

THE CRITERION

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

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JULY 1924

A COMMENTARY

It is somewhat late in the day to comment upon the inaugural lecture delivered by Professor Garrod on February 13, but the occasion is one which justifies retrospective comment. Mr. Garrod chose a difficult subject for himself: he chose to deal with the characteristics of contemporary poetry. He rightly refrained from illustrating by the use of names and quotations what he means by "contemporary poetry"; such precision might have been invidious, and would have been inappropriate. On the other hand, much of what he says loses its value from the fact that there is almost *no* statement which can be made of contemporary poetry as a whole. One must first define contemporary poetry by a list of the contemporary writers whom one believes to be poets, and this was impossible for Professor Garrod to do. In consequence we are at a loss, for example, when he says that "in our time, more than in any other, poetry and the study of poetry take their share in the formulation of the new and large demands for political and moral liberty." This is a characteristic which we are unable to apply.

But when Mr. Garrod turns to either more general or more definite observations he says many things which are agreeable to hear. He suggests tentatively that poetry might be made better by an increased attention to the theory of it, and we should only suggest, in return, that he might have made his sentence more dogmatic. He pays merited and appropriate tributes to Matthew Arnold and to Aristotle, and his remarks on the derivation of the philosophy of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley from Hartley are exactly of the sort that make historical criticism valuable.

THE Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics has distributed a circular, inviting membership at a minimum subscription of five shillings a year. The circular explains the objects of the Society, which are four :

- (1) To collect and diffuse information in both countries on developments in Science, Education, Philosophy, Art, Literature and Social and Economic Life ;
- (2) To organise lectures and an interchange of lecturers, conferences, exhibitions, etc., and to arrange for the publication and translation of papers and books ;
- (3) To provide opportunities for social intercourse ;
- (4) To take any action deemed desirable to forward the intellectual and technical progress of both peoples.

The list of British supporters which is given includes many distinguished names. We have no doubt that these supporters are fully informed and satisfied concerning the origin and purpose of this society, but an ordinary member of the public receiving such a circular is entitled to ask certain questions. Is this society initiated under the auspices of the present Government of Russia ? If so, what form does the government support take ? We do not imply that a society of this kind is necessarily to be avoided when it is backed by a foreign Government. We only suggest that, if there is governmental backing, the public on which the benefits are to be conferred, is entitled to know the facts. For, however disinterested a society may be in its attempt to introduce a knowledge of foreign culture into England, a Government can never be expected to be wholly impartial in its choice of the material which it presents to a foreign audience. The circular in question suggests to an ignorant member of the public some remote possibility of government interest. For it states that "in science, in the achievements of literature and art, in the theories and practice of education, and in social work, the U.S.S.R. is showing constructive energy." To an ignorant member of the public, the use of the title "U.S.S.R." rather than "Russia" has rather an official sound.

We should also be inclined to inquire what reciprocal benefits the U.S.S.R. is to receive in return for those it will bestow on Great Britain. It is proposed to include amongst these blessings a "conversazione" and an "Exhibition of Russian Posters and Leaflets for popularising Science and Health." We would gladly contribute five shillings or more to the diffusion of English culture in Russia or in the States of the U.S.S.R., but we should prefer that our money be laid out in a different way.

In the April number of THE CRITERION we made some suggestions toward increasing the utility of the University Presses. We have since received from Mr. Humphrey Milford a volume in a series entitled "The Oxford Miscellany." This volume consists of select poems by Lord de Tabley, a minor Victorian poet whose works are worth preserving. Criticising the Miscellany as a whole, one can say that it is too miscellaneous, and that it contains some volumes which can easily enough be obtained elsewhere. The section of literary history and criticism, however, is interesting because it contains a volume of Jeffrey's *Criticism* and Morgann's *Falstaff*. It is to be hoped that this section will be extended to include some specimens of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century criticism.

For the earlier critics, whatever their limitations, kept their eye on the object : their criticism was *literary* criticism. There has been a growing and alarming tendency in our time for literary criticism to be Criticism. something else ; to be the expression of an attitude "toward life" or of an attitude toward religion or of an attitude toward society, or of various humanitarian emotions. There is also a tendency for literary criticism to turn, under the baleful influence of Charles Lamb, into the polite literary essay. We must distinguish between these various tendencies, for it would be unjust to confuse Mr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. Squire with Mr. Middleton Murry or the late Mr. Clutton Brock. Of all these tendencies toward obliteration of distinctions, the most dangerous is the tendency to confuse literature with religion—a tendency which can only have the effect of degrading literature and annihilating religion. This particular heresy has lately been dealt with very ably by Monsieur Jacques Rivière in an article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* on the Crisis of the Concept of Literature.

We learn with great regret that the Egoist Press has ceased to exist. Amongst the reasons given for its termination is the multiplication of other private presses which can perform the same services. But the conclusion of the Egoist Press deserves more than a passing comment. It performed a service that is one function of the private press. It made possible the publication of the works of authors then unknown which would never have been accepted by the larger publishing houses. It was the Egoist Press which published James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and amongst the properties which the Egoist Press now transfers are all the works of Mr. Joyce, with the exception of *Ulysses* ; and in its short list were included books by Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, H.D., and Mr. Richard Aldington's "Poets' Translations

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Series." With complete disinterestedness and modesty the Egoist Press performed services to literature wholly out of proportion to its capital and position.

Amongst existing private presses the Hogarth Press carries on a part of the same task; other private presses, such as the Nonesuch Press, are occupied with producing beautiful editions of old authors. A new press which is welcome is that of Frederick Etchells and Hugh Macdonald, who announce the Haslewood Reprints. Sir Thomas Browne's *Letter to a Friend*, which is the first of the series, is an admirable reproduction of the first edition; and the volumes of the series are published at very moderate prices.

In both of these directions, the private press will have a function complementary to that of the publishing house and equally important.

THE Phoenix Society closed a brilliant season with its performance of *The Old Bachelour*. The play, although it has moments of brilliant dialogue, is for the most part tedious and ill-constructed; nevertheless, since everybody has seen *The Way of the World*, it was a useful service to have included in this year's programme a specimen of Congreve. The play itself is not only far below *The Way of the World*, but is signally inferior to Wycherley's *Country Wife*. The comic characters, Sir Joseph Wittol and Captain Bluffe (the latter well acted by the reliable Mr. Roy Byford), are descendants of stock Elizabethan types; and the conventional morality of seventeenth-century comedy displays itself more wearisome and antiquated than in either of the other plays. But it is an interesting and valuable experience to have had so much of the Restoration comedy, if only we may realise its feebleness and timidity compared with that of the best Elizabethans. And the presentation of these comedies gives further food for meditation. We have only to turn to the pages of any nineteenth-century critic of Restoration literature, including the great Taine himself, to realise the remoteness of the nineteenth century from ourselves. For the nineteenth century really thought that the harmless and childlike morality of Restoration drama was disgusting, whilst to us it is merely weariness and ennui. The plays of the Restoration record an ethic in some ways as remote from our own as is that of Mr. Bernard Shaw.

Besides the individual performances mentioned in our last Commentary, and the Edward II of Mr. Yarrow, what stands out in retrospect is the general high level of acting and the remarkable degree of co-operation in the performances. It is to be hoped that the Phoenix Society will be able to secure many of the same actors and actresses next year. And it is to be desired that the Society may include in the

programme for next year another example of Elizabethan comedy, such as one of Middleton's, as well as one of the less frequently performed plays of Shakespeare, such as *Pericles* or *Timon*. Whatever the programme chosen by the committee may be, the Society will continue to merit and to need an endowment, from such patrons as can afford more than their subscription, to make it a permanent institution.

CRITES.

THE DEATH OF ALBERTINE

By MARCEL PROUST

I FORSOOK all pride with regard to Albertine ; I sent her a despairing telegram, begging her to return upon any conditions, telling her that she might do anything she liked, that I asked only to be allowed to take her in my arms for a minute three times a week, before she went to bed. And had she confined me to once a week I should have accepted the restriction. She did not return. My telegram had just gone to her when I myself received one. It was from Mme. Bontemps. The world is not created once and for all time for each of us individually. There are added to it in the course of our life things of which we have never had any suspicion. Alas ! It was not a suppression of anguish that was produced in me by the first two lines of the telegram : " My poor friend, our little Albertine is no more. Forgive me for breaking this terrible news to you who were so fond of her. She was thrown by her horse against a tree while she was out riding. All our efforts failed to restore her to life. If only I were dead in her place ! " No, not the suppression of anguish, but an anguish till then undreamed-of, that of learning that she would not come back to me. And yet, had I not told myself, more than once, that, quite possibly, she would not come back ? I had told myself so indeed, but I saw now that never for a moment had I believed it. As I needed her presence, her kisses, to enable me to endure the pain that my suspicions wrought in me, I had formed, since our Balbec days, the habit of being always with her. Even when she had gone out, when I was left alone, I was kissing her still.

I had continued to do so since her departure for Touraine. I had less need of her fidelity than of her return. And if my reason might with impunity cast a doubt on her now and again, my imagination never ceased for an instant to bring her before me. Instinctively I passed my hand over my throat, over my lips which felt themselves kissed by hers still after she had gone away and would never be kissed by her again ; I passed my hand over them, as Mamma had stroked me at the time of my grandmother's death, saying : " My poor boy, your grandmother, who was so fond of you, will never kiss you any more. " All my life to come seemed to have been plucked from my heart. My life to come ? I had not then thought, at times, of living it without Albertine ? Why, no ! All this time had I then vowed to her service every minute of my life until my death ? Why, certainly ! This future indissolubly blended with hers I had never had the vision to perceive, but now that it had just been shattered, I could feel the place that it occupied in my gaping heart. Françoise, who still knew nothing, came into my room ; in a burst of fury I shouted at her : " What's the matter now ? " Then (there are sometimes words which set a different reality in the same place as that which confronts us ; they stun us as does a sudden fit of giddiness) : " Master has no need to look cross. I've got something that will make him very glad. It's two letters from Mademoiselle Albertine. " I felt afterwards that I must have looked at her with the eyes of a man whose mind has become unbalanced. I was not actually glad, nor was I incredulous ; I was like a person who sees the same place in his room filled by a sofa and by a grotto. Nothing seeming to him more real, he collapses on the ground. Albertine's two letters must have been written at an interval of a few hours, possibly at the same time, and anyhow only a short while before the ride on which she was killed. The first said : " My friend, I must thank you for the proof of your confidence which you give me when you tell me of your plan to get Andrée to stay

with you. I am sure that she will be delighted to accept, and I think that it will be very pleasant for her. With her talents, she will know how to benefit by the companionship of a man like yourself, and by the admirable influence which you manage to secure over people. I feel that you have had an idea from which as much good may spring for her as for yourself. And so, if she should make the least shadow of difficulty (which I don't believe), telegraph to me, I will bring pressure to bear on her." The second was dated the following day. (As a matter of fact, she must have written them at an interval of a few minutes, possibly at the same time, and must have ante-dated the first. For all the time I had been forming an absurd idea of her intentions, which had been only this: to return to me, and which anyone with no direct interest in the matter, a man lacking in imagination, the plenipotentiary in a peace treaty, the merchant who has to examine a deal, would have judged more accurately than myself.) It contained only these words: "Is it too late for me to return to you? If you have not yet written to Andrée, would you be prepared to take me back? I shall abide by your decision, but I beg you not to be long in letting me know it, you can imagine how impatiently I shall be waiting. If it is telling me to return, I shall take the train at once. With my whole heart, Yours, ALBERTINE."

For the death of Albertine to be able to suppress my anguish, the shock of the fall would have had to kill her not only in Touraine but in myself. There, never had she been more alive. In order to enter into us, another person must first have assumed the form, have fitted into the surroundings of the time; appearing to us only in a succession of momentary flashes, he has never been able to furnish us with more than one aspect of himself at a time, to present us with more than a single photograph. A great weakness, no doubt, for a person to consist merely in a collection of moments; a great strength also: it is dependent on memory, and our memory of a moment is not informed of anything that has

passed since this moment which it has registered, endures still, lives still, and with it lives the person whose form appears in it. And besides, this disintegration does not only make the dead live, it multiplies him. To find consolation, it would not have been one Albertine that I must first forget. When I had succeeded in making myself bear the grief of losing her, I must begin afresh with another, with a hundred more.

So, then, my life was entirely altered. What had furnished—and not owing to Albertine, concurrently with her, when I was by myself—its pleasantness was precisely, at the prompting of identical moments, the resurgence of moments from the past. By the sound of rain was brought back to me the scent of the Combray lilacs, by the shifting of the sun's rays on the balcony the Champs-Élysées pigeons, by the deadening of sounds in the heat of the morning hours the cool taste of cherries, the desire for Brittany or Venice by the sound of the wind and the return of Easter. Summer came, the days were long, the weather warm. It was the season when, early in the morning, pupils and their masters go into the public gardens to prepare for their final examinations under the trees, seeking to gather the sole drop of coolness that is let fall by a sky less ardent than in the heat of the day, but already as sterilely pure. From my darkened room, with a power of evocation equal to that of former days but capable now of evoking only pain, I felt that outside, in the heaviness of the air, the setting sun was plastering the vertical sides of houses and churches with a tawny distemper. And if Françoise, coming in, disarranged unintentionally the folds of the big curtains, I stifled a cry at the gash that was cut in my heart by that ray of old sunlight which had made beautiful in my eyes the modern front of Bricqueville-l'Orgueilleuse, when Albertine said to me: "It is restored." Not knowing how to account to Françoise for my sigh, I said to her: "Oh, I am thirsty." She left the room, came back, but I turned sharply away, smarting under the painful dis-

charge of one of the thousand invisible memories which at every moment broke from the surrounding gloom: I had noticed that she had brought in cider and cherries, which were what a farm-lad had brought to us in the carriage, at Balbec; "kinds" in which I should have made the most perfect communion before, in the rainbow light of shuttered dining-rooms on scorching days. Then I thought for the first time of the farm called Les Ecorres, and said to myself that on certain days when Albertine had told me, at Balbec, that she would not be free, that she was obliged to go out with her aunt, she had perhaps been with one or other of her girl friends at a farm to which she knew that I was not in the habit of going, and where, while I waited desperately for her at Marie-Antoinette, where they told me: "No, we have not seen her to-day," she had been using, to her friend, the same words that she used with me when we went out together: "He will never think of coming to look for us here, so there's no fear of our being disturbed." I told Françoise to draw the curtains close again, so that I should not see the ray of sunlight. But it continued to filter through, just as corrosive, into my memory. "I don't like it; it's been restored, but we'll go to-morrow to Saint-Martin-le-Vêtu, and the day after to . . ." To-morrow, the day after, it is a future of life held in common, perhaps for all time, that is beginning; my heart leaps towards it, but it is no longer there; Albertine is dead.

I asked Françoise the time. Six o'clock. At last, thank God, was about to be lifted that oppressive heat of which, in days gone by, I had complained with Albertine and which we had both so loved. The day drew to an end. But what did that profit me? The coolness of evening rose, it was the sun setting in my memory at the end of a road which we had taken, she and I, on our way home, that I saw now, farther than the last village, like some distant town not to be reached that night which we must spend at Balbec, always together. Together then; now I must stop short on the

edge of that same abyss: she was dead. It was no longer enough to draw the curtains, I must stop the eyes and ears of my memory so as not to see that band of orange in the western sky, so as not to hear those invisible birds responding from one tree to the next on either side of me who was embracing then so tenderly her who now was dead. I tried to avoid those sensations that are given us by the dampness of leaves in the evening air, the steep rise and fall of mountain paths. But already those sensations had gripped me, carried back far enough from the present moment for there to have gathered all the recoil, all the spring necessary to strike me to the heart afresh the idea that Albertine was dead. Ah! Never again should I enter a forest, I should stroll no more beneath the spreading trees. But would the broad plains be less cruel to me? How many times had I crossed, going in search of Albertine, how many times had I taken, on my return with her, the great plain of Cricqueville, now in thick weather when the flooding fog gave us the illusion of being surrounded by a vast lake, now on limpid evenings when the moonlight, dematerialising the earth, made it appear, a yard away, celestial, as it is, in day-time, only on far horizons, enshrined the fields, the woods, with the firmament to which it had assimilated them, in the moss-agate of a universal blue.

Françoise was bound to be glad of Albertine's death, and it should, in justice to her, be said that by a sort of tactful convention she made no pretence of sorrow. But the unwritten laws of her immemorial code and the tradition of a mediæval peasant that floated over her as it floats over the romances of chivalry were older than her hatred of Albertine and even of Eulalie. And so, on one of these late afternoons, as I was not quick enough in concealing my distress, she caught sight of my tears, served by the instinct of a little old peasant woman which at one time had led her to catch and torture animals, to feel only amusement in wringing the necks of poultry and boiling lobsters alive, and, when I was ill, in observing, as it might be the wounds she had inflicted

on an owl, my suffering expression which she afterwards proclaimed in a sepulchral tone and as a presage of coming disaster. But her Combray "Customary" did not permit her to treat lightly tears, grief, things which in her judgment were as fatal as shedding one's flannels or eating without any "stomach" for one's food. "Oh no, Master, it doesn't do to cry like that, it isn't good for you." And in seeking to stem my tears she showed as much uneasiness as though they had been rivers of blood. Unfortunately, I adopted a chilly air that cut short the effusions in which she was hoping to indulge, and which might quite well, for that matter, have been sincere. Her feeling towards Albertine had been, perhaps, like her feeling towards Eulalie, and now that my friend could no longer derive from me any profit, Françoise may have ceased to hate her. She felt bound, however, to show me that she was perfectly well aware that I was crying, only, following the deplorable example set by my family, I did not want to "let it show." "You mustn't cry, Master," she adjured me, in a calmer tone this time, and to prove her clairvoyance rather than to show me any compassion. And she went on: "It was bound to happen; she was too happy, poor thing; she never knew how happy she was."

How slow the day is in dying on these interminable summer evenings. A pallid ghost of the house opposite continued indefinitely to sketch upon the sky its persistent whiteness. At last it was dark indoors; I stumbled against the furniture in the hall, but in the door on to the staircase, in the middle of the blackness which I had believed to be total, the glazed part was translucent and blue, with the blue of a flower, the blue of an insect's wing, a blue that would have seemed to me beautiful if I had not felt it to be a last reflexion, trenchant as a blade of steel, a supreme blow which, in its indefatigable cruelty, was still launched at me by the day. In the end, however, complete darkness came; but then a glimpse of a star by the side of a tree in the courtyard was enough to remind me of how we used to start out in a carriage, after

dinner, for the woods of Chantepie, carpeted with moonlight. And even in the streets it would so happen that I could isolate upon the back of a bench, could gather there the natural purity of a moonbeam in the midst of the artificial lights of Paris, of that Paris over which it enthroned, by making the town return for a moment in my imagination to a state of nature, with the infinite silence of the suggested fields, the heart-rending memory of the walks that I had taken in them with Albertine. Ah! When would night finish? But at the first chill breath of dawn I shuddered, for it had revived in me the sweetness of that summer in which, from Balbec to Incarville, from Incarville to Balbec, we had so many times escorted each other home until the break of day. I had now only one hope for the future—a hope far more heart-rending than any dread—which was that I might forget Albertine. I knew that I should forget her one day; I had quite forgotten Gilberte, Mme. de Guermantes; I had quite forgotten my grandmother. And it is our most fitting and most cruel punishment for that so complete oblivion, as tranquil as the oblivion of the graveyard, by which we have detached ourselves from those whom we no longer love that we can see the same oblivion to be inevitable in the case of those whom we love still. To tell the truth, we know it to be a state not painful, a state of indifference. But not being able to think at the same time of what I was and of what I should one day be, I thought with despair of all that covering mantle of caresses, of kisses, of friendly slumber, of which I must now let myself be divested for all time. The rush of these tender memories sweeping on to break against the idea that she was dead oppressed me by the incessant conflict of their baffled waves so that I could not keep still; I rose; but suddenly I stopped in consternation; the same faint daybreak that I used to see at the moment when I had just left Albertine and was still radiant and warm with her kisses had come into the room, and bared, above the curtains, its blade, now a sinister portent, whose whiteness, cold, im-

placable and compact, thrust itself like a dagger into my heart.

Presently the street noises would begin, enabling me to read from the qualitative scale of their sonorities the degree of the steadily increasing heat in which they were sounding. But in this heat which, a few hours later, would have saturated itself in the odour of cherries, what I found (like a medicine which the substitution of one ingredient for another is sufficient to transform from the stimulant and tonic that it was into a debilitating drug) was no longer the desire for women but the anguish of Albertine's departure. Besides, the memory of all my desires was as much impregnated with her, and with suffering, as the memory of my pleasures. That Venice where I had thought that her presence would be a nuisance (doubtless because I had felt confusedly that it would be necessary) to me, now that Albertine was no more I preferred not to go there. Albertine had seemed to me to be an obstacle interposed between me and everything else, because she was for me their container and it was from her as from an urn that I might receive them. Now that this urn was shattered, I no longer felt that I had the courage to grasp them, there was not one now from which I did not turn away spiritless, preferring not to taste it. So that my separation from her did not in the least throw open to me the field of potential pleasures which I had imagined to be closed to me by her presence. Besides, the obstacle which her presence had perhaps indeed been in the way of my travelling, of my enjoying life, had only (as always happens) been a mask for other obstacles which reappeared intact now that this first had disappeared. It had been in the same way that, long ago, when any friend came to see me and prevented me from working, if on the following day I was left undisturbed, I did not work any better. Let an illness, a duel, a runaway horse make us see death face to face, how richly we should have enjoyed the life of pleasure, the travels in unknown lands which are about to be snatched

from us. And no sooner is the danger past than what we find once again before us is the same dull life in which none of these delights had any existence for us.

No doubt these nights which are so short continue but for a brief season. Winter would at length return, when I should no longer have to dread the memory of walks with her, protracted until a too early dawn. But the first frosts, would not they bring back to me, preserved in their ice, the germ of my first desires when at midnight I used to summon her to me, when the time seemed so long until I heard her ring my bell, a sound for which I might now wait everlastingly in vain? Would they not bring back to me the germ of my first uneasiness, when, twice over, I was afraid that she would not come? At that time I saw her only rarely, but even those intervals that there were between her visits, making Albertine emerge, at the end of several weeks, from the heart of an unknown life which I made no effort to possess, ensured my peace of mind by preventing the first inklings, constantly interrupted, of my jealousy from coagulating, from forming a solid mass in my heart. So far as they had contrived to be soothing, at that earlier time, so far, in retrospect, were they stamped with the mark of suffering, since all the unaccountable things that she might, while they lasted, have been doing had ceased to be immaterial to me, and especially now that no visit from her would ever fall to my lot again; so that those January evenings on which she used to come, and which, for that reason, had been so dear to me, would blow into me now with their biting winds an uneasiness which then I did not know, and would bring back to me (but now grown pernicious) the first germ of my love, preserved by their frozen breath. And when I thought that I should see begin again that cold season which since Gilberte and my games in the Champs-Élysées had always seemed to me so depressing; when I thought that there would be coming again evenings like that evening of snow when I had vainly, far into the night, waited for Albertine to come; then,

like a consumptive choosing the best climate, from the point of view of his body, for his lungs, but in my case making a moral choice, what at such moments I dreaded most for my grief, for my heart, was the return of the great cold, and I said to myself that what it would be hardest to live through was, perhaps, the winter. Bound up as it was with all the seasons, in order for me to lose the memory of Albertine I should have had first to forget them all, prepared to begin again to learn to know them, as an old man after a stroke of paralysis learns again to read; I should have had first to forfeit the entire universe. Only, I told myself, an actual death of myself would be capable (but that was impossible) of consoling me for hers. I did not realise that the death of oneself is neither impossible nor extraordinary. It is effected without our knowledge, it may be against our will, every day of our lives. And I should suffer from the recurrence of all sorts of days which not nature alone but adventitious circumstances, a purely conventional arrangement, introduce into a season. Presently would return the date on which I had gone to Balbec that other summer when my love, which was not yet inseparable from jealousy and did not perplex itself with the problem of what Albertine could be doing all day, had to pass through so many evolutions before becoming that so different love of the last period, that this final year, in which Albertine's destiny had begun to change and had received its quietus, appeared to me full, multiform, vast, like a whole century. Then it would be the memory of days more slow to recur but from still earlier years; on Sundays of bad weather on which nevertheless everyone else had left the house, in the void of the afternoon when the sound of wind and rain would have bidden me at that time to stay at home, the "philosopher in his garret," with what anxiety should I see approach the hour at which Albertine, so little expected, had come to see me, had fondled me for the first time, breaking off because Françoise had come in with the lamp, at that time now doubly dead when it had

been Albertine who was interested in me, when my affection for her might legitimately nourish so strong a hope. Even at an earlier season, on those glorious evenings when kitchens, girls'-schools, open to the view like wayside shrines, bathed in a golden dust, allow the street to crown itself with a garland of those demi-goddesses who conversing, ever so close to us, with their peers, fill us with a feverish longing to penetrate into their mythological existence; these recalled to me nothing now but the affection of Albertine, who walking by my side, was an obstacle in the way of my approaching them.

