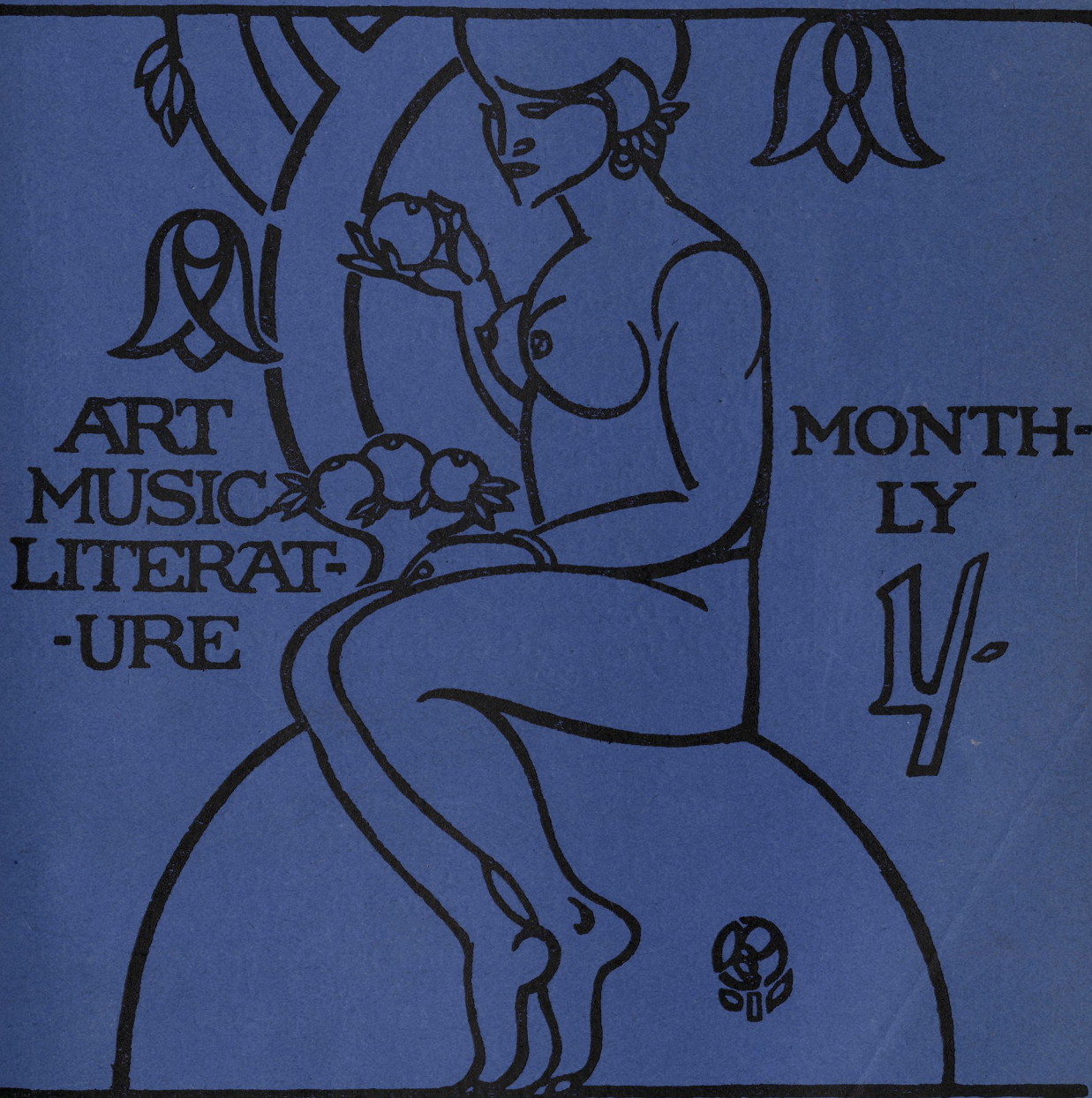


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NOVEMBER, 1912

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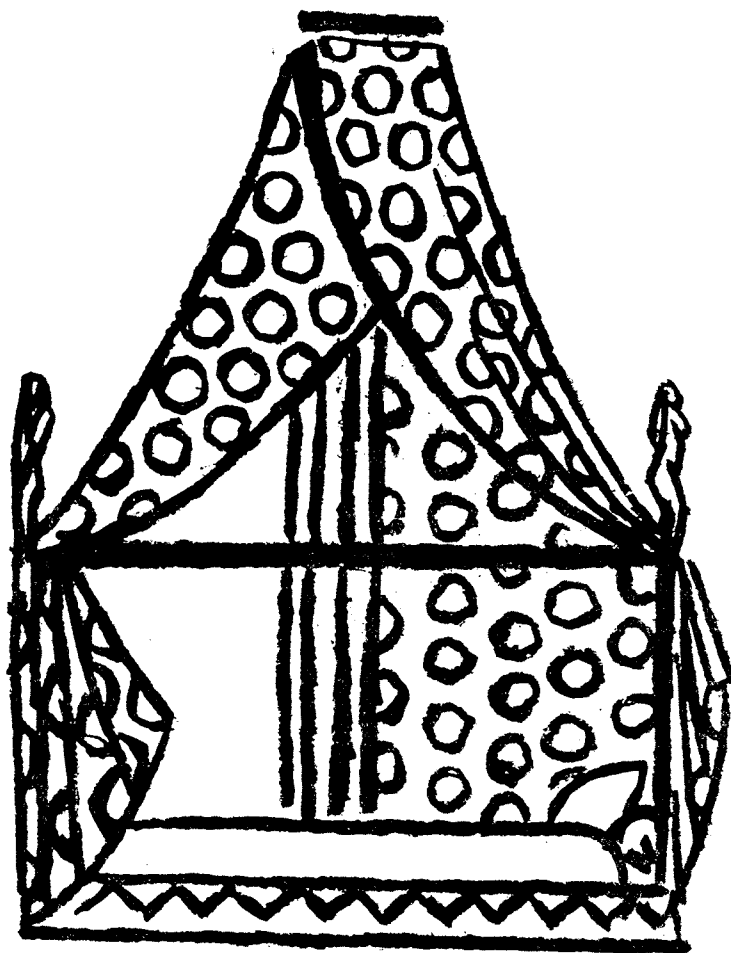
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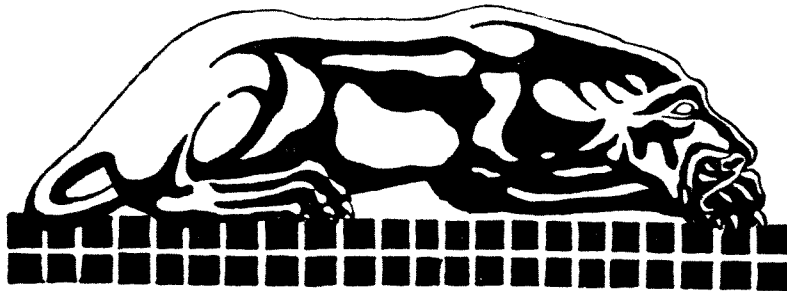
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TO GOD THE FATHER

To the little, pitiful God I make my prayer,
 The God with the long grey beard
 And flowing robe fastened with a hempen girdle
 Who sits nodding and muttering on the all-too-big throne of Heaven.
 What a long, long time, dear God, since you set the stars in their places,
 Girded the earth with the sea, and invented the day and night.
 And longer the time since you looked through the blue window of Heaven
 To see your children at play in a garden. . . .
 Now we are all stronger than you and wiser and more arrogant,
 In swift procession we pass you by.
 "Who is that marionette nodding and muttering
 On the all-too-big throne of Heaven?
 Come down from your place, Grey Beard,
 We have had enough of your play-acting!"
 It is centuries since I believed in you,
 But to-day my need of you has come back.
 I want no rose-coloured future,
 No books of learning—no protestations and denials—
 I am sick of this ugly scramble,
 I am tired of being pulled about—
 O God, I want to sit on your knees
 On the all-too-big throne of Heaven,
 And fall asleep with my hands tangled in your grey beard.

Translated from BORIS PETROVSKY.



N. THEOPHILAKTOFF.

THE BLUE PETER

For forty years he had lived with his mother in the same house. For forty-five years he had worked in the same branch of the same bank, walking to and fro in morning and evening between house and bank, bank and house. For twenty years, at least, he had followed exactly the same route, crossing the streets at the same point, taking the inside of a curve and leaving it always at the same points, hardly deviating by a yard. He walked very fast in the morning and always arrived at the bank at four minutes past nine. He walked faster still in the evening, and, except at balance time, walked home exactly at five. Everything that he did between half-past eight and five was as purely mechanical as sleeping, or eating or dressing. He never saw anything in the streets he passed through four times a day, and he never noticed anything that happened in his house. His mother's habits never clashed with his own, and her presence was never disturbing, for she changed no more than the clock on the landing outside his room. The clock ticked monotonously, but he never heard it. She talked monotonously, but he never heard her. When she was ill she talked about death, when she was well she talked about her illnesses.

