in front pews curiously. The straw-stuffed hassocks were uncomfortable to kneel on. Someone just behind was sucking a lozenge which smelt of eucalyptus. Sunlight fell through a saint's robe in a high window. It stained the white blossoms on the coffin with patches of red and blue.

"So also is the resurrection——" A general movement. Down the nave faces of old women peered at the mourners. Men shielded their silk hats as bodies jostled against them and feet shuffled over the flag-stones out into the churchyard.

Over earth piled high, the widow's veil fluttered. Beside her the deaf girl cried, with bowed head. The coffin-handles

clicked. There was a creaking and a straining of ropes. A handful of gravel rattled on the brass inscription plate. The crowd pressed closer to the grave's edge. The daughter-in-law abruptly turned her back to it. There was clean primrose light in the sky, as on Easter Day five years before, when the Vicar had stopped her at the gate: "Miss Burney, Mr. Merton is choosing a new family burial plot. Forgive me for delaying you, but you will now naturally feel a personal interest in the matter——"

"and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us——"

"Over?" said Sir William. "Tell that fellow I'll give him an extra half-crown if he can get to the station in time for the 5.18."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

By T. S. ELIOT

THE death and the funeral of Sarah Bernhardt are events important not so much because of the loss of a great actress as because they mark the termination of an epoch. The epoch was already over, but Bernhardt's death gave, as we had known for years that it would give, the official date for the "Closing of the Theatres." It is a commonplace that in France the theatre has been, up to and into our time, far more nearly the public institution which the theatre should be than in any other country; and Bernhardt represented for the world outside of France, and finally for France itself, the genius of the French stage. As long as Bernhardt was alive we were not forced to admit that the traditional French theatre was a survival. The Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, (though it could hardly be called a revolutionary enterprise) and other theatres of the same tendency, were obviously a sign of dissatisfaction within the heart of Paris itself—a city more than any other loyal to its institutions. And last year M. Cocteau was saying:

Le cirque, le music-hall, le cinématographe et ces entreprises qui, depuis Serge de Diaghilew, mettent de puissants véhicules aux mains des jeunes, autant de forces qui conspirent, sans même connaître leur entente, contre ce que le théâtre est devenu, savoir: un vieil album de photographies.

Such statements will shortly be incontestable. I doubt

whether the funeral of any other representative of the nineteenth century stage will be the event that Bernhardt's was.

We may still, no doubt, take a certain pleasure in the Guitrys, especially if we have the prudence to see them in London rather than in Paris. They will always be interesting here if only because they demonstrate the extraordinary clumsiness of English actors who imitate them. Even so the collapse is imminent. If there must be telephoning on the stage, Lucien and Sacha Guitry know how to do it better than anybody, and they are only in London for a short season now and then; but the spectacle of Seymour Hicks telephoning for months on end is enough to discredit the use of that instrument altogether.

The chaos of the modern stage is a chaos of styles of acting as much as of types of play. One interesting accident of the Phoenix Society performances—and I say it without reproach to that wholly commendable enterprise—is the way in which they bring to light this histrionic anarchy. The Society presents plays most of which have never been performed within living memory, and plays of so remote a time that we have only the vaguest notion of the style of acting then in practice. We do not know exactly what kind of acting the playwright had in mind when he wrote, or what appealed to the contemporary audience. The play remains, but the Elizabethan theatre is gone for ever; we know as little about it as we do about stained glass work. The actors in the Phoenix Society, therefore, have all the same handicap. They are good actors, representative of the best of the English stage to-day; they have been acting separately and in plays of different kinds during the week. Furthermore, there is not time, in the preparation of a play to be performed only twice, for the actors to be all drilled into carrying out the conception of one person. So we get treatments of different parts in the same piece, in different and sometimes incompatible manners. I have in mind, in the excellent production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, the brilliant work of Ion Swinley and Michael Sherbrooke.