Moreover, to the memory even of hours that were purely natural would be added of necessity the moral landscape which makes of each of them a thing apart. When I should hear, later on, the goat-herd's horn, on a first fine, almost Italian morning, the day that followed would blend successively in its sunlight the anxiety of knowing that Albertine was at the Trocadéro possibly with Léa and the two girls, then the kindly, domestic sweetness, almost that of a wife who seemed to me then an embarrassment and whom Françoise was bringing back to me. That telephone message from Françoise which had conveyed to me the dutiful obedience of an Albertine who was returning with her, I had thought at the time that it made me swell with pride. I was mistaken. If it had exhilarated me, that was because it had made me feel that she whom I loved was really mine, lived only for me, and even at a distance, without my needing to occupy my mind with her, regarded me as her lord and master, returning home upon a sign from myself. And so that telephone message had been a particle of sweetness, coming to me from afar, sent out from that region of the Trocadéro where there happened to be for me sources of happiness, directing towards me molecules of comfort, soothing balms, restoring to me at length so sweet a liberty of spirit that I need do no more, surrendering myself without the restriction of a single care to Wagner's music, than await

the certain arrival of Albertine, without fever, with an entire absence of impatience in which I had not had the perspicacity to discern true happiness. And this happiness that she should return, that she should obey me and be mine, the cause of it lay in love and not in pride. It would have been quite immaterial to me now to have at my command fifty women returning, upon a sign from myself, not from the Trocadéro but from the Indies. But that day, listening for Albertine, who, while I sat alone in my room playing music, was coming dutifully to me, I had breathed in, where it lay scattered like motes in a sunbeam, one of those substances which, just as others are salutary to the body, do good to the soul. Then there had been, half an hour later, Albertine's coming, then the drive with Albertine come, a drive which I had thought tedious because it was accompanied for me by certainty. But this very certainty had, from the moment of Françoise's telephoning to me that she was bringing Albertine back, let flow a golden calm into the hours that followed, had made of them as it were a second day, wholly unlike the first because it had quite a different moral basis, which made of it an original day coming to increase the variety of the days that I had known until then, a day which I should never have been able to imagine any more than we could imagine the delicious idleness of a day in summer if such days did not exist in the series of those that we had lived, a day of which I could not say absolutely that I recalled it, for to this calm I added now an anguish which I had not felt then. But at a much later date, when I went over gradually in a reversed order the times through which I had passed before being so much in love with Albertine, when my scarred heart could detach itself without suffering from Albertine dead; then, when I could recall at length without suffering that day on which Albertine had gone on errands with Françoise instead of remaining at the Trocadéro, I recalled it with pleasure, that day belonging to a moral season which I had not known until then, I recalled it at length exactly, without

adding to it now any suffering, rather, on the contrary, as one recalls certain days in summer which one found too hot while they lasted, and from which only after they are gone does one extract their unalloyed standard of fixed gold and imperishable azure.

* * *

With the result that these several years not only imposed on the memory of Albertine, which made them so painful, the successive colouring, the different modulations of their seasons or of their hours, from long afternoons in June to winter evenings, from seas by moonlight to dawns that broke as one took one's homeward way, from snow in Paris to fallen leaves at Saint-Cloud; there were also each of the particular ideas of Albertine that I successively formed, the bodily aspect in which I pictured her at each of those moments, the degree of frequency with which I had seen her during that season, which itself appeared consequently more or less dispersed or compact, the anxieties which she might have caused me by keeping me waiting, the attraction which I had at a given moment for her, hopes formed then blasted; all of these modified the character of my retrospective sorrow fully as much as the impressions of light or scents which were associated with it, and completed each of the solar years through which I had lived and which were already, with all their springs, their trees, their skies, so sad because of the indissociable memory of her, complemented each of them with a sort of sentimental year in which the hours were defined, not by the sun's position, but by the strain of waiting for a tryst, in which the length of the days, the increase of the temperature were determined not by the seasons but by the soaring flight of my hopes, the progress of our intimacy, the gradual transformation of her face, the travels on which she had gone, the frequency and style of the letters which she had written me during her absence, her more or less precipitate eagerness to see me on her return. And, lastly, if these changes of season, if these different days ren-

dered to me each a fresh Albertine, it was not only by the suggestion of corresponding moments. The reader will remember that always, even before I had begun to be in love, each day had made of me a different person, swayed by other desires because he had other perceptions, a person who, just as he had dreamed only of cliffs and tempests overnight, if the indiscreet spring dawn had distilled a scent of roses through the ill-fitting portals of his house of sleep, would awake alert to start for Italy. Even in my love, had not the changing state of my moral atmosphere, the varying pressure of my beliefs, had they not one day diminished the visibility of the love that I was feeling, had they not another day extended it beyond all bounds, one day sweetened it to a smile, another contracted it to a storm. One exists only by virtue of what one possesses, one possesses only what is really present to one, and so many of our memories, of our humours, of our ideas set out to voyage far away from us, until they are lost to sight. Then we can no longer make them enter into our reckoning of the total which is our personality. But they know of secret paths by which to return to us. And on certain nights, having gone to sleep almost without regretting Albertine—one can regret only what one recalls—on awaking I found a whole fleet of memories that had come to cruise upon the surface of my clearest consciousness, which I found marvellously distinct. Then I wept for what I could see so plainly, for what overnight had been to me but nothing at all. Albertine's name, her death had changed in meaning; her betrayals had suddenly resumed all their old importance.

How could she seem dead to me when now, in order to think of her, I had at my disposal only the same images of which, when she was alive, I would see again one or another, each one associated with a particular moment? Visible in turn, now rapid and bowed above the mystic wheel of her bicycle, as she appeared on rainy days in the waterproof tunic which showed her breasts swelling beneath an amazonian cuirass, while snakes writhed in her hair, or again, on the evenings

on which we had taken champagne with us to the Chantepie woods, her voice provoking, altered, with that pallid warmth, colouring only over her cheekbones, so much so that, barely able in the darkness of the carriage to see her, I could make out only a phantom in the moonlight, whom I tried now in vain to recapture and to see again in a darkness that would never end; a little statuette as we drove to the island; large, with a grained skin, by the pianola, such was she now in turn, rain-soaked and swift, provoking and diaphanous, motionless and smiling, an angel of music. So that what would have had to be obliterated in me was not one only, but countless Albertines. Each was attached to a moment to the date of which I found myself carried back when I saw again that particular Albertine. And the moments of the past do not remain still; they keep in our memory the motion which drew them towards the future—a future now become itself, too, a past—and draw us in their train. Never had I caressed the waterproofed Albertine of the rainy days; I wanted to ask her to divest herself of that armour; that would be to know with her the love of the tented field, the brotherhood of travel. But this was no longer possible, she was dead. Never either, for fear of corrupting her, had I shown any sign of comprehension on the evenings when she seemed to be offering me pleasures which, but for that restraint, she would not perhaps have sought from others, and which excited in me now a frenzied desire. I should not have found them the same in any other, but her who would fain have given me them I might scour the whole world now without encountering, for Albertine was dead. It seemed that I had to choose between two sets of facts, to decide which was the truth, so far was the fact of Albertine's death—arising for me from a reality which I had not known: her life in Touraine—in contradiction with all my thoughts of her, my desires, my regrets, my tenderness, my rage, my jealousy. So great a wealth of memories, borrowed from the treasury of her life, such a profusion of sentiments, evok-

ing, implicating her life, seemed to make it unbelievable that Albertine could be dead. Such a profusion of sentiments, for my memory, while preserving my affection, left to it all its variety. It was not Albertine alone that was simply a succession of moments; it was also myself. My love for her had not been single. To a curious interest in the unknown had been added a sensual desire, and, to a sentiment of an almost conjugal quietness, at one moment indifference, at another a jealous fury. I was not a single man, but the steady advance, hour after hour, of an army in close formation, in which there appeared, according to the moment, impassioned men, indifferent men, jealous men—jealous men among whom no two were moved to jealousy by the same woman. And no doubt it would be from here that one day would come the healing which I should not expect. In a composite mass the elements can one by one, without our noticing it, be replaced by others, which others again eliminate or reinforce, until in the end a change has been brought about which would be inconceivable if the composite mass were uniform. The complexity of my love, of my person, multiplied, diversified my sufferings. And yet they could always be ranged beneath the two headings, the option between which had made up the whole life of my love for Albertine, alternately swayed by trust and by jealous suspicions. These suspicions became at times so tormenting that I begged Aimé, who was still working in Paris, to go down to Balbec and to inquire into the life that Albertine had led there. He promised to arrange for a holiday at the end of the month, and I made over to him two thousand francs for the journey.

If I had found it difficult to imagine that Albertine, so vitally alive in me, was dead, perhaps it was equally paradoxical in me, wearing as I did the double harness of the present and the past, that Albertine, whom I knew to be dead, could still excite my jealousy, and that this suspicion of misdeeds of which Albertine, stripped now of the flesh that had rejoiced in them, of the mind that had been

able to desire them, was no longer capable, nor responsible for them, should excite in me so keen a suffering that I should only have blessed them could I have seen in those misdeeds a pledge of the moral reality of a person materially non-existent, in place of the reflexion, destined itself too to fade, of impressions which she had made on me long ago. A woman who could no longer taste any pleasure with other people ought not any longer to have excited my jealousy if only my affection had been able to come to the surface. But this was just what was impossible, since it could not find its object, Albertine, save among memories in which she was still alive. Since, merely by thinking of her, I brought her back to life, her betrayals could never be those of a dead woman; the moments at which she had been guilty of them becoming the present moment, not only for Albertine but for that one of my various selves, suddenly brought to light, who was regarding her. So that no anachronism could ever separate the indissoluble couple, in which to each fresh culprit was immediately mated a jealous lover, pitiable and always contemporaneous. I had in the last months kept her confined in my own house. But in my imagination now Albertine was free, she abused her freedom, prostituted herself to this friend or to that. Before, I used constantly to dream of the future that was unfolding itself before me, I endeavoured to read its story. And now what lay before me like a counterpart of the future—as absorbing as a future because it was equally uncertain, as difficult to decipher, as mysterious, more cruel still because I had not, as with the future, the possibility or the illusion of influencing it, and also because it unrolled itself to the full measure of my own life without my companion's being present to soothe the anguish that it caused me—was no longer Albertine's future; it was her past. Her past? That is the wrong word, since for jealousy there can be neither past nor future, and what it imagines is invariably the Present.

Atmospheric changes, provoking other changes in the body

of man, awoken forgotten variants of himself, upset the somnolent course of habit, restore their old force to certain memories, to certain sufferings; how much the more so with me if this changed spell of weather recalled to me that in which Albertine used at Balbec, under threatening rain it might be, to set out, heaven knew why, on long rides, in the clinging mail of her waterproof. If she had lived, no doubt to-day, in weather so similar as this, she would be setting out, in Touraine, upon a corresponding expedition. Since she could do so no longer, I ought not to have been pained by the thought, but, as with amputated cripples, the least change in the weather revived my pains in the member that had ceased, now, to belong to me.

(Translated by C. K. SCOTT MONCRIEFF.)

THE CAT AND THE MOON

A PLAY FOR DANCERS

By W. B. YEATS

SCENE

The scene is any bare place before a wall against which stands a patterned screen, or hangs a patterned curtain suggesting St. Colman's Well. Three Musicians are sitting close to the wall, with zither, drum, and flute. Their faces are made up to resemble masks.

FIRST MUSICIAN

(Singing.) The Cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon
The creeping cat looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For wander and wail as he would
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.

(Two beggars enter—a blind man with a lame man on his back. They wear grotesque masks. The blind beggar is counting the paces.)

BLIND BEGGAR

One thousand and six, one thousand and seven, one thousand and nine. Look well now, for we should be in sight of the holy well of St Colman. The beggar at the cross-road said it was

one thousand paces from where he stood and a few paces over.
Look well now ; can you see the big ash tree that's above it ?

LAME BEGGAR

(Getting down.) No, not yet.

BLIND BEGGAR

Then we must have taken a wrong turn ; flighty you always were, and maybe, before the day is over, you will have me drowned in Kiltartan River or maybe in the sea itself.

LAME BEGGAR

I have brought you the right way, but you are a lazy man, Blind Man, and you make very short strides.

BLIND BEGGAR

It's great daring you have, and how could I make a long stride and you on my back from the peep o' day ?

LAME BEGGAR

And maybe the beggar of the cross-roads was only making it up when he said a thousand paces and a few paces more. You and I, being beggars, know the way of beggars, and maybe he never paced it at all, being a lazy man.

BLIND BEGGAR

Get up—it's too much talk you have.

LAME BEGGAR

(Getting up.) But, as I was saying, he being a lazy man—oh, oh, oh, stop pinching the calf of my leg and I'll not say another word till I'm spoken to.

[They go round the stage once, moving to drum taps, and as they move the following song is sung.]

FIRST MUSICIAN

Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance ?
When two close kindred meet
What better than call a dance,
Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
And new dance turn.

BLIND BEGGAR

Do you see the big ash tree ?

LAME BEGGAR

I do then, and the well under it, and the flat stone, and the things upon the stone ; and here is a good dry place to kneel in.

BLIND BEGGAR

You may get down so. *(Lame Beggar gets down.)* I begin to have it in my mind that I am a great fool, and it was you who egged me on with your flighty talk.

LAME BEGGAR

How should you be a great fool to ask the saint to give you back your two eyes ?

BLIND BEGGAR

There is many gives money to a blind man and would give nothing but a curse to a whole man, and if it was not for one thing—but no matter any way.

LAME BEGGAR

If I speak out all that's in my mind you won't take a blow at me at all ?

BLIND MAN

I will not this time.

LAME BEGGAR

Then I'll tell you why you are not a great fool. When you go out to pick up a chicken, or maybe a stray goose on the road, or a cabbage from a neighbour's garden, I have to go riding on your back; and if I want a goose, or a chicken, or a cabbage, I must have your two legs under me.

BLIND BEGGAR

That's true now, and if we were whole men and went different ways, there'd be as much again between us.

LAME BEGGAR

And your own goods keep going out from you because you are blind.

BLIND BEGGAR

Rogues and thieves ye all are, but there are some I may have my eyes on yet.

LAME BEGGAR

Because's there's no one to see a man slipping in at the door, or throwing a leg over the wall of a yard, you are a bitter temptation to many a poor man, and I say it's not right, it's not right at all. There are poor men that because you are blind will be delayed in Purgatory.

BLIND BEGGAR

Though you are a rogue, Lame Man, maybe you are in the right.

LAME BEGGAR

And maybe we'll see the blessed saint this day, for there's

an odd one sees him, and maybe that will be a grander thing than having my two legs, though legs are a grand thing.

BLIND BEGGAR

You're getting flighty again, Lame Man; what could be better for you than to have your two legs?

LAME BEGGAR

Do you think now the saint will put an ear on him at all, and we without an Ave or a Paternoster to put before the prayer or after the prayer?

BLIND BEGGAR

Wise though you are, and flighty though you are, and you throwing eyes to the right of you and eyes to the left of you, there's many a thing you don't know about the heart of man.

LAME BEGGAR

But it stands to reason that he'd be put out and he maybe with a great liking for the Latin.

BLIND BEGGAR

I have it in mind that the saint will be better pleased at us nor knowing a prayer at all, and that we had best say what we want in plain language. What pleasure can he have in all that holy company kneeling at his well on holidays and Sundays, and they as innocent maybe as himself?

LAME BEGGAR

That's a strange thing to say, and do you say it as I or another might say it, or as a blind man?

BLIND BEGGAR

I say it as a blind man, I say it because since I went blind

in the tenth year of my age, I have been hearing and remembering the knowledges of the world.

LAME BEGGAR

And you that are a blind man say that a saint, and he living in a pure well of water, would soonest be talking with a sinful man.

BLIND BEGGAR

You have no sense in you, no real sense at all. Did you ever know a holy man but had a wicked man for his comrade and his heart's darling? There is not a more holy man in the barony than the man who has the big house at Laban, and he goes knocking about the roads day and night with that old lecher from the county of Mayo, and he a woman-hater from the day of his birth. And well you know that all the neighbours know what they talk of by daylight and candle-light. The old lecher does be telling over all the sins he committed, or maybe never committed at all, and the man of Laban does be trying to head him off and quiet him down that he may quit telling them.

LAME BEGGAR

Maybe it is converting him he is.

BLIND BEGGAR

If you were a blind man you wouldn't say a foolish thing the like of that. He wouldn't have him different, no, not if he was to get all Ireland. If he was different, what would they find to talk about? Will you answer me that now?

LAME BEGGAR

We have great wisdom between us, that's certain.

BLIND BEGGAR

Now the church says that it is a good thought, and a sweet thought, and a comfortable thought, that every man may have a saint to look after him, and I, being blind, give it out to all the world that the bigger the sinner the better pleased is the saint. I am sure and certain that St. Colman would not have us two different from what we are.

LAME BEGGAR

I'll not give in to that, for, as I was saying, he has a great liking maybe for the Latin.

BLIND BEGGAR

Is it contradicting me you are? Are you in reach of my arm? (*Swinging stick.*)

LAME BEGGAR

I'm not, Blind Man, you couldn't touch me at all; but, as I was saying——

FIRST MUSICIAN

(*Speaking.*) Will you be cured or will you be blessed?

LAME BEGGAR

Lord save us, that is the saint's voice, and we not on our knees. (*They kneel.*)

BLIND BEGGAR

Is he standing before us, Lame Man?

LAME BEGGAR

I cannot see him at all. It is in the ash-tree he is, or up in the air.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Will you be cured or will you be blessed?

LAME BEGGAR

There he is again.

BLIND BEGGAR

I'll be cured of my blindness.

FIRST MUSICIAN

I am a saint and lonely. Will you become blessed and stay blind, and we will be together always?

BLIND BEGGAR

No, no, your Reverence, if I have to choose, I'll have the sight of my two eyes, for those that have their sight are always stealing my things and telling me lies, and some maybe that are near me, so don't take it bad of me, Holy Man, that I ask the sight of my two eyes.

LAME BEGGAR

No one robs him, and no one tells him lies; it's all in his head it is. He's had his tongue on me all day because he thinks I stole a sheep of his.

BLIND BEGGAR

It was the feel of his sheepskin coat put it into my head, but my sheep was black they say, and he tells me, Holy Man, that his sheepskin is of the most lovely white wool, so that it is a joy to be looking at it.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Lame Man, will you be cured or will you be blessed?

LAME BEGGAR

What would it be like to be blessed?

FIRST MUSICIAN

You would be of the kin of the blessed saints and of the martyrs.

LAME BEGGAR

Is it true now that they have a book and that they write the names of the blessed in that book?

FIRST MUSICIAN

Many a time have I seen that book, and your name would be in it.

LAME BEGGAR

I would be a grand thing to have my two legs under me, but I have it in my mind that it would be a grander thing to have my name in that book.

FIRST MUSICIAN

It would be a grander thing.

LAME BEGGAR

I will stay lame, Holy Man, and I will be blessed.

FIRST MUSICIAN

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit I give this blind man sight and I make this lame man blessed.

BLIND MAN

I see it all now, the blue sky, and the big ash tree, and the well and the flat stone—all as I have heard the people say—and the things the praying people put on the stone, the beads and the candles and the leaves torn out of prayer-books and the hairpins and the buttons. It is a great sight and a blessed sight, but I don't see yourself, Holy Man—Is it up in the big tree you are?

LAME BEGGAR

Why there he is in front of you, and he laughing out of his wrinkled face.

BLIND BEGGAR

Where, where?

LAME BEGGAR

Why there, between you and the ash-tree.

BLIND BEGGAR

There's nobody there—you're at your lies again.

LAME BEGGAR

I am blessed, and that is why I can see the holy saint.

BLIND BEGGAR

But if I don't see that saint, there's something else I can see.

LAME BEGGAR

The blue sky and the green leaves are a great sight, and a strange sight to one that has been long blind.

BLIND BEGGAR

There is a stranger sight than that, and that is the skin of my own black sheep on your back.

LAME BEGGAR

Haven't I been telling you from the peep o' day that my sheepskin is that white it would dazzle you?

BLIND BEGGAR

Are you so swept with the words that you've never thought

that, when I had my own two eyes, I'd see what colour it was on it?

LAME BEGGAR

(*Very dejected.*) I never thought of that.

BLIND BEGGAR

Are you that flighty?

LAME BEGGAR

I am that flighty. (*Cheering up.*) But am I not blessed? and it's a sin to speak against the blessed.

BLIND BEGGAR

Well, I'll speak against the blessed, and I tell you something more that I'll do. All the while you were telling me how, if I had my two eyes, I could pick up a chicken here and a goose there, while my neighbours were in bed, do you know what I was thinking?

LAME BEGGAR

Some wicked blind man's thought.

BLIND BEGGAR

It was, and it's not gone from me yet. I was saying to myself I have a long arm and a strong arm and a very weighty arm, and when I get my own two eyes I know where to hit.

LAME BEGGAR

Don't lay a hand on me. Forty years we've been knocking about the roads together, and I wouldn't have you bring your soul into mortal peril.

BLIND BEGGAR

I have been saying to myself, I know where to hit and how to hit, and who to hit.

LAME BEGGAR

Do you not know that I am blessed? Would you be as bad as Cæsar, and as Herod, and Nero, and the other wicked emperors of antiquity?

BLIND BEGGAR

Where'll I hit him, for the love of God, where'll I hit him?
[Blind beggar beats lame beggar. The beating takes the form of a dance and is accompanied on flute and drum. The blind beggar goes out.]

LAME BEGGAR

There is a soul lost, Holy Man.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Maybe so.

LAME BEGGAR

I'd better be going, Holy Man, for he'll rouse the whole country against me.

FIRST MUSICIAN

He'll do that.