In the evenings he read books about ships and the universities and the lives of learned men. He never read the lives of sailors, but he read every novel of the sea that was ever published in the English language.

He had a fortnight's holiday in the year and then he would take a cheap sea voyage dressed in a pepper-and-salt tail suit—he never had more than one—and a yachting cap, with a telescope under his arm. He never spoke to a soul. The common sailors were beneath notice, and his whole attention was concentrated on criticizing the navigation, which, as a rule, he found contemptible. He had a certain scorn of steamships, though he travelled by them.

Saturday afternoons and Sundays he always spent in his bedroom, which, in its furniture, was scant and bare. Here he was the master of many ships. On the chest of drawers was a brig, full-rigged, all ship-shape, spotless, with all the furniture proper to a brig, every line of her true and trim, all her guns of polished brass lashed under her bulwarks. She was

his treasure. . . . On the mantelpiece were a schooner, a cutter and a yawl. On a cupboard by the window was a steamer that, in a swaggering moment, he had bought for a yacht, but he never believed in steamships and he had turned her to base traffic as a tramp. She never had any luck and was always in dirty weather, and, her profit being small, he had cut down her expenses to the minimum. She was very dirty. Her bow had been stove in in the bath and she was never really seaworthy again. For long enough he had not given her so much as a coat of paint. She would founder some day and that would show that these steamships were a snare and the children of the devil.

Every winter the brig, the schooner, the cutter and the yawl were put in dry dock, and thoroughly overhauled. They needed new masts or new rudders, or anchor chains or deck timbers, always new sails and spars and scientific instruments, or a capstan, port and starboard lights, bowsprit, crosstrees. There was a reason for every repair. Every ship had its log written in a neat, though roughish, hand, and signed: P. Lawrie, Master, or T. Willier, Mate, or F. Dodd or J. Pettigrew. Master's report of repairs needed, tenders received and owner's acceptance were all filed. A great many characters passed in and about the bedroom, all having dealings with the owner of those ships. These characters never passed out of the bedroom. Many of them were very villainous and mutiny was not unknown on the brig or the schooner when they went on long voyages.

They set out in the spring. When the little green buds began to peep on the blackened hawthorns in the back garden, and the sparrows sang, then the brig was made stately in full sail, then blue peter was hoisted that all might know she was about to quit port and take to the high seas, and there was a new entry in the log—"Arethusa," Brig, Liverpool to Pernambuco. . . ." When the brig had set sail, then the schooner began her series of voyages in the North Sea and the Baltic, and the cutter plied between Southampton and Bordeaux and the Spanish Ports, and the yawl joined the coastwise traffic. . . . Heavily insured, the steamer, whose every voyage might be her last, went from port to port in the China seas, and always the most horrible fates attended her. The laconic entries in her log revealed tragedy most bare—cholera, plague, enteric, mutiny, lascar crews frantic with opium, typhoon, fire, water in her bulkheads. There was never any final disaster and by Christmas, brig, schooner, cutter, yawl and steamer were safe in dock waiting for repairs.

One Saturday in winter the ship-master returned from the bank, gulped down his dinner and hurried upstairs to the dock. He was very excited and went to his office—a nest of drawers in the corner of the room—and

took out a map of England, a huge navigator's map on which the land was nothing but names and the sea charted in fullest detail. He studied this for a long time, especially the mouth of the Thames and the Kentish coast, and he took a pin and stuck it through the little circle which was called Deal. Then he hurried downstairs to his mother sitting in the parlour and with the awkward air of one approaching a vital subject he said:

"Mamma, I wish to say something."

"I am not feeling at all well," replied the old woman, fencing off his disturbing excitement.