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The latter (in spite of his Potash and Perlmutter delivery) was one of the best realistic villains I have ever seen: radiating simple energy of evil over the whole stage. Michael Sherbrooke was not an actor, he was an illusionist; it was Ford's personage in the flesh. Ion Swinley, on the other hand, is always an actor; he makes himself into a figure, a marionette; his acting is abstract and simplified. The two men, on the same stage, were beings from different worlds, could not combine in any common action.

So inchoate is the theatre, which, if realised, would be the theatre of our generation, that we can only guess at the scheme of what we grope for by inference from our perceptions, from observation of any instant on the stage which has aroused an hitherto dormant feeling. Mr. Swinley, I feel, with his mask-like beauty, belongs to this unrealised stage; at the same moment I regret that he has not had the training in movement and gesture—the only training in movement and gesture—the training of ballet. For his physical type is not dissimilar to that of Leonid Massine, who seems to me the greatest actor whom we have in London. Massine, the most completely unhuman, impersonal, abstract, belongs to the future stage. Swinley's face and his pose are at war with the conventional school of acting in which (I presume) he was trained; and the difference between the conventional gesture of the ordinary stage, which is supposed to *express* emotion, and the abstract gesture of Massine, which *symbolises* emotion, is enormous. The former is usually untrue, and always monotonous: the movements of an able and intelligent actor, Mr. Basil Holloway, illustrate this monotony. The realism of the ordinary stage is something to which we can no longer respond, because to us it is no longer realistic. We know now that the gesture of daily existence is inadequate for the stage; instead of pretending that the stage gesture is a copy of reality, let us adopt a literal untruth, a thorough-going convention, a ritual. For the stage—not only in its remote origins, but always—is a ritual, and the failure of the contemporary stage to satisfy

the craving for ritual is one of the reasons why it is not a living art.

(In the cinema, which has perpetuated and exaggerated the most threadbare devices of stage expression, the failure is most apparent. It is a delusion of cinema producers, apparently, that the film, merely because it is a series of photographs, is a realistic medium. The egregious merit of Chaplin is that he has escaped in his own way from the realism of the cinema and invented a *rhythm*. Of course the unexplored opportunities of the cinema for eluding realism must be very great.)

The contrast made by Massine, after an hour of the tinned, preserved, and cold-stored humour of a New York revue, is a reminder that there is life, as well as machinery. The New York revue, *You'd be Surprised*, if this is a fair specimen, must be something which never had life at all; and I would prefer to emphasise the contrast between the art of Massine and the art of other actors which was living for its time. The art of acting is obviously not one thing for all time any more (but rather less) than other arts; the art of every actor is in relation to his own age, and would perhaps be unintelligible to any other. But as the age is not an instant, but an indefinite span of time including part of both past and future, we can still, with our retrospective selves, appreciate such acting as that of Bernhardt, though we move toward satisfaction in the direction in which moves Leonid Massine.

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FOREIGN REVIEWS

FRENCH PERIODICALS

La Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 fév.—A polemic by M. Jules Romains on the subject of "La Vision Extra-Rétinienne." Short prose anecdotes "Passantes," by M. Eugène Marsan. "Aimer," disait-elle, "aimer, c'est être heureuse de dormir avec lui, de regarder sur sa bouche le souffle de sa vie et d'en être émue soudain jusqu'au voile de larmes." "Quand il m'a su grosse, il est parti." "J'avais la manie de la comparer à la Comtesse Valdegrave." "Patiences," by M. Odilon-Jean Perier, poems. M. Rivière continues his "Alain Fournier," and M. François Mauriac (an able novelist) his "La Fleuve de Feu." M. Thibaudet discourses upon "Courants d'Idées," and the reviews are as usual excellent, especially those by MM. Charles du Bos, Valéry Larbaud, Schlumberger, and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle.

(The number of the *N.R.F.* devoted to Marcel Proust will be noticed separately.)