LAME BEGGAR

And I have it in my mind not to even myself again with the martyrs, and the holy confessors, till I am more used to being blessed.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Bend down your back.

LAME BEGGAR

What for, Holy Man?

FIRST MUSICIAN

That I may get up on it.

LAME BEGGAR

But my lame legs would never bear the weight of you.

FIRST MUSICIAN

I'm up now.

LAME BEGGAR

I don't feel you at all.

FIRST MUSICIAN

I don't weigh more than a grasshopper.

LAME BEGGAR

You do not.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Are you happy?

LAME BEGGAR

I would be if I was right sure I was blessed.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Haven't you got me for a friend?

LAME BEGGAR

I have so.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Then you're blessed.

LAME BEGGAR

Will you see that they put my name in the book?

FIRST MUSICIAN

I will then.

LAME BEGGAR

Let us be going, Holy Man.

[They go out to drum and flute as before.]

FIRST MUSICIAN

(Singing.) Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
 From moonlight place to place,
 The sacred moon overhead
 Has taken a new phase.
 Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
 Will pass from change to change,
 And that from round to crescent
 From crescent to round they range?
 Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
 Alone, important, and wise,
 And lifts to the changing moon
 His changing eyes.

CHARACTER IN FICTION¹

By VIRGINIA WOOLF

IT seems to me possible, perhaps desirable, that I may be the only person in this room who has committed the folly of writing, trying to write, or failing to write, a novel. And when I asked myself, as your invitation to speak to you about modern fiction made me ask myself, what demon whispered in my ear and urged me to my doom, a little figure rose before me—the figure of a man, or of a woman, who said, “My name is Brown. Catch me if you can.”

Most novelists have the same experience. Some Brown, Smith, or Jones comes before them and says in the most seductive and charming way in the world, “Come and catch me if you can.” And so, led on by this will-o’-the-wisp, they flounder through volume after volume, spending the best years of their lives in the pursuit, and receiving for the most part very little cash in exchange. Few catch the phantom; most have to be content with a scrap of her dress or a wisp of her hair.

My belief that men and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has thus imposed itself upon them has the sanction of Mr. Arnold Bennett. In an article from which I will quote he says: “The foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else. . . . Style counts; plot counts; originality of outlook counts. But none of these counts anything like so much as the convincingness of the characters. If the characters are real the novel will have a chance; if they are not, oblivion will be its portion. . . .” And he goes on to draw the conclusion that

¹ A paper read to the Heretics, Cambridge, on May 18, 1924.

we have no young novelists of first-rate importance at the present moment, because they are unable to create characters that are real, true, and convincing.

These are the questions that I want with greater boldness than discretion to discuss to-night. I want to make out what we mean when we talk about "character" in fiction; to say something about the question of reality which Mr. Bennett raises; and to suggest some reasons why the younger novelists fail to create characters, if, as Mr. Bennett asserts, it is true that fail they do. This will lead me, I am well aware, to make some very sweeping and some very vague assertions. For the question is an extremely difficult one. Think how little we know about character—think how little we know about art. But, to make a clearance before I begin, I will suggest that we range Edwardians and Georgians into two camps; Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy I will call the Edwardians; Mr. Forster, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Strachey, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. Eliot I will call the Georgians. And if I speak in the first person, with intolerable egotism, I will ask you to excuse me. I do not want to attribute to the world at large the opinions of one solitary, ill-informed, and misguided individual.

My first assertion is one that I think you will grant—that every one in this room is a judge of character. Indeed it would be impossible to live for a year without disaster unless one practised character-reading and had some skill in the art. Our marriages, our friendships depend on it; our business largely depends on it; every day questions arise which can only be solved by its help. And now I will hazard a second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that on or about December 1910 human character changed.

I am not saying that one went out, as one might into a garden, and there saw that a rose had flowered, or that a hen had laid an egg. The change was not sudden and definite like that. But a change there was, nevertheless; and, since one must be arbitrary, let us date it about the year 1910. The first signs

of it are recorded in the books of Samuel Butler, in *The Way of All Flesh* in particular; the plays of Bernard Shaw continue to record it. In life one can see the change, if I may use a homely illustration, in the character of one's cook. The Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing-room, now to borrow *The Daily Herald*, now to ask advice about a hat. Do you ask for more solemn instances of the power of the human race to change? Read the *Agamemnon*, and see whether, in process of time, your sympathies are not almost entirely with Clytemnestra. Or consider the married life of the Carlyles, and bewail the waste, the futility, for him and for her, of the horrible domestic tradition which made it seemly for a woman of genius to spend her time chasing beetles, scouring saucepans, instead of writing books. All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910.

I have said that people have to acquire a good deal of skill in character-reading if they are to live a single year of life without disaster. But it is the art of the young. In middle age and in old age the art is practised mostly for its uses, and friendships and other adventures and experiments in the art of reading character are seldom made. But novelists differ from the rest of the world because they do not cease to be interested in character when they have learnt enough about it for practical purposes. They go a step further; they feel that there is something permanently interesting in character in itself. When all the practical business of life has been discharged, there is something about people which continues to seem to them of overwhelming importance, in spite of the fact that it has no bearing whatever upon their

happiness, comfort, or income. The study of character becomes to them an absorbing pursuit; to impart character an obsession. And this I find it very difficult to explain: what novelists mean when they talk about character, what the impulse is that urges them so powerfully every now and then to embody their view in writing.

So, if you will allow me, instead of analysing and abstracting, I will tell you a simple story which, however pointless, has the merit of being true, of a journey from Richmond to Waterloo, in the hope that I may show you what I mean by character in itself; that you may realise the different aspects it can wear; and the hideous perils that beset you directly you try to describe it in words.

One night some weeks ago, then, I was late for the train and jumped into the first carriage I came to. As I sat down I had the strange and uncomfortable feeling that I was interrupting a conversation between two people who were already sitting there. Not that they were young or happy. Far from it. They were both elderly, the woman over sixty, the man well over forty. They were sitting opposite each other, and the man, who had been leaning over and talking emphatically to judge by his attitude and the flush on his face, sat back and became silent. I had disturbed him, and he was annoyed. The elderly lady, however, whom I will call Mrs. Brown, seemed rather relieved. She was one of those clean, threadbare old ladies whose extreme tidiness—everything buttoned, fastened, tied together, mended and brushed up—suggests more extreme poverty than rags and dirt. There was something pinched about her—a look of suffering, of apprehension, and, in addition, she was extremely small. Her feet, in their clean little boots, scarcely touched the floor. I felt that she had nobody to support her; that she had to make up her mind for herself; that, having been deserted, or left a widow, years ago, she had led an anxious, harried life, bringing up an only son, perhaps, who, as likely as not, was by this time beginning to go to the bad. All this shot through my mind

as I sat down, being uncomfortable, like most people, at travelling with fellow passengers unless I have somehow or other accounted for them. Then I looked at the man. He was no relation of Mrs. Brown's I felt sure; he was of a bigger, burlier, less refined type. He was a man of business I imagined, very likely a respectable corn-chandler from the North, dressed in good blue serge with a pocket-knife and a silk handkerchief, and a stout leather bag. Obviously, however, he had an unpleasant business to settle with Mrs. Brown; a secret, perhaps sinister business, which they did not intend to discuss in my presence.

"Yes, the Crofts have had very bad luck with their servants," Mr. Smith (as I will call him) said in a considering way, going back to some earlier topic, with a view to keeping up appearances.

"Ah, poor people," said Mrs. Brown, a trifle condescendingly. "My grandmother had a maid who came when she was fifteen and stayed till she was eighty" (this was said with a kind of hurt and aggressive pride to impress us both perhaps).

"One doesn't often come across that sort of thing nowadays," said Mr. Smith in conciliatory tones.

Then they were silent.

"It's odd they don't start a golf club there—I should have thought one of the young fellows would," said Mr. Smith, for the silence obviously made him uneasy.

Mrs. Brown hardly took the trouble to answer.

"What changes they're making in this part of the world," said Mr. Smith looking out of the window, and looking furtively at me as he did do.

It was plain, from Mrs. Brown's silence, from the uneasy affability with which Mr. Smith spoke, that he had some power over her which he was exerting disagreeably. It might have been her son's downfall, or some painful episode in her past life, or her daughter's. Perhaps she was going to London to sign some document to make over some property.

Obviously against her will she was in Mr. Smith's hands. I was beginning to feel a great deal of pity for her, when she said, suddenly and inconsequently,

"Can you tell me if an oak-tree dies when the leaves have been eaten for two years in succession by caterpillars?"

She spoke quite brightly, and rather precisely, in a cultivated, inquisitive voice.

Mr. Smith was startled, but relieved to have a safe topic of conversation given him. He told her a great deal very quickly about plagues of insects. He told her that he had a brother who kept a fruit farm in Kent. He told her what fruit farmers do every year in Kent, and so on, and so on. While he talked a very odd thing happened. Mrs. Brown took out her little white handkerchief and began to dab her eyes. She was crying. But she went on listening quite composedly to what he was saying, and he went on talking, a little louder, a little angrily, as if he had seen her cry often before; as if it were a painful habit. At last it got on his nerves. He stopped abruptly, looked out of the window, then leant towards her as he had been doing when I got in, and said in a bullying, menacing way, as if he would not stand any more nonsense,

"So about that matter we were discussing. It'll be all right? George will be there on Tuesday?"

"We shan't be late," said Mrs. Brown, gathering herself together with superb dignity.

Mr. Smith said nothing. He got up, buttoned his coat, reached his bag down, and jumped out of the train before it had stopped at Clapham Junction. He had got what he wanted, but he was ashamed of himself; he was glad to get out of the old lady's sight.

Mrs. Brown and I were left alone together. She sat in her corner opposite, very clean, very small, rather queer, and suffering intensely. The impression she made was overwhelming. It came pouring out like a draught, like a smell of burning. What was it composed of—that overwhelming and peculiar impression? Myriads of irrelevant and incongruous

ideas crowd into one's head on such occasions; one sees the person, one sees Mrs. Brown, in the centre of all sorts of different scenes. I thought of her in a seaside house, among queer ornaments: sea-urchins, models of ships in glass cases. Her husband's medals were on the mantelpiece. She popped in and out of the room, perching on the edges of chairs, picking meals out of saucers, indulging in long, silent stares. The caterpillars and the oak-trees seemed to imply all that. And then, into this fantastic and secluded life, in broke Mr. Smith. I saw him blowing in, so to speak, on a windy day. He banged, he slammed. His dripping umbrella made a pool in the hall. They sat closeted together.

And then Mrs. Brown faced the dreadful revelation. She took her heroic decision. Early, before dawn, she packed her bag and carried it herself to the station. She would not let Smith touch it. She was wounded in her pride, unmoored from her anchorage; she came of gentlefolks who kept servants—but details could wait. The important thing was to realise her character, to steep oneself in her atmosphere. I had no time to explain why I felt it somewhat tragic, heroic, yet with a dash of the flighty, and fantastic, before the train stopped, and I watched her disappear, carrying her bag, into the vast blazing station. She looked very small, very tenacious; at once very frail and very heroic. And I have never seen her again, and I shall never know what became of her.

The story ends without any point to it. But I have not told you this anecdote to illustrate either my own ingenuity or the pleasure of travelling from Richmond to Waterloo. What I want you to see in it is this. Here is a character imposing itself upon another person. Here is Mrs. Brown making someone begin almost automatically to write a novel about her. I believe that all novels begin with an old lady in the corner opposite. I believe that all novels, that is to say, deal with character, and that it is to express character—not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel,

so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic, and alive, has been evolved. To express character, I have said; but you will at once reflect that the very widest interpretation can be put upon those words. For example, old Mrs. Brown's character will strike you very differently according to the age and country in which you happen to be born. It would be easy enough to write three different versions of that incident in the train, an English, a French, and a Russian. The English writer would make the old lady into a 'character'; he would bring out her oddities and mannerisms; her buttons and wrinkles; her ribbons and warts. Her personality would dominate the book. A French writer would rub out all that; he would sacrifice the individual Mrs. Brown to give a more general view of human nature; to make a more abstract, proportioned, and harmonious whole. The Russian would pierce through the flesh; would reveal the soul—the soul alone, wandering out into the Waterloo Road, asking of life some tremendous question which would sound on and on in our ears after the book was finished. And then there is the writer's temperament to be considered. You see one thing in character, and I another. You say it means this, and I that. And when it comes to writing each makes a further selection on principles of his own. Thus Mrs. Brown can be treated in an infinite variety of ways, according to the age, country, and temperament of the writer.

But now I must recall what Mr. Arnold Bennett says. He says that it is only if the characters are real that the novel has any chance of surviving. Otherwise, die it must. But, I ask myself, what is reality? And who are the judges of reality? A character may be real to Mr. Bennett and quite unreal to me. For instance, in this article he says that Dr. Watson in *Sherlock Holmes* is real to him: to me Dr. Watson is a sack stuffed with straw, a dummy, a figure of fun. And so it is with character after character—in book after book. There is nothing that people differ about more than the reality of characters, especially in contemporary books. But if you

take a larger view I think that Mr. Bennett is perfectly right. If, that is, you think of the novels which seem to you great novels—*War and Peace*, *Vanity Fair*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Madame Bovary*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Villette*—if you think of these books, you do at once think of some character who has seemed to you so real (I do not by that mean so lifelike) that it has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes—of religion, of love, of war, of peace, of family life, of balls in county towns, of sunsets, moonrises, the immortality of the soul. There is hardly any subject of human experience that is left out of *War and Peace* it seems to me. And in all these novels all these great novelists have brought us to see whatever they wish us to see through some character. Otherwise, they would not be novelists; but poets, historians, or pamphleteers.

But now let us examine what Mr. Bennett went on to say—he said that there was no great novelist among the Georgian writers because they cannot create characters who are real, true, and convincing. And there I cannot agree. There are reasons, excuses, possibilities which I think put a different colour upon the case. It seems so to me at least, but I am well aware that this is a matter about which I am likely to be prejudiced, sanguine, and near-sighted. I will put my view before you in the hope that you will make it impartial, judicial, and broad-minded. Why, then, is it so hard for novelists at present to create characters which seem real, not only to Mr. Bennett, but to the world at large? Why, when October comes round, do the publishers always fail to supply us with a masterpiece?

Surely one reason is that the men and women who began writing novels in 1910 or thereabouts had this great difficulty to face—that there was no English novelist living from whom they could learn their business. Mr. Conrad is a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes him, however admirable, not very helpful. Mr. Hardy has written no novel since 1895. The

most prominent and successful novelists in the year 1910 were, I suppose, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy. Now it seems to me that to go to these men and ask them to teach you how to write a novel—how to create characters that are real—is precisely like going to a bootmaker and asking him to teach you how to make a watch. Do not let me give you the impression that I do not admire and enjoy their books. They seem to me of great value, and indeed of great necessity. There are seasons when it is more important to have boots than to have watches. To drop metaphor, I think that after the creative activity of the Victorian age it was quite necessary, not only for literature but for life, that someone should write the books that Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have written. Yet what odd books they are! Sometimes I wonder if we are right to call them books at all. For they leave one with so strange a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. In order to complete them it seems necessary to do something—to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque. That done, the restlessness is laid, the book finished; it can be put upon the shelf, and need never be read again. But with the work of other novelists it is different. *Tristram Shandy* or *Pride and Prejudice* is complete in itself; it is self-contained; it leaves one with no desire to do anything, except indeed to read the book again, and to understand it better. The difference perhaps is that both Sterne and Jane Austen were interested in things in themselves; in character in itself; in the book in itself. Therefore everything was inside the book, nothing outside. But the Edwardians were never interested in character in itself; or in the book in itself. They were interested in something outside. Their books, then, were incomplete as books, and required that the reader should finish them, actively and practically, for himself.

Perhaps we can make this clearer if we take the liberty of imagining a little party in the railway carriage—Mr. Wells, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Bennett are travelling to Waterloo with Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown, I have said, was poorly dressed and

very small. She had an anxious, harassed look. I doubt whether she was what you call an educated woman. Seizing upon all these symptoms of the unsatisfactory condition of our primary schools with a rapidity to which I can do no justice, Mr. Wells would instantly project upon the window-pane a vision of a better, breezier, jollier, happier, more adventurous and gallant world, where these musty railway carriages and fusty old women do not exist; where miraculous barges bring tropical fruit to Camberwell by eight o'clock in the morning; where there are public nurseries, fountains, and libraries, dining-rooms, drawing-rooms, and marriages; where every citizen is generous and candid, manly and magnificent, and rather like Mr. Wells himself. But nobody is in the least like Mrs. Brown. There are no Mrs. Browns in Utopia. Indeed I do not think that Mr. Wells, in his passion to make her what she ought to be, would waste a thought upon her as she is. And what would Mr. Galsworthy see? Can we doubt that the walls of Doulton's factory would take his fancy? There are women in that factory who make twenty-five dozen earthenware pots every day. There are mothers in the Mile End Road who depend upon the farthings which those women earn. But there are employers in Surrey who are even now smoking rich cigars while the nightingale sings. Burning with indignation, stuffed with information, arraiging civilisation, Mr. Galsworthy would only see in Mrs. Brown a pot broken on the wheel and thrown into the corner.

Mr. Bennett, alone of the Edwardians, would keep his eyes in the carriage. He, indeed, would observe every detail with immense care. He would notice the advertisements; the pictures of Swanage and Portsmouth; the way in which the cushion bulged between the buttons; how Mrs. Brown wore a brooch which had cost three-and-ten-three at Whitworth's bazaar; and had mended both gloves—indeed the thumb of the left-hand glove had been replaced. And he would observe, at length, how this was the non-stop train from Windsor which calls at Richmond for the convenience of middle-

class residents, who can afford to go to the theatre but have not reached the social rank which can afford motor-cars, though it is true, there are occasions (he would tell us what), when they hire them from a company (he would tell us which). And so he would gradually sidle sedately towards Mrs. Brown, and would remark how she had been left a little copyhold, not freehold, property at Datchet, which, however, was mortgaged to Mr. Bungay the solicitor—but why should I presume to invent Mr. Bennett? Does not Mr. Bennett write novels himself? I will open the first book that chance puts in my way—*Hilda Lessways*. Let us see how he makes us feel that Hilda is real, true, and convincing, as a novelist should. She shut the door in a soft, controlled way, which showed the constraint of her relations with her mother. She was fond of reading *Maud*; she was endowed with the power to feel intensely. So far, so good; in his leisurely, surefooted way Mr. Bennett is trying in these first pages, where every touch is important, to show us the kind of girl she was.

But then he begins to describe, not Hilda Lessways, but the view from her bedroom window, the excuse being that Mr. Skellorn, the man who collects rents, is coming along that way. Mr. Bennett proceeds:

“The bailiwick of Turnhill lay behind her; and all the murky district of the Five Towns, of which Turnhill is the northern outpost, lay to the south. At the foot of Chatterley Wood the canal wound in large curves on its way towards the undefiled plains of Cheshire and the sea. On the canal-side, exactly opposite to Hilda’s window, was a flour-mill, that sometimes made nearly as much smoke as the kilns and the chimneys closing the prospect on either hand. From the flour-mill a bricked path, which separated a considerable row of new cottages from their appurtenant gardens, led straight into Lessways Street, in front of Mrs. Lessways’ house. By this path Mr. Skellorn should have arrived, for he inhabited the farthest of the cottages.”

One line of insight would have done more than all those lines

of description; but let them pass as the necessary drudgery of the novelist. And now—where is Hilda? Alas. Hilda is still looking out of the window. Passionate and dissatisfied as she was, she was a girl with an eye for houses. She often compared this old Mr. Skellorn with the villas she saw from her bedroom window. Therefore the villas must be described. Mr. Bennett proceeds:

“The row was called Freehold Villas: a consciously proud name in a district where much of the land was copyhold and could only change owners subject to the payment of ‘fines,’ and to the feudal consent of a ‘court’ presided over by the agent of a lord of the manor. Most of the dwellings were owned by their occupiers, who, each an absolute monarch of the soil, niggled in his sooty garden of an evening amid the flutter of drying shirts and towels. Freehold Villas symbolised the final triumph of Victorian economics, the apotheosis of the prudent and industrious artisan. It corresponded with a Building Society Secretary’s dream of paradise. And indeed it was a very real achievement. Nevertheless, Hilda’s irrational contempt would not admit this.”

Heaven be praised, we cry! At last we are coming to Hilda herself. But not so fast. Hilda may have been this, that, and the other; but Hilda not only looked at houses, and thought of houses; Hilda lived in a house. And what sort of a house did Hilda live in? Mr. Bennett proceeds:

“It was one of the two middle houses of a detached terrace of four houses built by her grandfather Lessways, the tea-pot manufacturer; it was the chief of the four, obviously the habitation of the proprietor of the terrace. One of the corner houses comprised a grocer’s shop, and this house had been robbed of its just proportion of garden so that the seigneurial garden-plot might be triflingly larger than the other. The terrace was not a terrace of cottages, but of houses rated at from twenty-six to thirty-six pounds a year; beyond the means of artisans and petty insurance agents and rent-collectors. And further, it was well built, generously built; and its archi-

ture, though debased, showed some faint traces of Georgian amenity. It was admittedly the best row of houses in that newly settled quarter of the town. In coming to it out of Freehold Villas Mr. Skellorn obviously came to something superior, wider, more liberal. Suddenly Hilda heard her mother's voice. . . ."

But we cannot hear her mother's voice, or Hilda's voice; we can only hear Mr. Bennett's voice telling us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines. What can Mr. Bennett be about? I have formed my own opinion of what Mr. Bennett is about—he is trying to make us imagine for him; he is trying to hypnotise us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there. With all his powers of observation, which are marvellous, with all his sympathy and humanity, which are great, Mr. Bennett has never once looked at Mrs. Brown in her corner. There she sits in the corner of the carriage—that carriage which is travelling, not from Richmond to Waterloo, but from one age of English literature to the next, for Mrs. Brown is eternal, Mrs. Brown is human nature, Mrs. Brown changes only on the surface, it is the novelists who get in and out—there she sits and not one of the Edwardian writers has so much as looked at her. They have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her, never at life, never at human nature. And so they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; they have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death.

You may well complain of the vagueness of my language. What is a convention, a tool, you may ask, and what do you mean by saying that Mr. Bennett's and Mr. Wells's and Mr. Galsworthy's conventions are the wrong conventions for the Georgian's? The question is difficult: I will attempt a short

cut. A convention in writing is not much different from a convention in manners. Both in life and in literature it is necessary to have some means of bridging the gulf between the hostess and her unknown guest on the one hand, the writer and his unknown reader on the other. The hostess bethinks her of the weather, for generations of hostesses have established the fact that this is a subject of universal interest in which we all believe. She begins by saying that we are having a wretched May, and, having thus got into touch with her unknown guest, proceeds to matters of greater interest. So it is in literature. The writer must get into touch with his reader by putting before him something which he recognises, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to co-operate in the far more difficult business of intimacy. And it is of the highest importance that this common meeting-place should be reached easily, almost instinctively, in the dark, with one's eyes shut. Here is Mr. Bennett making use of this common ground in the passage which I have quoted. The problem before him was to make us believe in the reality of Hilda Lessways. So he began, being an Edwardian, by describing accurately and minutely the sort of house Hilda lived in, and the sort of house she saw from the window. House property was the common ground from which the Edwardians found it easy to proceed to intimacy. Indirect as it seems to us, the convention worked admirably, and thousands of Hilda Lessways were launched upon the world by this means. For that age and generation, the convention was a good one.