"But it is most important. To-day, at the bank, the manager talked to me about my retirement next year. I had not realized that it was so near. I shall get my full pension—eighty pounds a year. We could go and live in some quiet place and be very happy. I thought of Deal. It is a very quiet place and all day and all night you can watch the ships going by, coming and going from all parts of the world. I should have a window looking out to sea and I would buy a large telescope. . . . It is near Dover and any day I could cross the Channel and back again; sometimes I could go to Ostend or the Hook, or Hamburg. They say Hamburg is one of the greatest ports in the world. . . ."

"But I don't know anybody in Deal."

"There are hundreds of ships going by every day."

"I don't know anybody in Deal."

"There's a little harbour at Deal and many fishing boats. You would see them putting out to sea, and you would see them return with their holds full of fish, gleaming like bars of silver."

"I don't like fish."

Desperately he said:

"All day long and all night long you would hear the sea, and there would be storms and a wreck or two, and you would see them man the lifeboat. . . ."

He saw that his mother was crying, and his excitement oozed away. Helplessly his hands dropped between his knees and sadly he hung his head.

His mother said in a choking voice:

"I couldn't leave this house. I couldn't bear to sit in a strange room. I couldn't bear to look out of the window and see strange people, and I should miss the houses and the street so much. I never could abide the sea. It is so empty. . . . I couldn't leave this house."

"No. I suppose not. . . . I suppose not."

To avoid speaking again his mother went on weeping, and presently he

stole away. Very slowly he went upstairs to his bedroom. He took the pin out of the circle called Deal, folded up the map and put it away in the nest of drawers. He no longer thought of it as his office.

All the rest of the day and through the night he sat brooding, absolutely still, by the window. In the early morning of Sunday he rose and locked the door. Then for hours he sat still again, brooding.

About one o'clock he bestirred himself and shivered out of his lethargy. He took the yawl and broke it on his knee, the cutter and crushed it with his feet. Then he began dismantling the brig "Arethusa," his treasure. He took down her masts and rigging, stripped her and left her a sheer hulk. With his old log books and office papers and the broken chips of the cutter and the yawl he lit a fire, and when it had come to a great blaze he laid the hulk of the brig "Arethusa" on it and sat watching the paint blister and the wood char, flare, glow and crumble into dust.

That done he turned to the schooner and crammed into her all the guns of the brig, making cunning devices for their concealment. He victualled her for a very long voyage, and he painted her black.

He was at work on her all Sunday night, paying no heed to the repeated knocking on his door, and by seven o'clock on Monday morning he had her all ship-shape. He hoisted the blue peter that all men might see she was about to leave port for the high seas. Then he opened a new log and in a rough sprawling hand he wrote: "'Sanguinea,' schooner, Bristol to the Spanish Main. No cargo."

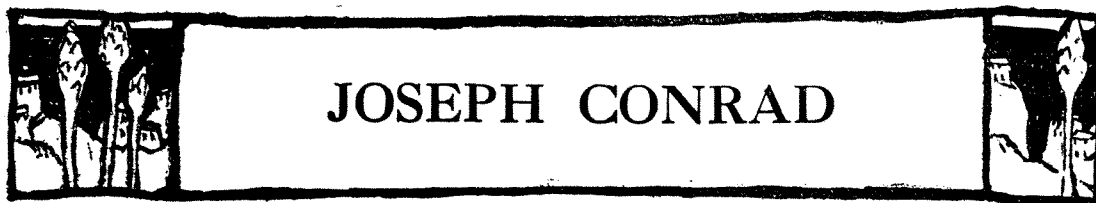
At eight o'clock he hauled down the blue peter, as she hove out of sight of land, he hoisted a signal which, being interpreted, is "Damn your eyes."

This he left flying when he hurried downstairs, swallowed his breakfast and walked swiftly away to the bank, crossing the streets at the same point, taking the inside of the curve and leaving it at the same points, hardly deviating by a yard from his accustomed route and entering the door at four minutes past nine.

GILBERT CANNAN.