Mercur de France, 1 jan.—"Léon Bloy," by Adolphe Retté. M. Retté is a minor Symboliste converted to Catholicism; his view of Bloy is of course very favourable. Poems by M. Jacques Dyssord, who appears to have read Laforgue:

"Le mauvais larron verse à boire
À Madeleine qui ne sait
—Et ne veut savoir—que la gloire
Gonflant le busc de son corset."

A long, interesting, and well-informed article on "Les Procès de Sorcellerie," containing many curious facts, by M. Maurice Garçon.

15 jan.—Continuation of "Les Procès de Sorcellerie." A curious political article on the death of Childers, accusing Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, a minor poet and Minister of Propaganda of the Irish Free State, of being guilty of Childers's death. The article is the usual Anglophobe outburst. "Gustave Moreau et Henri Evenepol," by Édouard Michel. An article on Blok by Madame Z. Hippus.

1 fév.—"Francis Viélé-Griffin"—the Franco-American Symboliste—

FOREIGN REVIEWS

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by M. Jean de Cours. A rather foolish Bacon-Shakespeare article. Poems by M. André Spire. "La Maison de Canova," by M. Boyer d'Agen.

15 fév.—"Sagesses Occulte de l'Orient," by Dmitri Merejkowsky. "J. H. Fabre, Darwin, Gourmont . . . et quelques autres," by M. Marcel Coulon, who has written considerably on Remy de Gourmont, and is the compiler of an excellent Gourmont anthology. M. Ernest Raynaud, who has constituted himself the historian of Symbolisme by his three volumes of "La Mêlée Symboliste," writes "Souvenirs de Police"—amusing retrospective gossip. Madame Rachilde begins a new novel, "La Château des Deux Amants."

La Revue Musicale, 1 déc.—Number largely devoted to César Franck. "Les Œuvres inédites de César Franck," by Julien Tiersot. "César Franck pendant le Siège de Paris," by Henri Duparc. "Sur Quelques Caractères de l'Influence Franckiste," by André Schaeffner. Notes and reviews, portrait of Rimsky-Korsakov; musical supplement, "Trois Compositions inédites pour chant de César Franck."

1 jan.—An interesting number containing "La Musique dans l'Œuvre de Marcel Proust," by André Cœuroy. "L'Opéra Italien à Bruxelles de 1650 à 1750," by Henri Liebrecht. "Les Ancêtres de Grétry," with a reproduction of Greuze's portrait of Grétry. "Paul Dupin," by Charles Hoechlin, with musical supplement, "Une Mélodie inédite de Paul Dupin." This periodical is skilfully edited and its foreign notes are good.

Les Marges, 15 jan.—Twentieth anniversary of M. Montfort's little periodical. "Le Vers de Jules Laforgue," by M. Jean de Lassus. "Un correspondant de Huysmans," by René Martineau, friend and "fidei defensor" of Léon Bloy. "Les Goncourts Aquafortistes," by M. Édouard Deverin. Good reviews.

15 fév.—The page from old French literature prefaced to each number of *Les Marges* is nearly always interesting. In this number Jean le Houx's "Chanson" is pleasant. Most of the number is occupied by the replies to an "enquête" relative to the liberty of the press in France, arising out of M. Victor Margueritte's little misunderstanding with the council of the Légion d'Honneur over "La Garçonne." Sixty-four people replied. The enquête is a journalistic device which seems very remote from literature. The same number contains poems by M. Tristan Klingsor.

Revue de l'Amérique Latine, 1 fév.—Enquête: "L'Amérique et le bonheur du Genre Humain." "La Poésie mexicaine actuelle," by Guillermo Jimenez, informs us that the "six great gods" of Mexican

poetry are: Guterrez Najera and Manuel José Othon (dead), Diaz Miron, Amado Nervo, Luis G. Urbina, and Enrique Gonzalez Martinez. "Images Sud-Américaines," by Renée Franchon. "Un Gentilhomme Pirate" (Sir Francis Drake), by Ricardo Fernandez Guardia, and a poem by Pedro Prado, "Les Oiseaux errants"; both translated from the Spanish.