But now, if you will allow me to pull my own anecdote to pieces, you will see how keenly I felt the lack of a convention, and how serious a matter it is when the tools of one generation are useless for the next. The incident had made a great impression on me. But how was I to transmit it to you? All I could do was to report as accurately as I could what was said, to describe in detail what was worn, to say, despairingly, that all sorts of scenes rushed into my mind, to proceed to tumble them out pell-mell, and to describe

this vivid, this overmastering impression by likening it to a draught or a smell of burning. To tell you the truth, I was also strongly tempted to manufacture a three-volume novel about the old lady's son, and his adventures crossing the Atlantic, and her daughter, and how she kept a milliner's shop in Westminster, the past life of Smith himself, and his house at Sheffield, though such stories seem to me the most dreary, irrelevant, and humbugging affairs in the world.

But if I had done that I should have escaped the appalling effort of saying what I meant. And to have got at what I meant. I should have had to go back and back and back; to experiment with one thing and another; to try this sentence and that, referring each word to my vision, matching it as exactly as possible, and knowing that somehow I had to find a common ground between us, a convention which would not seem to you too odd, unreal, and far-fetched to believe in. I admit that I shirked that arduous undertaking. I let my Mrs. Brown slip through my fingers. I have told you nothing whatever about her. But that is partly the great Edwardians' fault. I asked them—they are my elders and betters—How shall I begin to describe this woman's character? And they said, "Begin by saying that her father kept a shop in Harrogate. Ascertain the rent. Ascertain the wages of shop assistants in the year 1878. Discover what her mother died of. Describe cancer. Describe calico. Describe——" But I cried, "Stop! Stop!" And I regret to say that I threw that ugly, that clumsy, that incongruous tool out of the window, for I knew that if I began describing the cancer and the calico my Mrs. Brown, that vision to which I cling though I know no way of imparting it to you, would have been dulled and tarnished and vanished for ever.

That is what I mean by saying that the Edwardian tools are the wrong ones for us to use. They have laid an enormous stress upon the fabric of things. They have given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there. To give them their due, they have made

that house much better worth living in. But if you hold that novels are in the first place about people, and only in the second about the houses they live in, that is the wrong way to set about it. Therefore, you see, the Georgian writer had to begin by throwing away the method that was in use at the moment. He was left alone there facing Mrs. Brown without any method of conveying her to the reader. But that is inaccurate. A writer is never alone. There is always the public with him—if not on the same seat, at least in the compartment next door. Now the public is a strange travelling companion. In England it is a very suggestible and docile creature, which, once you get it to attend, will believe implicitly what it is told for a certain number of years. If you say to the public with sufficient conviction, "All women have tails, and all men humps," it will actually learn to see women with tails and men with humps, and will think it very revolutionary and probably improper if you say "Nonsense. Monkeys have tails and camels humps. But men and women have brains, and they have hearts; they think and they feel,"—that will seem to it a bad joke, and an improper into the bargain.

But to return. Here is the British public sitting by the writer's side and saying in its vast and unanimous way, "Old women have houses. They have fathers. They have incomes. They have servants. They have hot water bottles. That is how we know that they are old women. Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett and Mr. Galsworthy have always taught us that this is the way to recognise them. But now with your Mrs. Brown—how are we to believe in her? We do not even know whether her villa was called Albert or Balmoral; what she paid for her gloves; or whether her mother died of cancer or of consumption. How can she be alive? No; she is a mere figment of your imagination."

And old women of course ought to be made of freehold villas and copyhold estates, not of imagination.

The Georgian novelist, therefore, was in an awkward predicament. There was Mrs. Brown protesting that she was

different, quite different, from what people made out, and luring the novelist to her rescue by the most fascinating if fleeting glimpse of her charms; there were the Edwardians handing out tools appropriate to house building and house breaking; and there was the British public asseverating that they must see the hot water bottle first. Meanwhile the train was rushing to that station where we must all get out.

Such, I think, was the predicament in which the young Georgians found themselves about the year 1910. Many of them—I am thinking of Mr. Forster and Mr. Lawrence in particular—spoilt their early work because, instead of throwing away those tools, they tried to use them. They tried to compromise. They tried to combine their own direct sense of the oddity and significance of some character with Mr. Galsworthy's knowledge of the Factory Acts, and Mr. Bennett's knowledge of the Five Towns. They tried it, but they had too keen, too overpowering a sense of Mrs. Brown and her peculiarities to go on trying it much longer. Something had to be done. At whatever cost of life, limb, and damage to valuable property Mrs. Brown must be rescued, expressed, and set in her high relations to the world before the train stopped and she disappeared for ever. And so the smashing and the crashing began. Thus it is that we hear all round us, in poems and novels and biographies, even in newspaper articles and essays, the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction. It is the prevailing sound of the Georgian age—rather a melancholy one if you think what melodious days there have been in the past, if you think of Shakespeare and Milton and Keats or even of Jane Austen and Thackeray and Dickens; if you think of the language, and the heights to which it can soar when free, and see the same eagle captive, bald, and croaking.

In view of these facts, with these sounds in my ears and these fancies in my brain, I am not going to deny that Mr. Bennett has some reason when he complains that our Georgian writers are unable to make us believe that our characters are real.

I am forced to agree that they do not pour out three immortal masterpieces with Victorian regularity every autumn. But instead of being gloomy, I am sanguine. For this state of things is, I think, inevitable whenever from hoar old age or callow youth the convention ceases to be a means of communication between writer and reader, and becomes instead an obstacle and an impediment. At the present moment we are suffering, not from decay, but from having no code of manners which writers and readers accept as a prelude to the more exciting intercourse of friendship. The literary convention of the time is so artificial—you have to talk about the weather and nothing but the weather throughout the entire visit—that, naturally, the feeble are tempted to outrage, and the strong are led to destroy the very foundations and rules of literary society. Signs of this are everywhere apparent. Grammar is violated; syntax disintegrated, as a boy staying with an aunt for the weekend rolls in the geranium bed out of sheer desperation as the solemnities of the sabbath wear on. The more adult writers do not, of course, indulge in such wanton exhibitions of spleen. Their sincerity is desperate, and their courage tremendous; it is only that they do not know which to use, a fork or their fingers. Thus, if you read Mr. Joyce and Mr. Eliot you will be struck by the indecency of the one, and the obscurity of the other. Mr. Joyce's indecency in *Ulysses* seems to me the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break the windows. At moments, when the window is broken, he is magnificent. But what a waste of energy! And, after all, how dull indecency is, when it is not the overflowing of a superabundant energy or savagery, but the determined and public-spirited act of a man who needs fresh air! Again, with the obscurity of Mr. Eliot. I think that Mr. Eliot has written some of the loveliest lines in modern poetry. But how intolerant he is of the old usages and politenesses of society—respect for the weak, consideration for the dull! As I sun

myself upon the intense and ravishing beauty of one of his lines, and reflect that I must make a dizzy and dangerous leap to the next, and so on from line to line, like an acrobat flying precariously from bar to bar, I cry out, I confess, for the old decorums, and envy the indolence of my ancestors who, instead of spinning madly through mid-air, dreamt quietly in the shade with a book. Again, in Mr. Strachey's books, "Eminent Victorians" and "Queen Victoria," the effort and strain of writing against the grain and current of the times is visible too. It is much less visible, of course, for not only is he dealing with facts, which are stubborn things, but he has fabricated, chiefly from eighteenth-century material, a very discreet code of manners of his own, which allows him to sit at table with the highest in the land and to say a great many things under cover of that exquisite apparel which, had they gone naked, would have been chased by the men-servants from the room. Still, if you compare "Eminent Victorians" with some of Lord Macaulay's essays, though you will feel that Lord Macaulay is always wrong, and Mr. Strachey always right, you will also feel a body, a sweep, a richness in Lord Macaulay's essays which show that his age was behind him; all his strength went straight into his work; none was used for purposes of concealment or of conversion. But Mr. Strachey has had to open our eyes before he made us see; he has had to search out and sew together a very artful manner of speech; and the effort, beautifully though it is concealed, has robbed his work of some of the force that should have gone into it, and limited his scope.

For these reasons, then, we must reconcile ourselves to a season of failures and fragments. We must reflect that where so much strength is spent on finding a way of telling the truth the truth itself is bound to reach us in rather an exhausted and chaotic condition. Ulysses, Queen Victoria, Mr. Prufrock—to give Mrs. Brown some of the names she has made famous lately—is a little pale and dishevelled by the time her rescuers reach her. And it is the sound of their axes that we hear—a vigorous and stimulating sound in my ears—unless of course

you wish to sleep, when, in the bounty of his concern, Providence has provided a host of writers anxious and able to satisfy your needs.

Thus I have tried, at tedious length, I fear, to answer some of the questions which I began by asking. I have given an account of some of the difficulties which in my view beset the Georgian writer in all his forms. I have sought to excuse him. May I end by venturing to remind you of the duties and responsibilities that are yours as partners in this business of writing books, as companions in the railway carriage, as fellow travellers with Mrs. Brown? For she is just as visible to you who remain silent as to us who tell stories about her. In the course of your daily life this past week you have had far stranger and more interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overheard scraps of talk that filled you with amazement. You have gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of your feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder. Nevertheless, you allow the writers to palm off upon you a version of all this, an image of Mrs. Brown, which has no likeness to that surprising apparition whatsoever. In your modesty you seem to consider that writers are of different blood and bone from yourselves; that they know more of Mrs. Brown than you do. Never was there a more fatal mistake. It is this division between reader and writer, this humility on your part, these professional airs and graces on ours, that corrupt and emasculate the books which should be the healthy offspring of a close and equal alliance between us. Hence spring those sleek, smooth novels, those portentous and ridiculous biographies, that milk and watery criticism, those poems melodiously celebrating the innocence of roses and sheep which pass so plausibly for literature at the present time.

Your part is to insist that writers shall come down off their plinths and pedestals, and describe beautifully if possible,

truthfully at any rate, our Mrs. Brown. You should insist that she is an old lady of unlimited capacity and infinite variety; capable of appearing in any place; wearing any dress; saying anything and doing heaven knows what. But the things she says and the things she does and her eyes and her nose and her speech and her silence have an overwhelming fascination, for she is, of course, the spirit we live by, life itself.

But do not expect just at present a complete and satisfactory presentment of her. Tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure. Your help is invoked in a good cause. For I will make one final and surpassingly rash prediction—we are trembling on the verge of one of the great ages of English literature. But it can only be reached if we are determined never, never to desert Mrs. Brown.

ITHACA

By C. P. CAVAFY

WHEN you start on the way to Ithaca,
 Wish that the way be long,
 Full of adventure, full of knowledge.
 The Læstrygones and the Cyclopes
 And angry Poseidon, do not fear:
 Such, on your way, you shall never meet
 If your thoughts are lofty, if a noble
 Emotion touch your mind, your body.
 The Læstrygones and the Cyclopes
 And angry Poseidon you shall not meet
 If you carry them not in your soul,
 If your soul sets them not up before you.

Wish that the way be long,
 That on many summer mornings,
 With great pleasure, great delight,
 You enter harbours for the first time seen;
 That you stop at Phœnician marts,
 And procure the goodly merchandise,
 Mother-of-pearl and corals, amber and ebony,
 And sensual perfumes of all kinds,
 Plenty of sensual perfumes especially;
 To wend your way to many Egyptian cities,
 To learn and yet to learn from the wise.

Ever keep Ithaca in your mind,
 Your return thither is your goal.
 But do not hasten at all your voyage,
 Better that it last for many years;

And full of years at length you anchor at your isle
 Rich with all that you gained on the way ;
 Do not expect Ithaca to give you riches.

Ithaca gave you your fair voyage.
 Without her you would not have ventured on the way.
 But she has no more to give you.

And if you find Ithaca a poor place,
 She has not mocked you.
 You have become so wise, so full of experience
 That you should understand already what
 These Ithacas mean.

(Translated from the Greek by G. Valassopoulos.)

A GERMAN EIGHTEENTH- CENTURY TOWN

By OSBERT SITWELL

WHEN civilisation was making a fresh start in the western world, it was amid the peace of the Venetian lagoons that there rose up the most lovely palaces in Europe. Here was no necessity for defence ; no enemy could enter this watery fastness to burn or destroy. Happy in the amphibious character of his city, the Venetian merchant need not consider his mansion as a fortress, but could build with convenience and beauty for his only objects. He could spend the money with which in other countries it would have been necessary to purchase a stock of armour, cross-bows, clubs, rapiers, bludgeons, oil (for boiling, not for giving light), stone slings, stone balls, instruments of torture and Greek fire, on the enriching of his home. He could encrust the façade with slabs and strips of marble, split so as to give the pattern of a brocade, divide it with marble pillars, clustered together and bearing capitals of carved stone, inlay it with bosses of porphyry, serpentine, or bas-reliefs which his fleet had stolen from the dying Eastern Empire, with no fear that these things would be burnt or smashed. If he were too poor to indulge in these extravagances, he could paint the outside of his house in stripes, checks, and gay patterns with no thought of their being immediately obliterated. But in almost every other European city at this period the money spent thus would have been directed into making the living rooms as small, the walls as thick, the front as stern, as possible. Yet these light-hearted

Venetian palaces are more beautiful than their frowning, yellow contemporaries at Florence or Sienna, have outlived the fifty-foot thick walls of Heidelberg, Kenilworth, or Windsor.

Domestic architecture began early, too, in Palermo, where, blessed by its guardian sea and by the rule of wise kings, there was an efflorescence unequalled except at Venice.

But in England the building of beautiful houses can hardly be said to have begun until the War of the Roses was ended. Gradually the grim character of the Gothic altered; the heavy buttress took to itself wings and flew; the early intentions of fortification were forgotten, took on a merely ornamental value. Often, when something originally intended for war, for attack or defence, sinks into a forgetful old age, it assumes a certain beauty. The rhinoceros, clumsy and grotesque as the armoured knight, becomes transformed into the gracious unicorn. The savage butting horn of the one becomes the fruit-transfixing ivory of the other. In the same way you find Knole, or the early part of Hampton Court, springing out of the forbidding ruins of a feudal castle. While even after that, comes the greatest period of English domestic architecture, so well exemplified in Wilton House and Bolsover Castle, only, alas, to be cut short in its best, most typical phase by the outbreak of the Civil War, which was to warp its tradition for ever. In Germany, owing to the warlike character of the reigning princes and great nobles, domestic building achieved little but accidental—or romantic—beauty, until the latter half of the seventeenth century. Thus, naturally, since she began her triumph at so late an age, Germany is particularly rich in palaces and churches of the Baroque and Rococo periods.

In southern Germany it is, of course, that the best rococo work is to be found; for it should be recognised that this style was Catholic in invention and inspiration, Jesuitical in its faults, and is in reality only to be found at its best in Catholic countries. Thus, though the eighteenth century was a great period for building in England, little rococo work is to be discovered there. We had achieved a more solid, a more

Protestant style, to be seen at its best in Houghton and Holkham. Traces there are of the Rococo in other English arts—Pope, for instance, is the most perfect rococo artist we possess; and in order to understand, to appreciate fully his work, it is necessary to remember that he was a Papist.

In spite of their learning and enthusiasm for things of the mind, in spite, or perhaps because of their genius for music, it is probable that the Germans have always had a stronger streak of barbarism in their natures than is to be found in the French, English, or Italians. They never enjoyed to the same degree as these peoples the advantages of a Roman foundation. But it was the triumph of the latter half of the seventeenth and, above all, of the eighteenth century, to force, for the first time since the passing of the Roman Empire, an elegant, if somewhat artificial, culture upon the ruling classes in nearly every country. Libraries, museums, and picture-galleries suddenly appeared everywhere. Palaces sprang up, like gilded mushrooms, in one night all over the world, in Italy, France, Spain, England, Poland, Mexico, Russia, and Germany; and, though these palaces might lack the qualities of the greatest art, could never attempt to rival the earlier ones at Venice, Urbino, Mantua, or Rome, they were, at least, the pleasure-houses of civilised beings.

And the contribution of Germany to this culture was an important one. The conditions there, indeed, were very favourable. As in Italy, the necessary stimulus was found in the competition of numerous small courts, but these were less cramped by poverty, less embarrassed by being already in the possession of magnificent homes. Thus kings, grand-dukes, prince-bishops, margraves, were all engaged in a titanic but harmless warfare to proclaim their respective wealth and importance; seas of cement, mountains of brick and stone, whole valleys of rare marble, and in Russia quarries even of amethyst, malachite and onyx, oceans of gilding, were the fuel for these rich battles. It was a world-wide sequel to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Perhaps the ambition which, to

put it frankly, was the desire to "show off," may have been a mean one; but, at any rate, the manner was worthy. Our plainer, less ambitious statesmen achieve the same object by the threat of a new war in the Near East, or by the addition of several shillings to the income-tax; but if this money were spent in the creation or buying of a work of art it would be recognised as wicked extravagance—and no lives would be lost. The same age which conceives and executes Dreadnoughts at the cost of eight or nine million pounds each, which specialises in tank and big gun, sees Stowe, a more beautiful but almost equal extravagance, nearly perish for lack of funds. In Germany, too, the palaces are doomed, the plaster is falling in mimic snow-storms; in the gardens the trees have been cut, and in most of them the fountains have ceased playing for ever.

"Another age shall see the golden ear
Embrown the slope and nod on the parterre."

At first the Germans, distrusting their own power, made use of foreign artists and workmen. In this manner they learnt much, and, out of the knowledge thus acquired, developed, perhaps, for the first time, a national style. This latter is seen at its best in the beautifully dignified work of J. B. Neumann of Würzburg, who designed the Concordia at Bamberg, one of the most lovely smaller houses in Germany, worked on the palace there, and designed the still more magnificent one in his native town. He and his school gave to their work a strength, richness, and solidity, both of material and construction, which was lacking in the flimsier, more fantastic improvisations of Italy, Sicily, and Spain.

Arriving at Bayreuth after dark, little is visible of the town—nor can you even see "the Wagner Theatre and large lunatic asylum on the right" which Baedeker tactfully indicates together as being "conspicuous."

To many English people Bayreuth suggests only the image of a monstrous theatre in a pine-wood, of music-lovers, dark

and beaked like harpies, hastily swallowing doughnuts and gulping down hot chocolate in the *entr'actes*, before they return to wallow once more in the luxuriance and fertility of Wagner's genius. But, though the fame of that great composer is linked with Bayreuth, the town itself belongs to another period—one as divorced in ideas from the music and drama of Wagner as it is possible to imagine—an unheroic epoch of miniature courts and polite learning, and of passions well ordered; a time in which everyone but the highwayman observed certain rules of order, deportment, art, and even of love; but a world, all the same, in which already lurked those germs of revolution which were to destroy it artistically and politically. Not only were these germs allowed, they were actually encouraged. And in this small town, under the same roof as the Court, lived for some time one of the chief destroyers of his own age, and creators of those succeeding, Voltaire! This town, then, belongs more to the time of Voltaire than of Wagner; it is of one predominant style in detail and planning as is Bath (most delightful of English cities) with the addition—and it is one that no perfect town can afford to neglect—of a derelict palace that strangers can visit at any hour. Outside Bayreuth, too, there is another royal residence, half-cottage, half-palace, set back three miles in the country among golden corn-fields and hanging woods.

Most of the architectural background here was conceived between the years 1700 and 1760; much of it inspired by that remarkable woman the Margravine Sophie-Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick the Great and friend of Voltaire. She it was who imported from Paris a certain French architect, St. Pierre, who lived here for many years, building at least half the town. Churches, palaces, orangeries, gardens, convents, all sprang into being at a touch of his magic wand; while he laid out the town itself in formal but commodious fashion. Yet the effect is always German, not French—a tribute to the good sense and understanding of an architect who must have comprehended that a style unsuited to its neighbourhood

could no more be imposed upon a town than a foreign rule upon the inhabitants.

In the centre of the town is the New Palace, an admirable low building of two stories, designed by St. Pierre for Frederick, husband of Wilhelmine. Most palaces built at this date consisted of but two stories, for at Versailles Louis XIV had started the idea that he was too important to have people sleeping, or even walking, above him—an idea welcomed with great enthusiasm by the mimic monarchs and small rulers of the German States. This residence is a charming one, sufficiently impressive yet not pompous, a comfortable country house brushed up for the occasion, situated in a square built of the same soft grey stone, in the same epoch, and, presumably, by the same architect.

Set up in the middle of this square, for all to see, is a fountain bearing an equestrian statue of Margrave Christian Edward, a rather distinguished general and marshal of the Empire. But here he rides in surpassing pomp. Beneath a plumed helmet, his periwig flows in lava-like curls over his breastplate; his face, with its strongly marked rococo features, full of character, has the severe expression of one of the less objectionable Roman Emperors. Sword hanging from one hand, marshal's baton gripped in the other, he is obviously ready for any fray, were it not that his horse's victorious career is being checked by the uplifted hand of a favourite dwarf. The latter is wearing that kilt or abbreviated toga which seems to have been the conventional court-dress for black dwarfs of the period. At the base of the fountain are shown the Four Quarters of the Globe proclaiming the Margrave's martial prowess and civil virtues in full-throated chorus. The American Indian, with high-feathered headdress, is particularly enthusiastic in this vociferation, though one is inclined to doubt whether many natives of that continent were, in reality, aware of the Margrave's conquests. This fountain is an enchanting and grotesque work of art, having something of the quality which Aubrey Beardsley introduced into his drawings for *The Rape of the Lock*.

The interior of the New Palace is comparatively disappointing, though it contains much beautiful furniture and some fine panels of Brussels tapestry. The garden front is low, rambling, comfortable-looking, but has only one real architectural feature: a balcony, which, supported by two giant satyr-caryatides, bellies out over the garden; detached from the body of the palace is a pavilion that, though much smaller, rather resembles Devonshire House. The interior is full of beautiful plaster-work such as is found, carried out by Venetian artists, all over Europe—very much like the two drawing-rooms in the now derelict Sutton-Scarsdale in Derbyshire, work of a wonderful fineness, executed by a Venetian, Martino Petrozzi, who, working under St. Pierre, decorated the interior of the royal church as well as many rooms in the palace.

The garden is rather small, but has that ideal beauty, melancholy yet kindly, which one noticed as a child in old gardens. Here are statues, formal canals, and cut hedges of yew; but the general effect is not overwhelming, as is sometimes that of the larger gardens of this rather heartless century. This pleasant palace and garden, unpretentious yet in a way imposing, comfortable and obviously the home of nice people (we heard the Doges' Palace described the other day as the Unpleasant Home of Unpleasant People), would not have incurred the wrath of Pope as did those vast machines which he compares to Brobdingnag.

"Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
A puny insect, shivering at a breeze!
Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
The whole a laboured quarry above ground.

The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees."

The thick-boled trees, with their golden leaves, doubled by the flat sheets of water mirroring all the intricate arrangements of branches, twigs and sky, the long, untended grass heavy with dew, the statue, with its rustic rather clumsy grace,

placed on a little island—all have a sympathy which is lacking in the prodigious array of Versailles or Nymphenberg: here the effect is out of all proportion to the work, for little labour was necessary, little money was spent on the creation of this garden. The house lies long and low behind you. The high, red-brick walls of the orchards are soft coloured, covered with the flat branches, clutching at the walls like open fingers, of pear and plum trees. The flowers in the beds, many coloured and tall, are just conscious of the winter so soon to come. The purples, pinks, and deep reds are as bright yet soft as ever, but the full green stalks and thick leaves are touched with brown, and have too much moisture on them, whether of rain or dew, dripping, if you touch them, with little silver bells. There is a dampness in the air, a misty scent, rather sad but still fresh and sweet, of decaying leaves and over-blown flowers, though in a day or two the sharp aromatic smell of a bonfire will lie heavily on the rain-washed air, and the ground will be hard and silvered with the grip of winter.