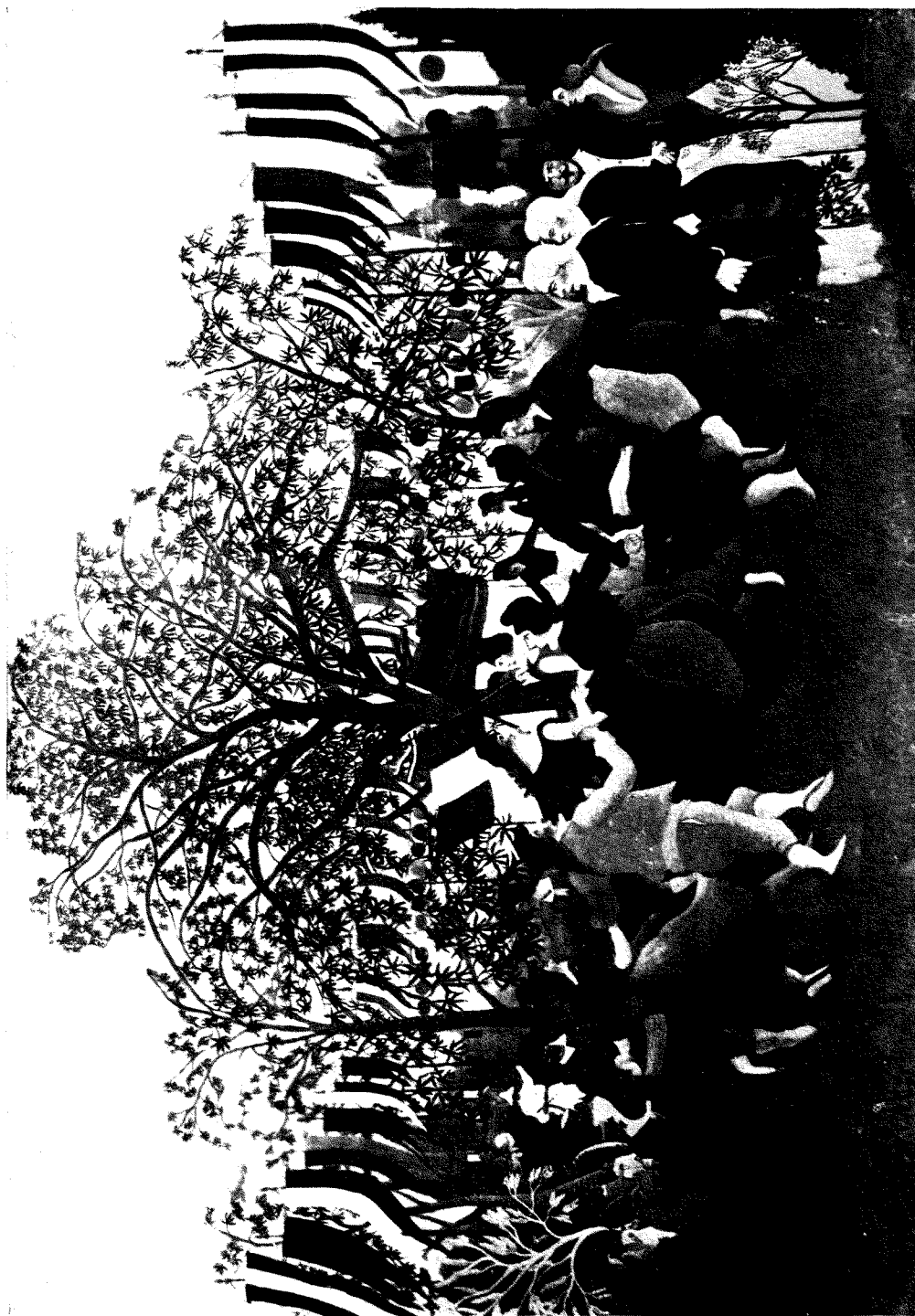


ANNE ESTELLE RICE



I know only too well that the very moment I sit down to write what I think about Conrad, I shall find myself quite unable to say what I really do think. The fact is, I suppose, that one forms a kind of clear, wordless impression of a man which it is extremely difficult to formulate in language. At any rate I find it extremely difficult. I have in front of me an essay (unpublished—refused) which I wrote on Conrad last year. Some of it is so horribly unlike what I actually meant to say that I've no doubt I shall fall into precisely the same pitfalls in this essay. But such things must take care of themselves.