Les Cahiers Idéalistes, 1 fév.—"Un Scandale Littéraire," by Édouard Dujardin, containing unpublished letters of Mallarmé, Jarry, Pergaud, Maeterlinck, and Mm. Gide and Pierre Louÿs. An article on Samuel Butler and Evolution by Dominique Braga. Short articles on the Hellenist, Louis Ménard, by Georges Jamati, and on the revival of the psychological novel by Marcel Arland.

La Vie des Lettres.—"La Renommée de Verlaine," by M. Marcel Coulon.

"Le Mouton Blanc," ode by Jules Romains; "La Doctrine du Mouton Blanc," by Jean Hytier (Rédacteur en chef of this new periodical). No. 3 contains "Le Chant du Verrier," by M. Georges Chennevière, one of the least displeasing of the old so-called Unanimiste group.

R. A.

GERMAN PERIODICALS

Die Neue Rundschau, December 1922. The chief literary contributions to this number are a series of quaint and delightful tales translated by Hermann Hesse from the Latin *Dialogus miraculorum*, written by Cæsarius von Heisterbach in the second decade of the thirteenth century and a translation of an old Russian legend, by Alexei Remisow called *The Journeying of the Mother of God through the Kingdom of Torments*. These and the translation of a "pious poem" from the old French:

Quant li solleiz converset en leon . . .

in the December number of the *Neue Merkur* are among the many signs that the Germans, in the midst of material disaster, are harking back to an earlier, simpler and more spiritual time, or, as Hermann Hesse puts it, men of culture, in the present barbaric state of Europe, may well look back upon and beyond the Middle Ages—the blossoming-time of Christianity in Europe—as to a lost Paradise. Otto Zarek has an article, in metaphysical language, on "Walt Whitman and German Poetry." Much of his argument he builds on the notion that the United States are democratic. We should like to hear on this the opinion of the ten men who at the present moment lie in a Californian jail, for having testified, as witnesses in an American court of law, that

they were members of a socialist organisation (persons who were not members were not allowed to give evidence), and that that organisation did not advocate violence.

Der Neue Merkur, December 1922.—The most interesting contribution to this number is a story by Hans Siemsen, "Die Geschichte meines Bruders," which goes to show that German can be written with the simplicity of form and the subtlety of content that distinguish Anatole France's prose. To one who daily endures the tortures and unravels the twists of the attempts of German professors to appear profound, this story comes like a release from oppression. Friedrich Purschell, in "Deutschland," laments the fact that there is no real Germany, no definite German point of view, and no characteristically German *état d'âme*. The style of certain notes and articles in this number of the *Merkur*, as well as in the *Neue Rundschau*, prompts the suggestion that, if German writers were to endeavour to enter into the tradition of European prose, the melody and harmony of the German *soul* might have some chance of being delivered from the mass of *accidentals* and the tortuous counterpoint that smother both.

T.-F.

AMERICAN PERIODICALS

The Dial, vol. lxxiv, no. 1, January, 1923:

"Charles Dickens," by Stefan Zweig. This essay, which is translated from the German, provides us with an experience that is always salutary—the fresh views of a detached foreigner on a subject about which most of us have definitely crystallised opinions. It is a long essay, not free from a certain amount of diffuseness and repetition. And Herr Zweig suffers from the usual continental delusion that England is a land of perpetual fog; "this dull grey," "this dull mass of clouds," "the leaden semi-darkness" are a few of his denigrations of England's green and pleasant land. He bases a good deal on this assumption, adopting the facile theory that climatic environment determines in some way the nature of genius. If climate had anything to do with the question, it would be more appropriate to expect a reaction; but Herr Zweig calls us "the world's most unpoetic nation," which is letting the theory run away with his critical judgment. And literary criticism that falls back on generalisations about nationalities is liable to end in nothing but resounding nonsense. There is only one kind of intelligence, and it is quite unrelated to the provenance of its manifestations. "For us who are not English," says Herr Zweig, "his work is too full of moralising." But it is not only for the "not English" that Dickens's work is too full of moralising: this is a platitude that any intelligent Englishman might utter. In this respect, indeed,

Herr Zweig lives in a very delicate glasshouse: his recent book on Romain Rolland being a crude case of special pleading in the interest of a particular code of ethics.