From the palace all the streets are laid out regularly: stone houses, well built, with pillars of cut stone, balconies made for hot summer nights, and high roofs, alternate with gate-piers, crowned with trophies and coats of arms. These, like the palace, and like the church which lies hidden away in the Old Palace, are by St. Pierre. This Old Palace is a rather uninteresting building; but the royal church, though not beautiful outside, has a charming interior decorated with plaster-work by Petrozzi. Over the walls and ceilings a mob of insubordinate cupids are engaged in whirling away with the Cardinal's hat, trying on the mitres of various bishops, and even, we regret to say, stealing the keys from St. Peter. All this work is in relief, but lies very flat against the wall, and is exquisitely designed.

The chief monument of the French architect, though, is undoubtedly the Hermitage, the Margravine Sophie-Wilhelmine's summer resting-place, a palace complete—replete even—"with every modern convenience" of that age—Sun-temple, water-

basins, pebble-work orangeries, shell-work grottoes, fountains, mirror-rooms, Chinese decorations, Roman amphitheatre, and pseudo-classical remains.

Autumn must be the ideal time for walking through these wide gardens: it tones down the general decay, making it merely a part of the yearly disintegration of Nature, while frosty sunshine still gives an aureole of golden leaves to the fountains which glitter up like rockets in the cold air. Only the sham ruins remain perfect and untouched in this desolation, immune from Time's decrees. It is a curious, perverse trait, full of ironic comment, this habit, formed by artificial ruins, of remaining intact!

Thus, at the Hermitage, the Roman amphitheatre and pseudo-classical remains are in perfect order, though the rest of the garden is perishing. It is still beautiful, however, full of old trees, groups of statuary, and the sound of flowing water. Under the tall, elephant-coloured trunks of the beech-trees Tritons still blow down their mossy conchs with an air of triumph. Interminable green tunnels stretch to an almost invisible blue stretch of country, and entering one of these alleys is like gazing down the wrong end of a telescope, so distant, round, and small is the view-point.

Placed among all these things is the Hermitage, where the little royalties spent their thebaidic lives, like children who play at being Red Indians, surrounded by an array of marble banqueting-halls, mirror-rooms, plaster-orchards, and a whole world of Chinoiserie. Hermits were very popular just then. If you were an important person, but did not play at being an anchorite yourself, you employed a proxy, who would live in the Park. At one great house in England the accounts disclose a half-yearly payment of £300 to a hermit, who had, for this commensurate salary, to remain bearded and in a state of picturesque dirtiness for six months in the year in an artificial cave at a suitable distance from the house—just far enough (but not too far) for the fashionable house-party, with its court of subservient poets and painters, to visit, walking there in the after-

noons, peering into the semi-darkness with a little thrill of wonder and excitement. During the winter months, however, the hermit was permitted to retire to a warmer, more congenial dwelling in the country town near by, where, no doubt, he could live in some comfort upon his hardly earned income.

The Hermitage here is half cottage, half palace. The exterior is fronted with stucco-rocks, to give it a wild, cave-like appearance. Even the chimneys are built of rockwork! The feast-hall, its most important room, is a large, handsome apartment panelled with marble, rather like some of the rooms at the Trianon. But the Margravine's writing-room is perhaps the most remarkable feature of the house; with a square alcove at one end, for a couch, the whole expanse of wall and ceiling is covered entirely with angular, irregular patches of mirror, reflecting every object in a state of semi-consciousness, a very modern room that looks as if it had been designed by one of the French Cubists, showing (as some dignified critics write about modern poetry) "a striving to be original at all costs." Next door to this is the music-room, as unusual but more beautiful in its decoration, and, again, very near the modern feeling. The ceiling has on it in bas-relief a design of plaster cupids playing on huge 'cellos, while on the walls, arranged in panels, are plaster still-lives, of violins, bagpipes, flutes, mandolines and other musical instruments. These gilded trophies, once more by Martino Petrozzi, are, except for their being in plaster, curiously in the manner of Severini, Juan Gris, Picasso, and other modern artists.

The Chinese rooms, of which there are so many different examples in German palaces, are here made of square pieces torn from a corymbel screen, while the ceilings are inlaid with squares of mirror, in whose watery light are reflected many dragons and oriental beasts.

Near the Hermitage is the Orangery, an imposing semi-circular building, with an arcaded front, plastered with designs in pebble-work. Steps, curving with the façade, lead down in shallow flights to a large basin of water, where monsters rise

out of the depths, spouting foam. The actual centre of the Orangery is an octagonal building with a domed roof, disconnected from the two curved wings. This is the Sun-temple.

The colonnades shelter a series of rooms most typical of their period. There is to be found in them much beauty, but also a certain desire to startle and surprise. First comes a chamber hung with Chinese glass-paintings, the ceiling covered with mirror, and painted with formal wreaths of flowers. Then follows a suite of rooms containing every sort of plaster-work. You have to walk out into the air for a minute, then enter the Sun-temple, a stately pavilion with marble walls and pilasters, very correct in manner, and curiously unlike the rest of the decoration in feeling. More Chinese rooms, and then comes the most entertaining apartment of all. It is a large, square room, in the middle of which is a dolphin fountain, while each corner has a miniature grotto in it, with water dripping down in thin stalactites. The walls are divided by pilasters, covered with painted creepers, and crowned by large vases of painted flowers in relief, among which squat gaudy macaws and many tropical birds. There is a lattice-work dado, while above this, between the pillars, are orange-trees and peach-trees of painted plaster, offering you their false fruit with a very naturalistic air. When the doors are closed, country gates and trees in the distance take their place.

This fantastic pleasure-house, sheltered by the cool shadow of colonnades and high swaying branches, the ceiling and floor dappled with circling patches of light thrice refined by their penetration through trees, arcades, and flowing water, must have made an ideal summer resting-place for the royal hermits. And no doubt the thin, rather acid shadow of M. Voltaire often rested with them here, though his spirit was like an axe laid at the base of these artificial trees of peach and orange.

The country out of which this park and garden are made, varies delightfully. Flat, open spaces alternate with woods, sweeping down steep hills; and in the hollows everywhere

are playing waters and green-stained statues, while at only a little distance from the Orangery, but at a considerable depth beneath it, is the Shell Grotto, which must have been designed by some Venetian garden architect. It is a high, dark pavilion, its dome, shaped like a fruit, with masks peering out of the surrounding blackness, and monsters bending their faces down to gaze in yours. Water gushes from every place, from floor, wall and ceiling, giving a cool, cellar-like atmosphere more necessary to the heats of Italy than to the German autumn. An old woman came in, placing a crown or tiara, upon which are six lighted candles, on the floor beneath all these fluttering ribbons of water. Suddenly there is the sound of an even greater rushing of spray, and the crown ascends, as if flying, twenty feet up into the air, supported on a quivering pillar of foam. Certainly it is a great moment when that solid tiara dances aloft, gradually lighting the darkness, till the whole mass of rising and falling water glistens as if a rainbow had been caught fast, frozen in a cave of crystal icicles. It shows how the eighteenth century could achieve the impossible, reducing life, the elements even, to toys, and with what magic it could balance an artificial culture over forces still savage and untamed.

The mention of a theatre at Bayreuth will, doubtless, call up to English minds the image of a huge, half-timbered barn in those dreary Aldershot-like pine woods. But the Opera-house in the town is as remarkable as the Wagnerian one, and much pleasanter to look at. Curiously enough, it is the very symbol of everything Wagner fought against; it exemplifies all those rules of music and the theatre which, because they had become petrified in his time, because they were then utterly without life, it was Wagner's triumph to break down and destroy. But now, again, these things have life; their tyranny has been broken and the spirit has come back to them, while Wagner, perhaps, has put in their place laws equally stagnant and less patined with age.

Designed by Giuseppe Bibbiena, no more perfect example of the eighteenth-century opera-house is to be found anywhere—not even in Italy, the home of the theatre. And though the Bibbiena family, of Bologna—a family that was almost a tribe, so great its numbers—produced the most famous stage designers of the time, with a world-wide reputation, yet comparatively few of its works survive. This Opera-house, therefore, apart from any question of beauty, belongs to the history of the stage; but, though it is a signed work, with the designer's name writ large over the Royal Box, no guide-book mentions that it is a Bibbiena theatre.

The façade was planned by St. Pierre, and is a stately, typically German, stone building, with its projection of three large doors, above which several Corinthian pillars rise up to support a coved and orange-tiled roof, the cornice of which is set with eight stone statues. But this dignified, stolid front gives no hint of the lively Italian riot that is proceeding within. It is merely like the heavy leather case for an intricate, fantastic piece of jewellery; for the interior is equal, in imaginative quality and execution, to any theatre-work of its time, is more beautiful even than the Phoenix at Venice or the San Carlo at Naples. Like these, the theatre is built up entirely out of opera-boxes, of which here there are only three tiers, while the most important architectural feature of the house, to which all things, even the stage, are subordinated, is the Royal Box, set in the middle and stretching from floor to roof. At the corners of the house, on either side above the stage, are two trumpeters' galleries from which fanfares would sound into the gilded, candle-lit air upon the arrival of the royal party. The doors would be thrown wide, and in they would walk, covered with miniature orders, golden eagles and fleeces, diamond stars and crosses, the chivalric badges of such Lilliputian States as Monaco, Luxembourg, and Bayreuth, while in virtue of the Margravine's relationship to Frederick, one or two of the most favoured may even sport a Prussian order. Immediately all eyes were fixed upon this box, the rival of the stage. So

intense would be the interest that even the candles would stop flickering, as if to hold their breath at the mere sight of so much glory. Little showers of white powder would fall in miniature cascades through the golden air from the curving ranges of boxes, as the ladies and gentlemen moved their heads, or shifted their positions, so as not to miss a single gesture or expression of the Margrave and Margravine as they entered their splendid cage. They sit down next to each other in their huge, rococo chairs, and the mummers, much impressed—respecting competitors for the public interest, and ones who possess the hereditary gift both of acting and of holding the attention of the audience all the time, however interesting or exciting may be the rival spectacle on the stage proper—shine again in the reflected glory of the Royal Box just opposite them. And how well the theatre designer of that time understood the mounting of Royalty!

In this theatre the Royal Box was admirably staged by Bibbiena, who understood the whole business as if born to it. Opposite the stage, in the centre of the house, a balustraded double staircase leads from it on to the plebeian floor. The box itself is a small painted room, on each side of which are two pillars, with gilded vines, carrying bunches of grapes twined round them; above is a canopy of painted wood, with large hanging gilded-wood tassels. Higher up, and slightly at the side, two cupids arrange formal bouquets in two vast flower-vases. Then come two allegorical figures, threatened by a fierce eagle, flapping his powerful gilded wings. Now tower up a huge crown, several caryatides, and (we are at the top of the house) two flying cupids, waving a rococo shield on which is inscribed "pro Friederigo et Sophia Josephus Gallus Bibbienna fecit, anno MDCCXLVIII." Opposite, over the stage, two huge flying figures are blowing fanfares in the direction of the royal party.

The theatre is typical of the town. About the whole place there is that enchanting, mock-heroic air, which is illustrated in literature by Pope's *Rape of the Lock*—an atmosphere which

only lingers in these decayed German princely towns. Everywhere the palaces, churches, theatres, gardens, squares, even the very streets, are set for the strutting of these tiny figures, all engaged in striking the correct Sun-king attitude—but there is something very beautiful as well as pathetic about this posturing. The cultivation of music, literature, and the arts is always noble, even if the ultimate aim is a little mean, the manner a little ostentatious. Here, in spite of bombast and rhetoric, is a comfortable, homely air, a sense that the Margraves themselves knew that it was only play, a solidity together with a feeling of heart, only to be found in these small principalities, and very absent in the overwhelming grandeur of Versailles, the source from which all these things come.

THE OLD LADIES

By HUGH WALPOLE

CHAPTER II

EVENING IN THE HOUSE. AGATHA PAYNE

DARKNESS gathers swiftly in November and below the rock the lights of the Seatown slum gaily flickered. There came up to the black walls of the houses some shadow of the last pale afterglow of the sunset and motion was sent spinning through the evening air by the shrill discordant notes of a cornet that someone in Seatown was enjoying.

In Pontippy Square there was no life. The tides of Polchester had passed it by. The old houses, once, in eighteenth-century years fashionable and alive had sunk their chins into their breasts and so slept. Used largely once for warehouses, they were now like No. 19 where lived the old ladies let out in pieces to occasional lodgers. It was the shabbiest inch of all the genteel districts of the town.

In the square there were only two lamps, and these at opposite corners, so that the space before No. 19 was unlighted. The pavement here, too, was broken and grass-grown so that it made a splendid trap for the unwary. After dusk to navigate the holes and broken stones then to find the door to turn the round iron knob to discover the stair-rail and then successfully to start upwards into the forbidding dark was no mean feat of seamanship, and for an old lady it was dangerous indeed.

Some years before an old lodger had been discovered by the milkman in the morning at the bottom of the stairs with her neck and many bones broken. She had fallen a full flight. She haunted, poor old whippy-haired, crumpled lady, the square after dusk. She always had with her a little sniffing dog. You could feel him sniffing at your trousers or skirts.

The silence of Pontippy Square was another matter of note. The sniffing of a ghostly little dog could indeed be heard miles away if you chose to listen for sound. But silent though the square might be, once within the house with the heavy old door closed behind you and you sank deep deep into a well of oblivion. You might climb the stair with the hope, perhaps, of discovering it livelier if you went higher. But the silence follows you. When out of breath on the third floor now, you pause and listen, it is only the hammering of your heart that you hear. Silence everywhere.

Mrs. Payne's room was the first on the right of the stairs. If you opened the door and looked in after dusk (a liberty very rarely taken by anyone), the first things that you noticed were the two big red candlesticks and a large piece of faded orange silk hanging over a cupboard opposite the door. It was a large room and curiously jumbled with odds and ends. On the round table there was a sewing-basket of pink silk, a china dish with oranges, a black-haired doll in a green dress, and two packs of cards scattered on the shabby red table-cloth. The candles in the red candlesticks gave but a faint light, and you must look well before you saw, in addition to a bed, a chest of drawers and the cupboard with the orange silk across it, a large black rocking-chair, a cuckoo clock, and a big oil painting of an aquarium scene—a very large picture this, with green shining water and large fish with open mouths. There was also a stuffed bird with crimson wings in a glass case.

After these things, your eyes now accustomed to the uncertain light, you perceived their mistress. Mrs. Payne was a large stout and shapeless woman. She had hair of a deep black and her cheeks were highly coloured. She had fine dark eyes. She looked an old gipsy woman and perhaps she had gipsy blood in her—foreign blood for sure. She would be rocking herself in her chair lying back in it wearing her soiled red wrapper and her shabby crimson shoes. She was not a cleanly old woman. Her splendid hair, as black now as forty years ago, was tumbled about her head carelessly, and stuck into it,

askew, was a cheap black comb studded with glass diamonds. Her colour was swarthy, brown under the deep red of her cheeks, and there was a faint moustache on her upper lip. But she must have been handsome once, a fine, bold girl in those years long ago. Quite shapeless now, her fat, dirty arms naked under the wrapper, her body, as it lolled back in the chair, boneless. Once and again she yawned, then felt in a dirty paper bag on the table near to her for a thick slab of nougat that she crumbled idly in the bag, then ate fragments licking slowly her fingers. Her face was expressionless. Her large black eyes stared out into the room vacantly.

As she licked her fingers she kicked one foot idly in the air. But she was not vacant. She knew what she was about. When the cuckoo burst his little door and cried that it was seven o'clock she would rise, totter across to the cupboard, produce a plate, a cup, a loaf of bread, butter, jam. She would make herself a cup of thick, rich cocoa (the kettle had been long on the fire) and she would eat many pieces of thick bread and raspberry jam and then a hunk of black, dark, plum cake.

She would eat sitting up at the table staring in front of her, her lips making a large smacking sound of satisfaction. Then once again she would lick her fingers slowly elaborately. Then once again totter back to her chair, lie on it and rock, tossing her shabby red shoes in air.

Totter! Yes, because the only sign of age was in those legs of hers. They alone had deserted her. They would betray her in a moment, the knees failing, and she must cling to the table to save herself from falling. She hated her legs—they had betrayed her—and in the dark recesses of her mind she would imagine how she might punish them, punish them without hurting herself, just as though they were separate personalities.

But on the whole she was not ill-contented, nor did she bear humanity a grudge. She did not dislike this life of hers. She had always been lazy, taking what came nonchalantly. She had taken Wilfred Payne and his miserable mother;

she had taken a lover and his brutal desertion of her; she had taken a child that had not been her husband's (and he had never known); she had taken the death of the same; she had taken the Roman Catholic religion for the lights and the incense; she had taken her husband's death and her own subsequent poverty; she had taken the job of companion to an old fool widow of a Polchester merchant; she had taken the widow's decease (without leaving her a farthing) and her own subsequent penury; she had taken Pontippy Square and the cold and silent room there; she had taken her absolute loneliness and isolation—everything she had taken with a luxurious sensual indifference. Her two passions—and they were in their basis one—were for food and bright colours.

For food her longing was both active and indolent. Active because she would take trouble that Mrs. Bloxam should keep her well supplied in cake and jam and nougat. She spent all that she had on these foods, and in her slothful brain there was a kind of wonder that she could purchase so much of this for so little. Her digestion did not apparently suffer.

Her passion for bright colours was a deeper longing. It had always been so. As a tiny child she had cried after a reel of coloured thread and had begged for a shining marble. And this had gathered strength perhaps because her husband and mother-in-law had sternly forbidden it. Theirs was the Nonconformist mind and vision—grey stone, drab clothes, uncoloured minds. She had hated her husband for many reasons but chiefly because he had thrown a gay hat of hers into the fire. She would lie in bed beside him devising tortures for his soft and rounded limbs. But that was many years ago. She had long forgotten him. The past appeared to her a succession of bright and shining images. Her husband was not one of these. She did not think connectedly of her past at all. Old people do not. To the old the past comes in a series of pictures, not of necessity connected, here intensely vivid, there dim and blurred—a green field, a quiet evening, an angry quarrel, some loving face, some sharp disappointment—and all,

vivid or blurred, dispassionately removed. No call for action any more. Quiescence. And then a strange wonder that to those about them these scenes, so real, so actual, mean nothing, stir no reaction.

But Mrs. Payne did not wonder. She had no audience for her memories; only Mrs. Amorest, who seemed to her a silly old thing, incredibly old, stupidly active, an egoist in her sense of her importance.

With this matter of activity Agatha Payne was always intending to be "on the move" one day soon. Nothing forced her to stir. Her monthly allowance was paid to her by a lawyer in Birmingham. He paid her rental for her room. The rest was in Mrs. Bloxam's hands, and Mrs. Bloxam might cheat her if she willed so long as she brought her what she desired.

But Mrs. Bloxam did not cheat her. She had a strange tenderness towards her two old ladies. When, before the arrival of Miss Beringer, there had been two old ladies and one old gentleman, she had been yet more tender towards the old gentleman, and were there now three old gentlemen her tenderness would have known no bounds. She *did* prefer the other sex and always had. But, as she said to Mr. Bloxam, you couldn't help but be sorry for the two old things. She liked Mrs. Amorest the better of the two; there was something in Mrs. Payne's lazy indifference that frightened her, and then "her liking for sweet things the way she did." Like a child. But then, if it hadn't been sweet things it would have been drink, and *that*, as Mrs. Bloxam only too absolutely knew, was "another kettle of fish." Mrs. Bloxam, too, was honoured by Mrs. Payne's trust in her and would take real trouble over the commissions she gave her, going "quite a way" up the High Street to find the raspberry jam that she preferred. But whereas Mrs. Amorest was a "real sweet old lady" and should have been "a Duchess in her own right if all had their proper due," Mrs. Payne "was not quite . . . Well, you know. Shouldn't wonder if she went queer in the 'ead any day."

Mr. Bloxam, when he was sober enough to realise things, couldn't see what Mrs. Bloxam was about wasting her time with those old women. It wasn't as though she got anything for it—but Mrs. Bloxam, having no children of her own, felt like a mother to them, twenty years younger though she was. She felt, too, a certain power. She liked to see Mrs. Amorest's eager smile when she called her in the morning and to feel Mrs. Payne's dependence on her. "If they 'adn't got me, surely to goodness I don't know who they would 'ave and that's the truth. Poor old dears."

About Miss Beringer she had not as yet made up her mind. Miss Beringer had been there, but a week. And then there was the fox-terrier, "Pip." A silly name for a dog.

It was not to be expected that Mrs. Payne considered Mrs. Bloxam as a separate identity. Had Mrs. Bloxam been a stick of nougat or a piece of brightly coloured silk then Mrs. Payne would have desired to possess her, and her sluggish brain would have awakened to the intention of possessing her, and from that, coil after coil unwinding, she would have entered on the campaign of possessing her with the pertinacity and determination of Napoleon advancing upon Russia.

It was fortunate indeed for her that she did not leave her room. The sight of a gay vase or a jewelled trinket in a shop window might have drawn her into committal of some crime.

I have said that physically she was still a strong woman, and the weakness in her knees was more imagined than real. But she did occasionally suffer from a strange pain in the head. This was not exactly a headache, it was rather a kind of limiting of her consciousness, a constriction of the brain as though cords were tightening over her brows and forbidding her to think. When this came upon her she was scarcely aware of what she did, moving apparently under the orders of some commanding personality.

It was as though someone whispered to her, "Go and do this," and she then moved hypnotically. It must be repeated that she was not essentially an unkindly woman. Now that she

was old and alone strange thoughts and desires possessed her. She wished ill to no one but she moved in a world that had been largely created out of her own lingering and possessing imagination.

The picture of the fish in the green tank of water that had been her father's, that she had known ever since, as a little child she had gazed up at it hanging in the Birmingham dining-room had become part of her real and active world. She moved inside it as truly as she moved about the room, and the fish, especially the large one with the silver scales and the long, swinging tail, left their watery confines and swum about her room, slowly opening and shutting their jaws, lazily swerving in their upward or downward course.

So, too, the black-haired doll with the green dress, Miranda. Miranda had three dresses, this green one, one of ruby colour, and one of dark purple. Mrs. Payne would change the dresses from time to time and, with the change, the whole room would seem to alter. When the ruby dress was worn sunlight seemed to strike the room. The very fish were glad, and Miranda, perched up against the red candlesticks, smirked her satisfaction.

There were also the cards. With these Mrs. Payne played a game of her own, a kind of Patience maybe but also a kind of fortune-telling, so that as she gazed at the King and Queen of hearts and then lying beside them found the black, rich, thick ten of clubs, her heart beat strongly and awful destinies seemed to close about the room, and her eyes would stare far beyond those confining walls and dynasties would rock and the very stairs would shake and quiver.

Then she would smile darkly to herself, knowing so much more of fate than the people about her.