Of course, Conrad is an exceptionally difficult writer to discuss. He is one of these men whose extraordinarily vivid personality pervades everything he writes to such an extent that a good many people do actually find him impossible to read. One must differentiate all this from mere mannerism, the mannerism that spoils such writers as Meredith and Hugo. It is not mannerism in the case of men like Conrad, that is to say it is not the mannerism of eccentricity, it is the positive strength of their personality. Flaubert, for instance, an indubitably great artist, arouses this antipathy to a marked degree. He could efface himself in one sense, but in another he was visible in every line of his work, and not only visible, because, of course, every one who is anyone is that, but visible in a singular and almost menacing fashion. The same, indeed, applies to Whitman and Dostoievsky, authors some people are temperamentally incapable of appreciating. And now, as far as I can judge, we have got to add Conrad to this list. Certain people, people of intelligence who can read Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Anatole France with delight, are quite antipathetic to Conrad. I think it must be that he seems to envelop things with his own sombre and poetic imagination rather than show them to us in their actual light. Take, for example, his story *Youth* and contrast it with Hudson's *Purple Land*. Essentially they are both concerned with the same idea—the glamour and romance of youth; but I can quite understand people asserting that Hudson's story does give the feeling of youth, whereas Conrad's story gives only a philosophic dream of what youth ought to be. Even if that were true, which I doubt, I don't think it matters (it is the



LE CENTENAIRE 1793

HENRI ROUSSEAU (Collection F. Dusseldorf)

difference between a self-conscious and an unself-conscious artist), but I see why it might be thought, and, in seeing that, I seem to grasp what it is about Conrad that is alien to some people. It is his passionately romantic, melancholy, and ironical mind.

So, then, you have got to go on the assumption that there are those who will never like Conrad. Whether I've given the correct reason for this, I don't know, but that it is the case I feel sure. One of these days he may divide literary opinion in England in the way Dostoevsky divides it in Russia. Not that Conrad is like Dostoevsky—his is a totally different type of intellect. When *Under Western Eyes* came out, I noticed that a reviewer compared the two of them. It struck me as obtuse. Certainly, there is a superficial resemblance between parts of *Under Western Eyes* and parts of *Crime and Punishment*, but it is palpably superficial. Conrad, unlike Dostoevsky, is not the least bit of a mystic, though he has such an unrivalled sense of the mysterious—a very different thing.

The truth is, it's not much use trying to compare Conrad to anyone. He has affinities (who hasn't?), his humour may be Slav, his keen, logical mind, French, but he is, indeed, profoundly original both in method and in point of view. One has only to examine the structure of his novels to see that. I'm told that in such books as *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo* it's very bad, and I'm inclined to admit that, but, all the same, it gives one a real insight into Conrad. It shows us his powerful and subtle brain following the winding clues of an idea into all sorts of bypaths and involved hypotheses, forgetting, as it were, the presence of the reader while he tries to discover the hint that will unbare "the secret baseness of motives." Perhaps, after all, none of his books exemplifies this better than his *Reminiscences*. There you have the ordinary facts of an adventurous life treated in such a curious and reflective manner that really one hardly ever knows where one is. And so with some of his long novels. The book may begin properly about p. 100—it is very interesting.

However, a point like this is comparatively small and certainly not worth while dwelling on. His originality is remarkable, rather, for that striking blend of romance and psychology which is so typical of his work. He has an immense creative energy. Everything he touches starts throbbing. Consider for an instant his novel *Nostromo*. In his *Reminiscences* Conrad speaks of its poor reception, and I find that when I mention the book to admirers of his work they are not, as a rule, particularly enthusiastic, but I must confess, for myself, that it strikes me as one of his most astonishing achievements. I've heard it said that he evolved it all after just touching at one South American port—really, it seems to me almost

incredible. I know that Western coast slightly, from Panama down to Callao, and I can only assert that Costaguana is a perfectly marvellous re-creation of the atmosphere of a South American Republic of the Ecuadorian type (a cooler Ecuador, let us say), marvellous in its delicate and just perception both of the character of the country and the character of the population. I call *Nostromo* a tremendous book, I think I can say one of the most tremendous books I've ever read. It is the great example of his vast capacity for building up the mirage of reality out of practically nothing.

But I must leave *Nostromo* for the moment—I only wanted to mention it here to show that very rare blending of romance, psychology, and creative force in Conrad. What I really want to do is to try and discover how to approach Conrad. I'm sure it's very difficult. He's not doctrinaire like Wells or Galsworthy and yet it's obvious that he has definite opinions. I should think they were mostly cynical. He is impatient of the futility of things and pessimism is embedded in his theory of a pitiless scheme. And yet to all this is queerly joined a real zest in existence and adventure, and a sympathetic warmth towards artless lives such as those of "Belfast" and the Cook in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. One feels inclined to say that to his general disillusionment about life there is added an almost naïve belief in goodness. Here, if you like, are two Russian qualities that he has—the melancholy of Turgenev and the compassion of Dostoievsky. . .