However, Herr Zweig's general fallacies do not hinder him in making detailed remarks of considerable interest. The following sentences may be quoted:

"When a literary product has such an enormously powerful effect, extending equally in breadth and profundity, this can have resulted solely from the union of two forces customarily in conflict—from the identification of a man of genius with the traditions of his time. As a rule genius and the traditional react upon each other like fire and water. Indeed, it is almost the earmark of genius that it embodies coming traditions, antagonising those of the past, and, as the author of a new race, declares war on the one which is on the decline. . . . Dickens is the only great writer of the century whose deepest attitudes correspond completely with the spiritual needs of his time."

"Shakespeare was the incarnation of heroic England; Dickens was merely the symbol of bourgeois England. He was the logical subject of the mild, motherly, insignificant old Queen Victoria; he was the citizen of a prudish, comfortable, well-ordered commonwealth lacking in dash and passion. His impulse was lessened by the sluggishness of an age which was never avid, but content to digest at its leisure. It was at most a light wind that played in the sails of his ship, never driving it from the English coast out into the dangerous beauty of the unknown, into the uncharted infinite. Essentially prudent, he has always remained in the vicinity of the domestic, the usual, and the time-honoured."

"His psychology begins with the visual; he characterises by externals, especially by those more delicate and remote externals which are noticeable only to the sharp eye of a poet. Like the English philosophers, he begins with particulars rather than with presuppositions."

And finally this aphorism, which perhaps embodies the prime fallacy of Herr Zweig's critical method:

"Works of art should not be judged solely by their intensity, not solely by the man that stands behind them; we should also take into account their *extensity*, their effect on the masses."

"Italian Letter," by Raffaello Piccoli. A sensitive, even a sentimental, appreciation of Papini, but interesting because it explains, by evoking the personality of Papini, the rather baffling inconsequence of this writer's work.

The Dial, vol. lxxiv, no. 2, February, 1923:

"Indians and an Englishman," by D. H. Lawrence. A vivid account

of a visit to a Red Indian compound in New Mexico, giving Mr. Lawrence an opportunity for some characteristic reflections on the tribal instincts.

"Freedom in Education," by Bertrand Russell. A protest against mechanism.

"Novices," a poem by Marianne Moore.

Secession, nos. 1, 2, and 3, Vienna, 1922:

Secession appears as a counterblast to the unrepresentative catholicity of *The Dial*, and aims to be something more uncompromisingly modern and more uncompromisingly American than "this Yale-Review-in-a-Harvard-blazer." The editor, Mr. Gorham B. Munson, gives expression to fairly definite literary standards. "The evasion of the grandly serious" (so clearly evaded by the contributors to *Secession*) is defended in the following able way:

"Let us note that there are certain grandly serious elements of life and certain very trivial constituents. This means that the power of subject matter varies and leads to another tentative conclusion. The more documentary solidity a writer can give his work, provided he can control surfaces proportioned to this interior development, the deeper and fuller response he can create.

"With more certainty it may be said that there is a shifting importance attached to the multitudinous subjects which writers use and that there come periods when even the grandly serious things are of less importance for literary production than the minor facets of life. This is, in part, due to the operation of a law of fatigue upon æsthetic emotion. Certain subject matter, let us say doubt, melancholy, speculation upon insolubles, exploited again and again in an era, gradually loses its potency and calls forth weaker and weaker replies. It is necessary to turn to other materials, courage and certitude, minor moods perhaps, to evoke fresh strong responses."

Rhythmus, vol. i., No. 1, January, 1923:

Poems by Amy Lowell, John Gould Fletcher, Alfred Kreymbourg and others. Published in New York.

H. R.