On the evening of Mrs. Amorest's visit to her cousin she was thus playing at her cards when the door opened and the old lady entered. Mrs. Amorest had had her evening meal and had felt then an irresistible desire to talk to someone. Endeavour to control it as she might, the promise of her cousin

that afternoon excited her so deeply that she was shaken through and through. One thousand pounds a year! To find her boy again, to spend the little time on this earth remaining to her with him! To see him with her own eyes, happy! And it was only with this sudden wonderful promise that she realised how hard things had of late been and how, deep in her sub-consciousness, the fear of some tragedy, the cessation of her money or the running into debt and the consequent disgrace, had played upon her. But now! One thousand pounds a year! And he had meant it! She could still feel the touch of his hand upon her hair. How good he was, how kind! How many people had misjudged him!

She did not want to bother poor old Agatha Payne—she always thought of her as at least twenty years older than herself—with her private affairs; but she must see somebody, be kind to somebody, because to-night she wished well to all the world.

She knocked on the door, then timidly stepped forward. The cards had just come out badly, meaning nothing, pretending nothing, and Agatha Payne was therefore glad to see a friend.

She liked Lucy Amorest and was sorry for her. Poor old thing, so lonely and deserted!

She gazed up, confusedly staring through the dim light and seeing a large green fish swerve just above Mrs. Amorest's head and disappear.

"Ah, my dear! Come along!" she said.

Her voice was bass and masculine. She rose very slowly from the table, leaving the cards upon the cloth. She moved to the rocking-chair, slowly sinking down into it. A very small fire flickered in the grate. On the other side of this there was a shabby red armchair from which the stuffing burst, now here now there, like a pale disease.

Mrs. Amorest sat down in this as on many occasions she had done before. She seemed very small and very slight beside the large fat woman, rocking, one heel in air, opposite to her.

Agatha Payne gazed at her with sombre eyes.

"You have not been out, I suppose?" said Mrs. Amorest. This was a genteel fiction always maintained between them, that to-day it was true that Mrs. Payne had not gone out, that yesterday also she had remained within, but that to-morrow, all being well, would certainly see her in the open air.

"No," said Mrs. Payne, "I have not been out. It was in no way the kind of day for me. Cold and dark. Mrs. Bloxam has kindly done my shopping for me."

"I went and paid a visit on my cousin," said Mrs. Amorest, smiling as though she would intimate that there was far more in that visit than she could expressly say.

But Agatha Payne was a bad one for secrets. She was occupied too deeply in pursuing the strange perplexing windings of her own brain to follow closely the possibilities of another.

One thing she always did—she overlooked Mrs. Amorest, and was discontented that she refused to have anywhere about her a bright spot of colour. That grey dress and plain hair and quiet little face irritated her. Poor little old thing, she would think, how old and shrivelled up she is. *She's* not long for this world.

And the sense to-night that Lucy Amorest was pleased about something—it mattered not what—irritated her still more. What right had *she* to be pleased with her poverty and mean way of dressing. So very soon she was in an irritable temper, muttering to herself and kicking in air her red-heeled shoe.

"And so you've begun a fire!" said Mrs. Amorest brightly. "Well, I'm sure it's time, and yet I can't make up my mind to it. I said to Mrs. Bloxam this morning that I thought to-morrow I really would start one. And yet I don't know. The winter hasn't truly come, has it? And we may get quite a number of warm days yet."

Mrs. Payne, lying back shapeless in her chair, began:

"I'm sorry for you, Lucy. There's that cousin of yours, rich as he is, does nothing for you, and your boy been gone for

years no one knows where. I'm glad my child died. She would only have been grief to me."

"He'll come back, Brand I mean," Mrs. Amorest spoke confidently. "I feel to-night as though everything is going to turn out well. Don't you feel that way sometimes?"

"Brand? Is that your boy's name? Queer name."

"It was my husband who wished it. I think it's a nice name."

"Well, I don't think much of your Brand. Why doesn't he write and tell you what he is doing? Perhaps he's dead."

Mrs. Amorest knew well that Agatha Payne was doing her best to be provoking. She had on many occasions been through just this same conversation before, and when she had been tired, hungry, and lonely it had been difficult not to burst into tears. But she was accustomed now and to-night she was too truly happy to care.

"I know that he's not dead," she answered. "Brand was the kind of boy who would never own that he was beaten. It was always the same, in cricket and in football. He'll tell me where he is when he's made his fortune. I'm expecting to hear any day now."

"You've been expecting to hear any day ever since I've known you," said Agatha Payne. "You're a patient woman."

Slowly from the sluggish levels of her mind curiosity was arising. What was making Lucy Amorest so happy to-night? What news had she received? Had some fortune come to her?

The fish swam slowly back into their deep green tank, she sat up in her chair and with her hands on the arms and her heavy breast bulging beneath her wrapper she looked attentively at her companion.

"What's the matter with you, Lucy?" she asked. "You've had some good news."

"Well, in a way I have," Mrs. Amorest conferred. "And yet it's not news exactly. My cousin spoke to me in a very kindly way this afternoon."

"Did he say he'd leave you something in his will?" asked Mrs. Payne, her interest growing very sharply.

"He did say something," answered Mrs. Amorest, smiling a little. "Of course he may have meant nothing by it. I certainly mustn't rely on it."

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Payne, leaning now eagerly forward. "What did he say he'd leave you?"

"Well, he *said* a thousand pounds a year!"

Mrs. Payne sank back into the chair:

"A thousand pounds! A thousand pounds a year!" Her large black eyes widened and extended. "Why, Lucy, that's a fortune!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Amorest faintly. "It is. And that's why I don't want to rely on it. It's only what he *said*, of course."

"And was there anyone else there when he said it?"

"No, there wasn't. We were quite alone and he was very kind indeed. I have never known him so nice."

Agatha Payne stared. A thousand pounds a year! And to be given to that poor little mouse who had only a few years to live at the best. What could *she* do with a thousand pounds a year? whereas the things that Agatha Payne might do . . . the gay, glorious, coloured, glittering things that she might buy! And there suddenly came into her head the idea that she herself would have some of this money that was coming to Lucy Amorest! She was a weak, good-natured little creature was Lucy Amorest. She would give anything away. She would do anything for anybody.

Her heart beat. It was strange, perhaps, that with her passion for gay things she had not, long ago, spent more than she had and encumbered herself with debt. But an odd laziness held her captive, and perhaps also the old house had thrown some spell over her. It had forbidden her, perhaps, to leave it. Old houses can do such things. They can impregnate human souls with their own subtle poison, and with bricks and beams of wood and flakes of mortar wall in the human

body as surely as in the cruel past errant wives and sinning nuns were confined.

Here was something beneath her hand. She smiled, and a grim, forbidding smile it was.

"That's right, Lucy. Don't you count on it. You come to me and we'll talk it over. There's nothing like a little plan. Nothing."

Mrs. Amorest was suddenly frightened. She did not know why. It had been foolish of her to say anything at all about the money. It had been, in a way, betraying the confidence of her cousin.

She was tired and needed the security of her own room.

"I think I'll go to bed now," she said. "It's late. It's ten o'clock."

Mrs. Payne smiled once more. "You come in again and we'll talk it over," she said.

Mrs. Amorest said good night and went.

She hurried into her room, lit her lamp, and began to undress. She took the photograph of her boy from the mantelpiece and kissed it. Then she knelt down and said her prayers.

LE PÈRE HYACINTHE

By FREDERIC MANNING

MEMORY has been described as decaying sensation, and history is a kind of memory. The historian is never in the presence of the actual experience, but only of those vestiges which the experience has left behind it. From his evidences he is able to infer with some measure of probability what was the conduct and action, the mechanical and impersonal, because unconscious, development of an age. He deals with character only in so far as it is revealed in action, and the consequences of action: character that is in its legal and social aspects, which are narrow and partial. The greater part of a man's life is not revealed effectively in this way. Each of us is a core of fact, or a nucleus of action, surrounded by a nebula. Apart from the nebula, the fact has no personal significance at all. The age, the social world encompassing him, acts upon the individual man. He reacts upon his age. The interest is in the reaction, the experience itself, not wholly in one or the other of the two facts momentarily related. Sometimes experience seems to be entirely separate from fact and action, at least from external fact and action; or they appear in it irrelevantly, and it is this disparity between the ideal and the actual which the more obvious kind of comedy seizes on as a pretext for laughter. Newton performed the ordinary functions of life, while absorbed in a problem, and apparently unconscious of them. Any action of which we do not perceive the motive or the intention seems to us comic, because devoid apparently of significance, and mechanical. An action reflective in its origin, and effective in its object, is, to us, a great or a beautiful action; but we seldom recognise the beauty or greatness of intention except

in its achievement. A greatness which fails is to us, from the moral point of view, unbearable.

There are some, however, whose lives are passed in thought, whose action upon the world is negligible, but whose thought becomes action in the lives of other men. Nietzsche said somewhere that all greatness has a posthumous activity; and one might add, that it is also sometimes anonymous. There are others, saints and mystics, whose lives seem to be complete in themselves, to have no relation either to the world of effective thought or the world of effective action, men born to contemplate the most excellent beauty and wisdom of God; and of these last there are some whom an adverse fate thrusts suddenly, disturbed and perplexed, into action, to disturb and perplex others.

Of what value is faith in the modern world? This is the question put to us, if only implicitly, by M. Albert Houtin's Life of Charles Loyson, *Le Père Hyacinthe*. It would be difficult to imagine a more impartial, a more rigorously scientific piece of work. The book was written at the instance of Madame Loyson; and, in giving his assent, Père Hyacinthe wrote to M. Houtin: "Je vous enverrai mes mémoires, ce qui revient à dire que je vous prendrai pour un véritable confesseur. J'espère qu'ils ne me feront pas perdre votre estime. Ils ont été écrits pour moi seul, pour la direction de ma pensée et de ma vie, et sous ce rapport, ils m'ont rendu d'inappréciables services; mais j'y suis comme dans un miroir quotidien, avec des changements d'aspects, des hésitations, des lenteurs, des découragements, qui ne me font pas honneur." It was written under his eyes, and after reading a portion of it he wrote to his son: "M. Houtin est un très bon historien, mais il ne comprend pas les cris de l'âme, ou du moins il n'y répond pas. Il dissèque mon âme, et du reste il fait bien." Certainly the *Journal* reveals the successive states of consciousness, the spiritual reactions to fact, at the point, the moment, of impact; before the reason has assimilated them; and in all their flow, their tenuity, their incandescence. M. Houtin

seldom intervenes between the reader and his subject, generally with the object of showing in what particular a retrospect differs from the actual experience, and always with a severe reticence as regards his own personal opinions and preoccupations. His mind, restricted scrupulously to the record of incontestable facts, moves on a parallel to his subject's, on the line of historical development which corresponds to the psychological. The record is thus as close to the actual experience as possible. Newman's *Apologia* is a retrospect; and for all its passionate sincerity, or because of it, the facts have been molten, fused, even consumed wholly, by the very speed and heat with which he traverses them. It is, for him, the decisive moment of affirmation, to which his previous actions and experiences only tended perhaps, though they are now uplifted and glorified in it.

The saint in every age is an isolated figure; and for most of us probably some change of mind, a criticism of ourselves, is necessary before we can attempt to appreciate the somewhat incongruous and unaccustomed character revealed in these pages. Incongruous, only if one may use the word in a spirit of humility: Saint Francis with his candid faith before Innocent, Saint Paul with his naïve assurance before Gallio; these surely were incongruous enough. And Gallio cared for none of these things, washing his hands, as it were; the scene being apparently a replica of that before Pilate; not so much, one may imagine, an historic fact as a kind of divination, having the more general truth of poetry, by a too zealous disciple. For the Epistle to the Romans sufficiently proves that naïve assurance, confronting a worldly and sceptical conscience, as after all the characteristic fact of Paul; and the scene before Gallio at Corinth, typical enough in itself, only dramatises that fact.

"It is the very function of a Christian to be moving against the world, and to be protesting against the majority of voices." Newman, uttering those words, realised as fully perhaps as Père Hyacinthe the tragedy of faith. A religious impulse

is, at least initially, spontaneous, irreflective, and naïve; but once launched upon reality, it meets with the resistance of opposite impulses, of conflicting facts, and is changed into a conscious, reflective, and reasoned effort. The difficulties, as they become more formidable, create a passion in the reasoning will to triumph over them; and, resistance increasing with effort, at last, in a mind like Pascal's, for instance, or Newman's, acute, subtle, beautifully poised, the intellectual ardour into which the original impulse, by the mere pressure of fact, has been converted, flames up into a blaze of ecstasy. For ultimately in what is, for us, the important question, argument exhausts itself, is consumed in its own effort; and the soul rejected upon itself by the resistance of fact, rests upon faith as a naked affirmation, a pure and irrational intuition of God. Variable, naturally; and inconstant; a faith from which one inevitably lapses, and to which one inevitably returns.

Compare, not the men, who are incomparable, but the qualities of Newman and Renan: two minds radically opposed, but coloured by the same pessimism, illuminated by the same poetry, using the same irony, the same scepticism; though the scepticism of Newman, which is half his strength, is not sufficiently appreciated by some of his disciples. There is, of course, a difference of direction, obvious enough in 1845, less clear in 1871, when, for them at least, the idols of tradition and of progress had been proved equally vain. The real difference is in the presence or absence of faith, that is of a faith, an intuition of God, sufficiently strong to be a determining factor in life. For faith, however attenuated, subsisted in the intellectual life of Renan, as doubt in the spiritual life of Newman; the impotence of reason to solve a question so vital to them both, leaving the decision, in either case equally, arbitrary and irrational. But compare them on that point of the essential faith, stripped of the accidents of creeds and churches. The *Journal* of Père Hyacinthe records on the 12th of September, 1868, a conversation with Newman at Birmingham. "Le P. Newman comprend toutes mes peines au sujet de

l'état présent du Catholicisme, et je crois qu'il les partage ; mais ces choses ne l'atteignent que par le dehors : une grande paix et une grande sérénité règnent en lui, depuis sa conversion, et l'on en voit bien le reflet sur son visage et l'écho dans ses paroles. Il dit quelquefois à ses amis puseystes que l'état politique de l'Eglise de Rome est bien compensé par son état spirituel : l'action de l'Eglise sur les âmes dans les sacrements. Nous avons le chef de l'Eglise dans l'Eucharistie. Et puis, malgré toutes ces misères, il y a dans l'Eglise Catholique une stabilité, une antiquité, une sécurité dont rien n'approche. *Res Angelorum exprimi nequit verbis humanis*. Les formules de l'Eglise, si vénérables qu'elles soient, sont nécessairement humaines et par conséquent ne rendent pas, dans leur vérité intime, substantielle, et vivante, les choses divines." Renan writes to Père Hyacinthe in 1872 : " Certes, l'issue la plus désirable à la crise religieuse de notre temps eût été un élargissement du catholicisme, sacrifiant sur bien des points la lettre et le dogme matériel pour sauver l'esprit, renonçant à la lutte contre les résultats éventuels de la science, et proclamant sans crainte qu'aucun de ces résultats ne l'atteindrait dans son vrai sanctuaire, qui est l'affirmation du cœur. Vous avez raison d'espérer contre l'espérance, et de regarder cette solution comme possible encore." They agree upon the necessary imperfection of dogma, its irrelevance to faith : Newman is even closer to Renan when he says : " The safeguard of faith is a right state of heart. This it is which gives it birth ; it also disciplines it."

Faith is based upon consciousness. In all his actions a man necessarily assumes his own real existence ; and that assumption may be shown, no less than the assumption of God, to be, at least from one point of view, an illusion. We know nothing of ourselves : even that secret self which we feel we alone know, even " the unconscious " of our most recent psychologists, are only " the objectified fancies of the experiencing mind." Behind them " unmoved, and moving all

things " is the veiled and inscrutable soul. We know, and can know, nothing of it : even the mystic sees no more in his ecstasies than its nebula, burning on the edges of material life. Such phrases as " the soul's separation from God," " the soul returned unto God," " the lost soul," do not imply in it even a momentary independence of God. The soul is the complement of God : *est Deus in nobis*. Determinism, mechanics, may be applied irresistibly to the whole material universe, and consciousness remain unaffected and secure ; for in such a system it is irrelevant, negligible, superfluous, and even absurd. It is inexplicable ; and, in it, the ideas of God and of the soul are implicit.

The tragedy of faith is in its attempt to penetrate and inform the world. Churches, rites, creeds, dogmas, are no more than the deposit left by the action of faith on fact, the vestiges of attempts to reconcile forces opposed and incompatible. Every Church may, in this special sense, be termed a *depositum fidei*. Launched upon the world as the expression of individual and personal values, faith is absorbed by the society enveloping it, and translated into the terms of moral, social, and political fact. A Church, in so far as it has a worldly and temporal object, represents the compromise which society makes with God.

Père Hyacinthe rejected the dogma of infallibility in 1869. In 1871 he visited Newman at Birmingham again. " Il m'a accueilli," he wrote, " avec beaucoup d'égards, et je dirai avec une véritable affection. C'est une âme très droite, mais timide, et je crois que son respect excessif pour l'autorité l'amènera à se soumettre à ce malheureux dogme. Quelle différence entre ces deux hommes, Newman et Doellinger." A little later, he turns away, not without some bitterness, from the spectacle of Newman seeking the minimum of infallibility. Doellinger, taking the legal and historical view, rejected the dogma as embodying an opinion neither universal, nor ancient, nor of general consent ; the Council itself was not free, and it was not unanimous. Newman, however, was less concerned

with the legal and historical grounds of dogma. *Res Angelorum exprimi nequit verbis humanis*: the formulæ of the Church were necessarily imperfect: one required, more especially at Newman's age, only that they should be tolerable. Mgr. Darboy, who had opposed it, assured Père Hyacinthe, after its proclamation, that the dogma did not have the importance which he attributed to it. The ultramontanes, having gained their essential object, did not object to this line of retreat, which spared the susceptibilities of their opponents: infallibility had been recognised, even by Newman and Döllinger, as being implicit in the Church; if it had now become explicit in the person of the Pope, this change might be represented as in effect little more than an administrative reform. The Archbishop was evidently of Merimée's opinion: "Le temps n'est plus aux grands schismes." Père Hyacinthe was incapable of Newman's delicate reserves and nice discriminations, of Döllinger's legalism, of Darboy's politic acquiescence. He was the one man who considered the question not under its logical, its legal, or its political aspects, but purely as a question of faith; and he remained irreconcilable.

Though he married, he remained obstinately Catholic and a priest, dreaming of a reformed Church. He would not ally himself with any disruptive liberalism or rationalism. When he left Geneva he said that there were three things for which he felt an increasing hatred, ultramontanism, protestantism, and democracy. Naturally a conservative and a legitimist, he stood in reality for Gallicanism. The French conservatives, however, had chosen blindly the path of ultramontanism, of that new Romanism, which the Revolution had created again out of the ruins of the old order, an anti-national and purely political movement. Finally, he seems to have shaken off the last remnants of his Catholicism: resting on a living and personal faith in a living and personal God, or on that *affirmation du cœur* of which Renan had written. He represents for us, with his naïveté and vision, the triumph of faith over religion, of a personality over an age. For he

possessed the quality of holiness, as others possess courage or beauty, clothed in it, as in a personal charisma. His simplicity disarms irony. He realised, not with Newman's originating mind, but with his own exquisite sensibility, that "it is the very function of the Christian to be moving against the world, and to be protesting against the majority of voices."

WORDSWORTH REVISITED

By HAROLD MONRO

I

IT is in childhood that most of us are introduced to Wordsworth. I, fortunately, was not compelled to meet him until late boyhood, my preceptors not having been sufficiently intelligent to lead me further afield than John Keble, Mrs. Hemans, Macaulay, and Scott. My own reading was entirely unguided, and it did not include Wordsworth's poems, chiefly because I knew him to be the author of "We are Seven." I thought of him as a venerable grandparent into whose presence one day I should inevitably be ushered. Meanwhile I knew him already in portraiture, where I had seen him clothed rather like a bishop, leaning on a rock by a waterfall, in an attitude of inspiration, demonstratively displaying a pencil; or, in profile, grim, pale, large-nosed, entirely unlovable, as in the chalk drawing by Robert Hancock. There was an unusually large number of portraits of my own grandparents and great-grandparents, among whom he seemed to take his place naturally, though invariably with more formidable aspect; and I never anticipated any sympathy from him. This impression was apparently the one that my betters desired me to form, which fact might normally have stimulated an intelligent child to initiate independent inquiry. Yet, easy as it might have been to get into touch with that elderly gentleman, and to test his actual qualities, nevertheless, so keenly did I fear him, that I never even knocked at his door. I preferred to postpone that meeting until the inevitable day when I antici-

pated that one of my betters would lead me to his room; hoping that I might then escape with no more severe a trial of patience than perhaps a pat or two on the head and a few words of grave admonishment.

In these later years I have never met, among those whose memories of childhood include a close acquaintance with Wordsworth, anybody who could tell me that he learnt to enjoy even the best among the nature poems. And many people have told me that they too thought of him as of a kind of grandrelative or head master; a pompous boring old gentleman, at whom the whole schoolroom was accustomed to laugh.

It was my own personal good fortune first to come into close contact with our grandparent at an age when we have learnt to dispense with the guidance of our apparent betters, and we have become no longer distrustful of an independent admiration. I then knew him for some time through his shorter lyrics, his sonnets, or odes, and preferred to leave "The Prelude," and several others of the longer poems, indefinitely unexplored. Such poems as "I heard a thousand blended notes," or "I wandered lonely as a cloud," most of the lyrics about the mysterious Lucy, and the "immortal ode" became things to me of such exquisite and intimate loveliness that they even supplanted in my mental anthology the odes of Keats. Those notorious last stanzas (as of "The Solitary Reaper"), the torture or laughing-stock of childhood, I could admire, or could condone. Thousands of young people, being familiar with a score of Shelley's or of Byron's lyrics, imagine themselves in a position to appraise and admire the work of these poets. All Shelley, however, and the greater part of Byron must be studied before any clear understanding can be reached. With Wordsworth it is different. On the strength of loving about twenty of the shorter poems we may already claim familiarity. A reading of "The Prelude" is more likely to qualify than to intensify admiration. The "Lines written in Early Spring" contains nearly the whole of his

philosophy, his faith, and his message, compressed into six stanzas.

For several years after leaving school I remained satisfied with Matthew Arnold's selection. Then I was tempted to explore further; but the results were not satisfactory. The shorter poems had come to me like wonderful unexpected messages from a distant personage, but when I knocked at his door, and tremblingly entered and heard his everyday monotonous voice, I became uncomfortable and restless. I felt inclined to be disrespectful. Phrases that I read about him would linger in my mind; Coleridge's taunt: "I and my brother the dean"; Fitzgerald's nickname, "Daddy Wordsworth"; I was too conscious of the Distributor of Stamps in the County of Westmorland (to the detriment of the Poet); and I recalled, with too much amusement, Byron's note to the sixth stanza of the Dedication of "Don Juan": "Wordsworth's place may be in the Customs—it is, I think, in that or the Excise—besides another at Lord Lonsdale's, where this poetical charlatan and political parasite licks up the crumbs with a hardened alacrity," etc. . . . That is mere abuse. But it may be added here that Wordsworth's own abusive attitude, a few years earlier, toward Byron was no less violent. In 1816 two of his lordship's latest poems, intended for private circulation only, were printed, through somebody's indiscretion, in most of the journals. These were "A Sketch" and "Fare thee Well," about the former of which Wordsworth's comment was that "the man was insane," that the poem was "the Billingsgate of Bedlam," and of the latter he remarked that it was "wretched doggerel, disgusting in sentiment, and in execution contemptible."

Turning to the biographers, I seemed to find all my worst impressions confirmed. "He wished, as he said, to be regarded as a teacher or as nothing," remarks Professor Garrod¹ in his new study of Wordsworth. Thus his early biographers

¹ I am much indebted to Professor Garrod's book, from which I have drawn material for this article.

erroneously conceived it their duty to "treat cursorily and superficially that part of Wordsworth's life which is most interesting—his early period," and the Bishop "elected, when he undertook the *Memoirs*, to concentrate the whole weight of his dull and cautious mind upon the dull and cautious period of his uncle's life."

Fortunately we are now no longer compelled to refer to the official biographers. In addition to Mr. Harper's *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works and Influence*, issued in 1916, there have lately been published several illuminating biographical and critical essays and lectures, of which I have a few volumes before me.¹

"The reading public has in recent years been informed how William Wordsworth," writes M. Legouis, "while he lived in France in 1792, fell in love with a French lady called Annette Vallon and had by her a daughter, to whom he gave his name, though he never would or could marry the mother."

"There was a period," writes Professor Garrod, "in which Wordsworth was a republican . . . a pacifist, a disciple of Godwin, a necessitarian, a 'semi-atheist,' a youth cast off by his relations, an object of suspicion to Government spies and good men generally, lax in moral principle and practice."

This period is the one upon which his early official biographer, Bishop Wordsworth, remarked as follows: "His mind was whirled round in a vortex of doubt . . . not that he ever lapsed into scepticism."

There is clear evidence that the poet himself conceived his own establishment in the judgment of future generations as an individual of stainless character essential to the effective penetration and comprehension of his important message. He would, therefore, probably have been more satisfied with the Bishop's version of his character and his behaviour than

¹ *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations*. By Arthur Beatty, Assistant Professor of English at Wisconsin University. *Wordsworth in a New Light*. By Emile Legouis (Milford). *Wordsworth*. By H. W. Garrod (Clarendon Press).

with that of Mr. Harper, or Professor Garrod, or M. Legouis. There are said to be many people now living, in cathedral towns and elsewhere, who have expressed their horror of the recent "scandals" that have gathered about their poet's name. The grandchildren must not be told.

But those, like myself, who stood in awe of that unnatural old gentleman portrayed to us by our betters, will be keenly grateful for the help that has now been offered toward a better understanding.

The facts, as verified, are these. Up to about 1797, that is up to the age of about 27, Wordsworth was seeking gradually to establish a basis for his creative art. About the year 1797 he began to find himself. During the decade ending about 1807 his imagination was effectively at work, and (under the tutelage of Coleridge and his sister) the best creations of his genius flowed spontaneously forth. After the year 1807 he began to deteriorate, and from then onwards that semi-ecclesiastical figure, Wordsworth The Instructive Poet, became gradually evolved.

II

Let us examine the circumstances which led up to the marvellous decade (1797-1807) into which his creative activities were so conveniently packed, that we may almost think of him as an ordinary man who happened to become a poet for ten years, and then dropped his vocation. The whole life divides itself into three periods.

Period I.—In 1785 the schoolboy of 15 began to write verse, and every subsequent year wrote a few pieces. He commenced, significantly, one year after the death of Dr. Johnson. During the following seven years his few poems showed no particular promise. The most ambitious *effort*, "An Evening Walk," was as competent an exercise in the contemporary style as any average professor might possibly require of any average pupil. He passed through Cambridge; he went for walking tours; he began a poor narrative poem

and wrote part of his *Descriptive Sketches*. He worshipped Nature. He considered entering the Church. He thought of a military life. He had no clear mind, or definite purpose.

From 1792 to 1797 his eyes are wider open. Temporarily he comes under the influence of Godwin. Nature yields to Man in his affections and imagination. He travels, and begets a child. He embraces the cause of Liberty, indulges in political speculations, and "with ardour heretofore unfelt" attempts to break his way in among the convulsive activities of the French Revolution. He is in the melting-pot. He proposes to found a monthly periodical. He searches for congenial employment. He inherits £900. Meanwhile he publishes his "Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches," and writes a mediocre blank verse drama. By the year 1797 he has become disillusioned in the French Revolution; he is on the point of losing faith in Godwinism; *but* this year he becomes intimate with Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Period II.—Now he settled down to a quiet domestic life with his sister Dorothy:

She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon Earth.

His preoccupation with Nature became absorbing and minute. He and Dorothy shared the same notebooks, and many of the observations recorded in Dorothy's *Journal* were transcribed almost word for word into his poems. The "meddling intellect" is no longer allowed to intrude, except through the medium of his near neighbour and close intellectual adviser, Coleridge. It would seem that Dorothy observed for him, and Coleridge thought for him. With his sister whispering in one ear and Coleridge into the other, the poet conceived his verses—but seldom wrote them down himself. He was not a *writer*. The physical operation was difficult and hateful to him. In a letter addressed to Sir George Beaumont in his thirty-fourth year he complains: "I do not know from what cause

it is, but during the last three years I have not had a pen in my hand for five minutes, before my whole frame becomes one bundle of uneasiness." And again, to Captain Pasley he writes: "I am ashamed to say, that I write so few letters, and employ my pen so little in any way, that I feel both a lack of words (such words, I mean, as I wish for) and of mechanical skill, extremely discouraging to me."

In another letter in 1800 he mentions these deficiencies as arising "partly from some constitutional infirmities, and partly from certain habits of mind." He was, in fact, not a man of letters; not a student of books, but a passionate student of Nature; a man of deep and simple interests, with a flaming desire to express himself, and an overwhelming ardour to teach. Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* provides a finished picture of William during the ten years of this period. "William tired himself with seeking an epithet for the cuckoo," she writes. Again: "William all the morning engaged in wearisome composition." In pleasant contrast we have, as the sole entry given us by Professor Knight, on a day of early spring, "William gathered sticks."

Their inquisitiveness, their prying into natural events, was an obsession almost unnatural. The minutiae of Nature's domestic affairs assume in Dorothy's *Journals*, and in William's poems, an importance equivalent to that attached by ordinary people to events in the life of human Royalty. Nature is a queen; and when Dorothy records "heard the nightingale; saw a glow-worm," an envious thrill rushes through our blood. They are in a condition of perpetual awe. She writes: "Again sat down to feed upon the prospect; a magnificent scene, *curiously* spread out for even minute inspection, though so extensive that the mind is afraid to calculate its bounds."

And Coleridge! He had observed an ordinariness in his friend, "a something corporeal, a matter-of-factness, a clinging to the palpable." For that reason he was perpetually whispering into his right ear, and not without result. He was a good tutor, while his guardianship lasted. He inspired the best of

"The Prelude," and ultimately he inspired the great Ode, that swan song of the marvellous decade, composed 1802-6. Then Coleridge left him.

Period III.—Now, at the moment when Wordsworth's poetic ill repute was at its height, Coleridge absconded.

There is a change—and I am poor
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did. . . .

What have I? Shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

Not long afterwards Wordsworth headed toward senility. Now he might well have gone into the Church. In 1813 he was appointed Stamp Distributor for Westmorland. He was still pursuing the scheme of elaborately classifying his poems, as for instructional purposes, and their publication, thus classified, in 1815, is like a resignation from a Calling, or the making of a Will. In 1821 the, so to speak, posthumous fame of the poet was increasing, but he himself was busy with the "Ecclesiastical Sketches." Chiefly in 1832 he was composing the "Evening Voluntaries." Now also, he was piously creating the new Wordsworth: the teacher who was to instruct future generations. Subconsciously, I think, he had a portrait of himself in his mind, a bad portrait (without Coleridge to help him) ill-advisedly conceived: a daguerreotype. He felt dissatisfaction concerning his undergraduate days; his brother was now Master of Trinity, and on these grounds, as it appears, he revised or sacrificed passages in "The Prelude," so as not to offend, or as a peace-offering to his own mind, in that changed condition.

But *this* we can only with difficulty pardon him: He was troubled in later life by the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," *for the reason*, not that the doctrine may not have been true, but that it may have been intrusive; that it was

not part of the teaching of the Church, and might have been misconceived as qualifying or superseding that teaching.

It is an irony that the most autobiographical (though Byron is a near rival) of all our poets should have lived long enough to have the curious opportunity of revising himself to his own detriment. Autobiography in poetry should be a matter of sudden flashes, instinctive revelations—not of “emotion recollected in tranquillity.” In his passion for truth I can think of no author he so resembles as Tolstoy. He distrusted spontaneity, and doubted the emotion of the moment. He believed (as he writes) in “men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criticisms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling, or who having known these things have outgrown them.” And when, in his third period, he was left more to himself to meditate upon his past and future, he seems to have relegated many of his best qualities, in Tolstoian fashion, to a human rubbish heap, so that the Wordsworth of later life becomes a distrustful and distrustable figure to whom we should not assign more significance than we do to any elderly gentleman who has lived long enough to say (like Southey to Shelley), “When I was your age, of course” . . .

(To be continued)

ART-CHRONICLE

“THE number of active professional artist-painters in England must be about 5,000. For a population of 42,000,000 this cannot be called excessive.” This statement occurred the other day in the course of a letter of complaint to *The Times*—complaining naturally that the 5,000 did not get their due, and that the hungry ghost of Tintoretto or some other dead master depleted as it were by night the revenues of the living 5,000, interfered with their lustre, and snatched the very bread out of their mouths. It proposed that the point of æsthetic inoculation should be removed, so that only the “new blood” should enter the public’s organism.

In the first place (however well-meant) the euphemistic figure 5,000 is a thing that “should not be allowed to pass unchallenged,” against which at once “a protest should be registered”; or “in respect of which a serious caveat should be entered.”

We know that the individual survives to-day by retrenchment of the personality, and we are accustomed to the process of “reducing” in the psychic displacement of those by whom we are surrounded—so that no one shall feel hot through anyone else’s proximity or receive an electric shock. And, although we know that a good deal of bluffing goes on in that matter, there is certainly more room than there otherwise would be in a crowded world. It is such a new thing, however, for a public body to wish to *se faire petit*, and it seems to involve such far-reaching consequences, if it were adopted by other public bodies, that some comment seems called for, as I have said.

Again, it is necessary to point out the extreme unfairness of one aspect of the letter-writer's statement; namely that whereby the general population of the country is left intact, whereas the figure of the "artist-painter" guild is reduced to such unobjectionable and slender proportions. This little fraud would all the more readily pass unnoticed as in the general mind there is no putative current figure, or the least idea or interest indeed in our numbers. But every artist would know that the figure for the "artist-painter" population is much nearer 500,000 than 5,000. He knows that the number of art-students, only, in London and the great provincial centres must be considerably over the 5,000 mark; and each year a fresh contingent pours into the schools, and a corresponding quantity pours out into the body-politic—so many more little mouths to feed, who neither sew nor spin, and so many able-bodied men and women lost to the "vital industries." And there is no longer-lived community, for "painting" is very healthy work: an artist usually lives about eighty years, in spite of the competition of Tintoretto, and latterly of Cezanne.

Another thing that "any artist" knows is that 90 per cent. of these students will subsequently become commercial designers; a certain small proportion portrait-painters, with Burlington House as the goal of their commercial effort; and that in both these cases no question of *art* ever arises at all; that most plain photographs are more "artistic" than what these poor contrivers of pretty likenesses, or advertisers of automobile-tyres or lingerie, are required to do for their bread and butter. And this is not because the vast underworld of art work does not contain people of talent; but because, in our civilisation to-day there is no place for *art-for-art's-sake*, or, more shortly, for art at all. Everybody to-day knows this, who has anything at all to do with art, but most do not like to say it, as it does not seem quite respectable for "civilisation" to exist without an "art": art being in the same category as religion in that respect, though with nothing like the same

leverage, when *délaissé*. And so the pretence is kept up: a great number of small and large art-galleries exist, selling quantities of work resembling the compounds found on the counter of an American soda-fountain; a number of art periodicals exist to advertise the ice cream and soda, and create a comfortable feeling in the trade—purchased presumably by the 500,000 artist-painters throughout the British Isles (the absurdity of the figure in *The Times* could be demonstrated alone by these costly and apparently successful publications): and the newspapers refer politely to "art" as usual as though nothing were wrong, as though things had not altered, as though it still existed; and a body of highly trained critics help to maintain the illusion. I have been asked by THE CRITERION to write an art-chronicle, and am playing my part in the general pretence, as you see.

But, owing to the desirability of putting things on a right footing at the start, I have been drawn away from the letter to *The Times* with which I started. The writer, Mr. Hugh Stokes (writing from Chelsea—that is, of course, from the factory, and therefore, it is to be assumed, thoroughly informed) suggests that something should be done about it: that "artists, lovers of the fine arts, and those professionally concerned with the commerce of art"—should "investigate an evidently declining interest on the part of a former purchasing public."

I have not any wish to repugn or question the desirability of such expedients; but still I am bound to ask what more could be done than has been done already. *Everything* has been done for this "former purchasing public" that human ingenuity and beastliness can contrive to satisfy it: and its "interest declines" just the same. The more the harassed Academy portrait-painter twists himself inside out, and ransacks the resources of vulgarity yet untapped in his most hidden nature, or that his skill can command, in a search for "what the public wants," the more listless and unresponsive the "former purchasing public" becomes. That is the fact of

the case, but even further investigations will doubtless be made. That this is not an opinion resulting from a first-hand experience only of the difficulties any "new" movement must encounter, but is the experience as well of the very people who lay themselves out to please, could be seen by consulting the recent sales at Burlington House. But "the salvation of art" of course *rests with the public*. The artists (calling themselves only a poor modest 5,000, and in reality amounting to such a figure that were it published—which I hope it may never be—would shock every right-thinking man) the "artist-painters" will never do anything except surreptitiously add to their numbers (like the German nation before the war) and investigate fresh means of degrading art still farther, and of farther corrupting the already almost decomposed public.

Artists are notoriously selfish: they are the children of pleasure, the irresponsible members in any community. It is in the public itself and not from among them, that you expect the "public-spirited" action to originate. The only thing that promises success and the required purgation is action on such lines as these. No one would expect the public to go back to that simple-hearted, self-effacing state of mind that "the old masters" demonstrate must have then belonged to it. No one would suggest that it should return to the degraded condition in which it must have been to allow itself to be painted as Rembrandt or Goya paints it. But the public could render the greatest service to art simply by *not encouraging any art at all*. It seems a terrible step for a "civilised" man to take to admit that he sees no point in art, that his sort of civilisation has nothing to do with that, and that he would be more comfortable without it. But it is the only "straight" thing for him to do: the only "white" thing: the only "manly" thing. Therefore, I cannot see that he has any alternative but to adopt it, and put an end to the present humbug that serves no purpose, and is discreditable. I believe if he did so—but *irrevocably* and without any com-

promise at all—that within a few years a great school of painting would spring up, if not several.

Again, "If England," says Mr. Stokes, "in the eighteenth century, with from six to ten million people, could support such and such a number (of artists), should not 42,000,000 support so many more?" This is the greatest fallacy; for the fewer people, the more artists there should be. I do not believe that the present huge population of England can afford, literally, to support more than ONE—or perhaps two, artists. And I do not think that any accredited economist would be prepared to challenge this statement. For we all know that as a rule the richer people are the less money they have to spend, for some reason, on things that are not, like motor-cars or orchids, absolutely necessary; and it is only natural to suppose that the larger a community is the less money it can really afford for "art." As to the commercial art of the hoarding and the illustrated paper ("caricature" excepted) some development of photography would be a wholesome substitute for the pseudo-art that exists in such profusion everywhere to-day.

The proverbial question, *How much land does a man require?* has been simply answered by the macabre device of measuring him and allowing a few inches for the thickness of the shell of the coffin. But to say how many "artist-painters" a growing population of 42,000,000 souls requires is not so easy. No doubt, though, you could arrive at it by measuring the ground on which they live. Say there is one man to the square mile. He requires *one* "artist-painter" sure enough. If there are ten, the same one will serve. If there are a *thousand* to the square mile, there will not be room, probably, for *more* than one artist-painter. And, if there are 42,000,000, then you can surely have no artist-painter at all. So *measure the land*—fix a standard; or if you like make it regional, attributing so many artists to a county or a commune. And if the population grows, reduce the number of "artist-painters" of course. These tentative suggestions called forth by Mr. Stokes's letter do not

pretend to do more than "dispel an impression" which it was evidently not in the public interest should exist, and which his letter, carelessly read, might have engendered. For the public should not be deceived as to the number of artists it supports: although I agree that I do not think it is desirable to publish the actual figures.

WYNDHAM LEWIS.

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

A Man in the Zoo. By David Garnett. (Chatto and Windus.) 5s. net.

The Voyage. By J. Middleton Murry. (Constable.) 7s. 6d. net.

WHENEVER one sits down to review a novel one is faced again with the problem whether it is any longer possible to write a novel at all. It has been said that Mr. James Joyce's *Ulysses* begins a new epoch in novel-writing, and it has also been said that *Ulysses* has closed an epoch so finally that nothing can come out of the book but its imitations. In any case, it now seems that the novel is in the position which painting occupied in England twenty years ago, and that there is no choice but consent to constant reproduction, or determination to find a perfectly new form. In Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* one sees a very positive endeavour to discover a new form, and, in spite of its inequality, it is certainly the nearest approach to a new form of novel which has been made since *Ulysses*.

Mr. Garnett, in his *Man in the Zoo*, has made a definite effort to fight against the chaos and decay of the novel without having attempted to discover a new form. What he has done is to construct an eighteenth-century incident—the kind of incident which might have served Voltaire for a *conte*—in an eighteenth-century style, but from a modern, and more than modern, point of view. Having imagined a fantastical premiss, that of a man electing to be exhibited in a cage in the Zoological Gardens, he then proceeds to build up an effect of realism by drawing all the possible logical conclusions which occur to his very ingenious mind. The result is an enchanting book.

Mr. Murry's attempt at life is not very modern, but he takes pains to show us at the beginning that he can play all the modern tricks, and he makes a deliberate gesture to show that he can play Mr. Joyce's "tricks" as well as or better than Mr. Joyce himself:

But seriously. Anti-tube—true symbolically? Tubolic truth? Tubolic tooth Antitubolic toothpaste in tubes? Small size: 1s. ½d.

No go. Once more. From the beginning. Tubes. Rattling, there and back again, endlessly. A shuttle, noisily weaving the intricate pattern of London. Eruptions of noise—dazed creatures into unheeding streets, aimless, aimlessly intent, buying innumerable newspapers. Woven threads, without a pattern: no pattern at all. Shoddy.

Anti-tube. Anti—all this. Eternal verities, pattern imperishable, woven of indissoluble essences, discovered by self-examination, elucidation of unbetrayable loyalties, acknowledgment of ineluctable sense of sin.

This little game with Mr. Joyce goes on to the end of page 19, after which Mr. Murry forgets him in his absorption in his own Friends and Friendships. In reading *The Voyage*, from this point, one has the sensation of having strayed into a little company composed of neurasthenics and imbeciles, who circle painfully around their complexes and neuroses weaving a tangled web from which there is no escape but physical or mental suicide. Mr. Garnett, on the other hand, makes his human beings, Mr. Cromartie in the Zoo, Miss Lackett, whose feminine perversity and obstinacy have driven him there, the curator, the keepers, and even the gaping public who line up to pass his cage, behave in the most perfectly natural, sane, and normal manner. Their reactions and behaviour delight one because they are real and natural reactions and behaviour. Mr. Garnett can treat not only fantastic situations with this level-headed sense of reality, but also unusual relationships such as the charming episode of Mr. Cromartie and the Caracal. Mr. Garnett makes the relationship between a man and an animal natural and just, and makes

the animal much more desirable and delicate a companion than, for instance, the negro who, towards the end of Mr. Cromartie's tenancy, comes to occupy the next cage.

In Mr. Murry's voyage, which, after endless discussion of schooners, the South Seas, ebb tides, coral islands, et cetera, takes place entirely in taxis, tubes, cafés, and drawing-rooms, not one of the characters has a normal or adult reaction to anything or anybody, except perhaps that wicked lady Emilia. And possibly Anne, the heroine—had she been allowed really to exist. But Anne is a figure who is only a figure-head to the "bookship" which was never launched. One gets the impression of a priggish and mousy little person whose speeches are the essence of triteness.

As for the hero, Mr. Wickham, every woman has suffered from this type of gentleman, and by now it should be recognised that it is unsafe to be shut up in a taxi with him. Mr. Wickham is in perpetual fear; amongst other fears, of being seduced. He is a strange and complex-ridden man. He has a most decided money complex. Oh the unending financial discussions! If I give twopence, will you give threepence? He gave his all. He wrote the largest cheque he had ever written. Anyhow, he had given two hundred pounds. I must pay my share. And a taxi complex. But perhaps that is mixed up with the money complex, for he never seems to pay the fare. And a telephone complex; he always swoons when faced with a telephone. And an "I am I" complex. This is one we have all known at about the age of fourteen. It seemed very grand then to say, "Well, I am myself," and an answer to everything. But, alas! most of us have had to shed that happy philosophy, with the other sweets of childhood.

Humour is not Mr. Murry's strong suit. Nevertheless, he introduces a humorous character in the shape of Mr. Doherty. Mr. Doherty laughed and sang:

" ' Now you're married I wish you joy;
First a girl, and then a boy.' "

"But why first a girl, Miss Ferguson? Not but what a family would be cheaper on a coral island. Cut their teeth for nothing anywhere. Pick up your necklace anywhere on the beach. What a world to miss! Cocoa-nuts dropping into your mouth." Doherty opened his mouth wide; it seemed enormous. "Have to be careful of your teeth. Dangerous to sleep under the trees. All very well in daylight. 'What was that noise, father?' 'That, my child, was a cocoa-nut falling on your father's head.' 'Does it hurt you, father?' 'No-o, my child, no-o!'" They laughed and laughed.

Oh how they laughed!

But what is it all about? Who can tell? Only Mr. Murry, or perhaps his hero Mr. Wickham. Does it hold a mirror to the times? No. It holds, perhaps, a mirror to an unknown and inconsiderable group. Has it style, form or rhythm? In the words of Mr. Doherty, "No-o, my child, no-o."

F. M.

Southern Baroque Art. By Sacheverell Sitwell. (Grant Richards.) 20s.

"It will be remarked," says Mr. Sitwell in the introduction to his singular book, "by anyone who has the patience to read these four essays that in their range of subject they have but little contact with the accepted or famous names of their period. . . . It is only the most southern countries of Europe, and their far-away dependencies that are roped off for a stage. . . . In the particular period I have chosen there are many qualities to be praised of which there is a total lack in our generation, for self-confidence and fluency are, surely, two qualities which no one could deny even to Luca Giordano. It has also been my intention to establish a definite short-circuit, by extolling practically the only kind of art that is not yet tarnished with a too extravagant admiration, thus completing the round and leaving our generation free to follow out their own ideas. . . ." If there is a kind of wilfulness in

Mr. Sitwell's firm exclusion of so much, and in his selection of a scene or series of scenes of which the historical unity is found, by Mr. Sitwell, and left by him, so tenuous and confused, perhaps we need not quarrel with him. Arbitrariness is often a virtue, and Mr. Sitwell's arbitrariness, so conscious in intention and performance, has decidedly a charm. He goes his own peculiar way: he gratifies himself (improvising on his baroque theme) as he was perhaps compelled to gratify himself; luxuriating confusedly and richly in the rich confusion of his subject (the more confused for his failure to place it, historically, with order or precision), and very often luxuriating with considerable skill and beauty. Names, dates, events, all sorts of small historical facts, are showered by him like confetti—that is, with regard for their colour rather than for their order. He has the air of being at the same time erudite and bewildered. He diverts, repels, bores, informs, all in a breath. It is clear that his theme chose him (with some violence) and flew off with him before he had time to see it. He has written, in short, a baroque book about baroque art—a book in which detail swarms, and in which design—well, the design was precisely a sort of ornate designlessness.

This has its merits. At the beginning of the book, where the flight of the theme was swiftest, Mr. Sitwell achieves a series of symbolical rococo descriptions of great beauty. Here the theme invited him with irresistible force; and here his "cold El Greco" colours, dissolving from scene to scene, piling up and blowing away, conscious, elaborate, hard-edged, yet curiously fluctuant and prismatic, give us at once all that there is and all that we need (alas!) of the baroque. Is it unkind to add that they give us, also, all that Mr. Sitwell, on this theme, *can* give us? Thereafter he seems only to repeat himself. The same stage-properties, the same queer, bright obsessions—feathers, beaks, cloud-ships, water-stars, birdmen; gorgeous mirage-armies ethereally invading mirage-worlds plumed, purple, and throbbing with nocturnal music; magicians and fauns and harlequins; fireworks turning to

music and music dissolving into fireworks—these and other decorative items begin to recur too frequently. The colours kill one another. The confusion, in which at first one lost oneself with delight, bathing in its whirl of curiously translucent and unaffactive images, becomes a confusion without meaning, a confusion in which one is helpless and yet in which one no longer believes. Resentfully, one skips a few pages. Duty takes one back again, and now one begins to be annoyed at the unvarying, over-poetic, fall of Mr. Sitwell's sentences, the dishevelment of his purpose, and a kind of cool, sensitive squeamishness in his choice of phrase, a persistent preciousness. Only a short chapter, one decides, can be written in the baroque style. One thinks of Pater's purple passages—but Pater's purple passages (turned to), seem by comparison vigorous and packed with thought. Pater, while he feels no less intensely, and perceives as relentlessly, nevertheless does not cease to think or remember. He analyses while he extols, remains richly aware of a wide background of history, and touches repeatedly, at the necessary intervals, on psychological causes. One thinks again—to drop some distance—of Miss Vernon Lee, whose Italian notes, if they are precious, are at any rate exact and brief. But one needs, of course, no examples. Here is Mr. Sitwell, whose ornate prose becomes, after twenty pages, fatiguing. He carries to excess, both of fineness and excessiveness, the doctrine of fine excess.

It is highly unfortunate that so considerable a mistake—a mistake of proportion—should have been made in the ground-plan of Mr. Sitwell's book. It is clear that he is not one of this generation who lacks "self-confidence" or "fluency," nor does he lack sensibility and imagination. He can write with gusto, power, and subtlety; as many enviable pages in this book make torrentially manifest. He can evoke a scene—crowded and tumultuous, or still and profound—with a felicity that is remarkable. Perhaps this felicity is too often of one sort, a little too careful, the colours a little too light and bright? But that may be a personal taste. All that one has a right

to suggest is that Mr. Sitwell might put his poetic power to purer use than he does in this book.

C. P. A.

The Growth of Civilisation. By W. J. Perry, M.A. (Methuen & Co., Ltd.)

The Origin of Magic and Religion. By W. J. Perry, M.A. (Methuen & Co., Ltd.) 6s. net each.

The recent theories of Professor Elliot Smith and his disciple, Mr. W. J. Perry, are of interest and importance to every student or practitioner of the arts, as indeed they should be to everyone who would pay any attention to the history and the future of the human race. In these two volumes Mr. Perry has made a brief statement of two principal theories and several incidental ones. His two main contentions are that the whole of human culture in every part of the earth is a derivation from that of the Egyptians, and that warfare is a comparatively late development due to the activities of certain warlike races clearly distinguished from the productive and artistic races. The warlike races have made no original contributions to culture, and are responsible for the destruction of every ancient civilisation which has disappeared. It is evident that both of these theories are highly contentious, and that no one but a specialist is competent to judge the validity of Mr. Perry's arguments. To an ordinary observer, it appears that these two theories are independent of each other; and that the first theory, that of Egyptian origins, is much better supported than the second. But it may be merely that the first theory is the less revolutionary and therefore finds easier acceptance.

Evidently, Mr. Perry's work is as much sociology as it is anthropology. That is to say, his work is not so much the accumulation and collocation of material, such as is found in *The Golden Bough*, as it is the construction of this material into a single edifice: he may be classified with Durkheim and

Lévy-Bruhl rather than with Sir James Frazer. We find his theory of the original spread of mankind and distribution of culture extremely engaging. Prehistoric migrations, according to Mr. Perry, are due to the search for the essential materials of life: in the first instance, flint and its substitutes. The spread of historic culture is due to the researches of the Egyptian for the materials for their more and more complicated civilisation. The science of irrigation was discovered on the banks of the Nile and introduced elsewhere by the Egyptians, and consecutively by peoples to whom the Egyptians had taught it. By an ingenious presentation of facts, Mr. Perry is able to show that the earliest remains in England are remains of colonies of the Egyptians, or their pupils the Phœnicians. It was one or the other of these peoples who introduced the construction of megalithic monuments into Britain. Similarly, Mr. Perry gives more than plausible reasons for believing that the civilisations of the Pacific and of Central and South America were directly due to nautical expeditions of the Egyptians, or of various peoples who had learnt Egyptian arts and sciences.

Into all of the implications of this fascinating study it is impossible to proceed. But there is one point which has interesting consequences for art. The arts developed incidentally to the search for objects of talismanic properties. The Egyptian who first fashioned gold into a likeness of a cowrie-shell, the Cretan who designed an octopus on his pottery, the Indian who hung a necklace of bear's-teeth about his neck, were not aiming primarily at decoration, but invoking the assistance of life-giving amulets. At what point, we may ask, does the attempt to design and create an object for the sake of beauty become conscious? At what point in civilisation does any conscious distinction between practical or magical utility and æsthetic beauty arise? These questions are not asked or answered by Mr. Perry. But surely the distinction must mark a change in the human mind which is of fundamental importance. And a further question we should be

impelled to ask is this: Is it possible and justifiable for art, the creation of beautiful objects and of literature, to persist indefinitely without its primitive purposes: is it possible for the æsthetic object to be a *direct* object of attention? These are only a few of the questions suggested by Mr. Perry's work; which compels more attention, I think, than the work of such abstract philosophers of history as Otto Spengler.

T. S. E

FOREIGN REVIEWS

AMERICAN PERIODICALS

The Yale Review, April 1924.—All the other contributions to this number are overshadowed by Professor Santayana's "Preface to a System of Philosophy," and it would not be unjust to devote all our available space to an appreciation of this one essay. The time has perhaps gone by when it was necessary to insist on the unique position that Professor Santayana occupies in modern philosophy, and certainly this is not the occasion for a complete definition of attitude. But there is a finality about this "Preface," and a certain personal and valedictory note, which demand uncommon alertness. The danger is that we should forget the history of this mind, and accept with easy sympathy a rare philosophy that was nevertheless undeviatingly elaborated in an age in which even metaphysics aspired to vulgarity. We can see, when we consider the matter, that Professor Santayana's has been one of the few aristocratic intelligences of the past generation. We shall pay our tribute to this intelligence by the frank use we make of it, willingly accepting it as an influence and a basis for our further search into reality. But there are already signs that we—the generation that is yet to come to its own—shall not be uncritical. In particular we may prefer to drive our attitude to a more absolute conclusion, and where Professor Santayana too often gives us bland tolerance, we shall demand force. It is perhaps for this reason that *The Sense of Beauty*, the earliest and the most definite in expression of any of his works, supplies most often our critical need. The present essay presumably heralds a more extended expression of Professor Santayana's philosophy, though what relation that philosophy will bear to *The Life of Reason* is not evident; it may be merely a more rounded, more unified conception of the same theme. That it will not, in essentials, depart from the already established attitude is proved by this "Preface." The ostensible object is to distinguish and define four "realms" in existence—those of Matter, Essence, Spirit, and Truth. It is perhaps most suitable to this brief occasion to note a few significant sentences. "The imagination which eventually runs to fine art or religion is the same faculty which, under a more direct control of external events, yields vulgar perception. . . . Poetic, creative, original fancy is not a secondary form of sensibility, but its first and only form. . . . Fine art is thus older than servile labour, and the poetic quality of experience is more fundamental than its scientific

value." "Nature drives with a loose rein, and vitality of any sort, even if expressed in fancy, can blunder through many a predicament in which reason would despair. And if the mythical systems decline at last, it is not so much by virtue of the maladjustments underlying their speculative errors—for their myths as a whole are wisely contrived—as because imagination in its freedom abandons these errors for others simply because the prevalent mood of mankind has changed and it begins dreaming in a different key." "Possession of the absolute truth is not merely by accident beyond the range of particular minds; it is incompatible with being alive, because it excludes any particular station, organ, interest, or date of survey: the absolute truth is undiscoverable, just because it is not a perspective." "My eclecticism is not helplessness before sundry influences; it is detachment and firmness in taking each thing simply for what it is. Openness, too, is a form of architecture. The doctrine that all moralities equally are but expressions of animal life is a tremendous dogma, at once blessing and purging all mortal passions; and the conviction that there can be no knowledge save animal faith positing external facts, and that this natural science is but a human symbol for those facts, also has an immense finality: the renunciation and the assurance in it are both radical and both invincible."

Secession, April, 1924.—This number is wholly taken up by an essay of Mr. Ivor Winters: "The Testament of a Stone, being Notes on the Mechanics of the Poetic Image." We are frightened, rather, by the preliminary warning that "These notes presuppose a knowledge of Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character*, a large part of T. S. Eliot's *The Sacred Wood*, and scattered paragraphs from Pound, Lewis, Croce, and the Hindus." But the essay that follows is a clear and independent treatment of a difficult subject. I confess I do not understand what is meant by calling a poem "a permanent gateway to waking oblivion, which is the only infinity and the only rest," and anyhow words like "infinity" are best kept out of any scientific discussion. But Mr. Winters makes up for this lapse by many admirable definitions and statements; and when he says that "the poet who is preoccupied with his object desires a speech without idiom, and a style without mannerism, that the clarity of his perception may not be clouded by inessentials," we realise that he has got to the root of the matter.

The Modern Quarterly, Spring 1924.—The fourth number of this new periodical, which we noted previously with a good deal of satisfaction, does not altogether maintain its first promise. The rather bleak socialistic matter, mostly of Russian origin, has assumed overwhelming

proportions. What does remain of the critical literary order is decidedly good, and shows the possibilities of this new group of writers.

The Century, April, May, and June.—In the April number is to be noted "A Catholic View of Religious America," by Hilaire Belloc. In May Mr. Bertrand Russell writes on "If we are to prevent the Next War" with a dialectic which we may admire, but with a facility we must a little distrust. In the same number Mr. C. E. Bechhofer gives a detailed account of "The Forest Philosophers"—the new cult established at Fontainebleau. There is also a dramatic poem by Miss Amy Lowell. In the June number there are several interesting contributions, but we must particularly notice the instalment of Mr. L. Frank Tooker's reminiscences ("As I saw it from an Editor's Desk") which have been appearing in the *Century* for some time now. The present chapter is concerned with "the fiction of the Magazine" (the old *Century*) and throws some interesting light upon the art and character of Henry James. Mr. Tooker is perhaps rather unnecessarily the plain man in the street, but that his observations and judgement are by no means commonplace, the following extract will show:

"From all the sources that one has at command comes the evidence that he [Henry James] was singularly unemotional by nature. His rigid devotion to his theory of the art of the novelist, his impartial treatment of his characters, his aloofness from his readers, his real or his apparent lack of humour, his selection of essentially impassive situations for the groundwork of his novels—all these appear as the natural corollaries of an inherently unemotional personality. There is also the evidence conveyed by the involutions of his later manner—his concern to run down to its last meaning and significance every thought he expressed. It became in the end a whimsy, not art, and akin to the eccentricities of certain atrophied, elderly unmarried people."

H. R.

GERMAN PERIODICALS

Neue deutsche Beiträge (Munich: Bremer Presse). In appearance and contents the *Neue deutsche Beiträge*, edited by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, are easily the most distinguished literary review now appearing in Germany. "Review" is perhaps hardly the word, for this publication is issued irregularly and not very often. It has a policy and a philosophy, and it does not aim at being merely informative. One does not consult it for the latest German literary news. It appears to be founded on the belief that the classics of Greece and Rome, and of Germany herself, all embodiments of the classical spirit, are still worth the attention of intelligent people, for the human and spiritual

value to be found in them. The April number begins with a selection of "Liebesreime" of the German Renaissance, complaints of love in the best *Barock* tradition. The next item is a free translation, by the dramatist and novelist Ernst Stucken, of a Guatemalan Indian play called *Die Opferung des Gefangenen* (The Sacrificing of the Prisoner). This "dance-play" is from a pre-Columbus age, and in a note the translator, whose most important work is a prodigious prose-epic of the Conquest of Mexico called "Die weissen Götter" (The White Gods), describes his discovery as a work of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, representing, in his opinion, the culmination of a glorious age of drama of which all traces were swept away by the invasion and devastation of Guatemala by the friend of Cortes, Alvarado.

Other contributions to this number are a translation of the First Book of the *Georgics* by Rudolf Alexander Schröder, notes on a journey through Asia Minor by Carl Burckhardt, a detailed critical examination of Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* by Walter Benjamin, and a valuable note on the genius of Provençal poetry by Rudolf Borchardt—strongly emphasising its complete divergence from French poetry.

Der neue Merkur (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt). The April number, apart from two or three political articles of no lasting importance, contains a selection, translated from D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, a short story by Alfred Wolfenstein, a lively review of recent English and American books by and about women entitled "Angelsächsischer Eros," by Rudolf Nutt. The two most important contributions, however, are an admirable essay on Hölderlin's "Rhein-hymns," by Conrad Wandrey, and a study in present-day German prose-literature by Max Krell. Hölderlin's Hymns, being the product of his later, eccentrically mystical period, have, like Blake's "mad" poems, been neglected in the past, but have recently, again like Blake, become the critical fashion. Herr Wandrey's "exegesis" is a little too technical for anyone who comes fresh to Hölderlin's work, but it is otherwise a very useful piece of work. Max Krell's essay is based on the theme that "prose is a manifestation of society . . . an expression of a nation's perfection of utterance." The maturity of French society is shown in the perfection of French prose-literature; on the other hand, "the immature condition of German society has made the formation of a representational style [*darstellenden Stils*] so far impossible." From this point of view the writer develops a very interesting argument regarding the bond between a country's prose-literature and its politics.

In the May number the most important contribution is Ernst Robert Curtius's essay on Paul Valéry, which is illustrated with a number of excellently chosen quotations and a translation of a number of Valéry's

poems, in particular of "Le Serpent." The following extracts are representative: "His aim was absolute poetry—and this he was fated not to attain. This signifies nothing against the symbolist ideal; at the most it signifies something against the world. . . . (His point of departure) is an Archimedean point outside the world, a sphere of pure relationships, more immaterial than philosophy. . . . His thought is an extreme de-realisation of existence [*Entwirklichung des Seins*]. . . . Valéry's climate is the cold air of abstract intellectuality. . . . It is clear that Valéry's conception of poetry is in the sharpest opposition to all romantic tendencies, past and present." It is regrettable that more cannot be quoted from this lucid essay on a writer about whom it is not easy to write lucidly.

Die Weltbühne (Verlag der Weltbühne: Charlottenburg) continues its political articles of a familiar type, the most noteworthy being a series of character-sketches of leading German personalities by the able political writer who calls himself "Johannes Fischart." In the May 8th number Else Laske-Schüler gives a chapter of autobiography which helps to elucidate her work, especially certain of her plays. In the issue for April 24 Alfred Polgar gives an account of the new Max Reinhardt-theatre in Vienna.

A. W. G. R.

FRENCH PERIODICALS

It is embarrassing to have to take up the chronicle of a country's literary reviews—even of those few that reach *THE CRITERION*—with an accumulation of six months confronting one. Impossible to read through that mass of print—impossible even to skim it with any justice. If, therefore, I miss a masterpiece or two, let me be forgiven.

In the January number of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, M. Albert Thibaudet writes on "La Mort de Maurice Barrès," with that finely balanced ponderation of phrase which is M. Thibaudet's own personal asset. The essay is well worth reading as the exponential of a certain function of contemporary France. But Barrès's permanent value to literature? That is another argument. M. André Gide continues his reminiscences under the title "Si le Grain ne meurt," quite oblivious of the effect of such titles upon us. To speak vulgarly, the edge that cuts the agate no longer cuts any ice with us. These reminiscences are best read with malice. M. P. Drieu La Rochelle, on whom the war has forced a *déplacement de pathétique*, has a "Chronique des Spectacles." Out of disgust for the particular cases that offered themselves to his view, he seems to have attempted what the mathematicians call a generalisation. A curious spectacle in itself. M. Drieu La Rochelle will either

sterilise his intellect or make it a powerful instrument of analysis. It will be interesting to watch his development.

I have lost the February number. March, at first blush, appears to offer nothing remarkable . . . for the *N.R.F.* M. Pierre de Lanux, "Intelligence et Démocratie"; M. André Lhote, "De l'Utilisation du Coup de Foudre"? M. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle: "Vous comprendrez que je cesse cette chronique: je fuis la tristesse qui s'accumule pour le moment dans les lieux où les hommes s'assemblent." Alas! Having substituted contemporary values for the symbols in his general equation, he has apparently found zero in the result. M. Thibaudet begins (if he did not begin it in the February number) a series of articles on the novel with "Le Roman de l'Energie," which he continues in the April number with "Le Roman domestique," and in the May number with "Le Roman urbain." In this last number, too, is a long "Ode Génoise," by M. Jules Romains. It proceeds from the preoccupations that created *Europe*. June number: "Anatole France en Angleterre," by M. Thibaudet; "Les Onze devant la Porte dorée," a mixture of metaphysics, psychology, and football, done well by M. Henry de Montherlant; some poems by M. Pierre Reverdy; "Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel," posthumous work by Raymond Radiguet, with a note by M. Jacques Rivière.

Le Mercure de France from January 1 to May 15, ten numbers, about three thousand pages. Ah non! J'y renonce. Je fais grève. Out of a mass of interesting matter, let me mention: "Maurice Barrès au Quartier Latin," by Pierre Dufay (January 1); "Maurice Barrès à l'Action française," by Robert Launay (February 1); "Stéphane Mallarmé, esquisse orale," by Francis Vielé-Griffin (February 15); "Le Lyrisme physiologique et la double Personnalité d'Arthur Rimbaud," by Jules de Gaultier; "La Prononciation du Latin," by the Abbé Rousselot (March 1); "Mercure ou les douze douzains du Négocé," by René Lobstein (May 15)—read this; it begins:

"1. Jusqu'au dernier sou, l'argent d'autrui est à toi.

"2. L'objet du négoce est de te restituer tout cet argent, qui est à toi, mais qui est hors de tes mains."

La Revue musicale, March, April, May. This review is outside my competence. It is exceedingly well done. I may be wrong, but my impression is that English musical periodicals are of the nature of trade papers. *La Revue musicale* treats its subject as an art. The March number has four articles on Eric Satie. The May number is devoted to Ronsard, with a musical supplement containing eight of Ronsard's poems set to music by French musicians. This number should be obtained.

Le Disque vert, double number 4 and 5, is wholly occupied with

Charlie Chaplin, who has received far more serious consideration in France than in England. M. Florent Fels gives some queer specimens of what he evidently thinks is English. Strange that so few Frenchmen can quote English correctly. M. Frans Masereel's drawings of M. Chaplin remind one rather of Billie Ritchie, an imitator, than of their original. None of the drawings in this number, in fact, approach the authenticity of the photographic frontispiece. The texts are various and worth study.

Philosophies (March and May—six numbers a year) is a new review for the discussion of ideas from all angles. "La première caractéristique de *Philosophies*, c'est de juxtaposer des œuvres de poètes, d'essayistes et de philosophes." These two numbers contain much interesting matter, and the review promises to be a valuable one . . . for those who are not afraid of ideas, whatever their nature. Alert, serious, even in its humour and wit, keen, pointed, deadly and vivifying, its pages present that most attractive spectacle—the French mind thinking clearly with a mathematical logic and the daring—if a courage that has foreseen and measured all the dangers can be called daring—of the born adventurer of the spirit.

Europe, January to May. "Quelques histoires de mon époque," by Vlaminck (January): "La poésie lyrique française," by Georges Duhamel (February).

F. S. F.

ITALIAN PERIODICALS

Il Convegno, March and April, continues to devote a large part of its pages to the theatre. These two numbers contain a long and thoughtful essay by Lucien Dubeck on contemporary French drama. His general conclusion is that, on the whole, the Vieux Colombier, or, in other words, M. Jacques Copeau, is on the right track: "Instead of dispersing the attention, like the school of exact detail, of diluting it, like the school of silence, the Vieux Colombier concentrates it on some one evocatory sign chosen with care and art. This is the formula of the masters of all arts in all times: not to describe, but to suggest, to strike the imagination on the exact spot. Where Zola wrote a volume, Virgil and Racine wrote a line:

'Dans l'Orient désert, quel devint mon ennui!'"

To the May number Riccardo Bacchelli contributes some souvenirs of Eleonora Duse, "the most masculine mind and the most womanly chivalrous heart of her time, a woman of Goldoni and a heroine of Tasso, before and as well as a wonderful tragic actress, both ancient

and modern." There is also a note, with photographs, on the production of Carlo Goldoni's *Il Servitore di due Padroni*, at the inauguration of the "Theater in der Josefstadt," at Vienna, under the direction of Max Reinhardt. The "Teatro del Convegno," with the editor of the review as its director, opens in October next: *È il primo ed unico teatro italiano che, senza nessun scopo di lucro, con una propria compagnia stabile e con un proprio laboratorio scenografico, si propone di rappresentare opere scelte con criterio rigorosamente artistico.*

F. S. F.

DANISH PERIODICALS

Tilskueren.—April. "Intermezzo," a short story, with an Italian back-ground, by M. Galschiøt; two poems by Per Lange.

May. Two poems by Sigurd Swane, an article on Danish and Norwegian lyric poetry by Tom Kristensen, and on Strindberg's world-fame, by Harry Jacobsen. M. Kristensen takes a pessimistic view. He says that verses are produced in great quantities; publishing houses are established to send them out in book form, but, more often than not, there is no relation between the poet's efforts and the quality of the books. There is an over-production of poor verse, and it would not be a bad thing if the publishers made war on dilettantism and their doors a little narrower. Jesper Ewald, in the same number, writing on the "young literature," says there is plenty of talent, but there lacks a man, a leader, a great critic. The times are propitious enough, and rich with subjects.

June. The conclusion of the article on Strindberg. An article by Hartvig Frisch on Chr. Fr. Wilster, the Danish translator of Homer. Wilster is said to have turned Homer's gold into romantic metal, but it was a precious metal, the product of an artist, fresh and full weight. Hartvig Frisch protests against an attempt to thrust Wilster into the background with a version of the *Iliad* (by Professor Gertz), the greatest merit of which is a pedantic accuracy. Wilster's translation, whatever its faults, was a living book, and "if it is to be replaced, it must be with a new artistic work, that bears the imprint and tone of a new time, and is not an unpoetical echo of the romantic utterance, of which our elders, in any case, were better masters than we are."

F. S. F.

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