Which leads me to interject a side-remark as to Conrad's originality. I was saying a little way back that it was a useless business comparing him to other people, but I rather think one might except from that the earlier part of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, which does seem to me to show definitely the influence of Flaubert. The sailors in the fore-castle of the "Narcissus" in the first chapter are filled in with a similar touch to the barbarians in the garden of Hamilcar in the beginning of *Salammbô*. These sharp, little sentences remind me exactly of Flaubert in a certain mood. One must not carry the comparison too far. . .

Let me see: I was trying to puzzle out some way of approaching Conrad. But the romantic mind is highly obscure and capable of all kinds of double experiences. The mournful philosophy of Conrad is impressed by him upon the wilds and upon men living in vain hope and constant endeavour. And how valuable an artistic background it is. This fatalism casts a glamour over these tropical forests, over these enormous rivers, over the unbroken silences of the wilderness. And it gives to human endurance and courage an almost sublime nobility. Look at Captain Macwhirr of *Typhoon*—a dense, unimaginative, stupid man, a man who would bore you

to death in five minutes. And yet, simply by the might of his dogged and unbending resistance to the storm, he emerges an heroic figure. There is something epic about Captain Macwhirr. I often wonder whether Conrad's real intention in writing this story were not to show what unconquerable faithfulness can accomplish, to show that man is, in a sense, superior to all the violence of the sea. It comes to this, I think, that Conrad, like so many pessimistic and cynical people, has an unbounded respect for singleness of heart. You notice it again and again—Winnie Verlock and her mother, Mrs Gould, Captain Whalley, Bessie Carvil, Captain Lingard, Giorgio Viola, old Singleton, Miss Haldin, Freya Nielsen.

To return to Captain Macwhirr. One must remember that the reason why he does interest one so intensely is just because he is a real person and not merely symbolic of man's fight with Nature. I'm a little afraid lest what I said before may have been misunderstood. You see, there is this recondite duality in romantic minds, this capacity for creating one illusion within another. Captain Macwhirr is essentially real, but his reality seems enhanced by his contact with the typhoon. That is Conrad's system of developing his characters. He likes to show us them battling with some definite catastrophe or idea. His people are faced with monstrous propositions. There is Lord Jim with his problem of how to redeem his honour, there is Charles Gould enslaved to his silver mine, there is Almayer with his *idée fixe* of riches, there is Mr Verlochaunted by his own endless scheming, there is Lieutenant Feraud obsessed by his duel, there is Razumov fighting his conscience. I needn't prolong such a list. Not always, of course, but quite frequently, this is how Conrad works, and it has led to some talk of his not really being so much a profound psychologist, as a profound describer of moods. I don't think there's much in that—in fact, my opinion is that Conrad is truly one of the great imaginative creators. For me his portraits have an absorbing actuality. They aren't those Meredithian types one gets so tired of. Conrad builds up his figures by a hundred harmonious touches. Even assume that he is going to present us to a man driven by one mastering impulse—say Lord Jim. That doesn't prevent him very soon making us comprehend Lord Jim quite apart from that impulse. For he finishes his people off minutely—their gestures, their scraps of dialogue. He reads them both objectively and subjectively, he views them from all sorts of standpoints. His endeavour is to be universally consistent to reality. I don't say he's always successful—I don't think he is. I don't call Nostromo himself a success, or Father Corbèlan (a figure of melodrama), or Marlow (more of a prig than a philosopher), or Gaspar Ruiz—just to mention one or two. But that's natural, it happens to every artist. Look at the Bulgarian

in Turgenev's *On the Eve*—what a piece of wood! But the answer to that is surely this—look at Bazarov! And as to Conrad (besides all these people I've named who are magnificently good, Winnie Verlock, Mrs Gould, etc.), look at Stein, look at Donkin, at Wait, at Harry Hagberd, at Mr Kurtz, at Gizelle Viola, at Dr Monygham, at Captain Mitchell, at Stevie, at the Professor, at Manuel-del-Popolo, at II Conde, at Alvan Hervey, at Almayer, at Jacobus

And I want to emphasize here what I touched on before when I was discussing Captain Macwhirr, and that is the strong influence of atmosphere upon Conrad's characters. Of course Conrad realizes very intensely and very poetically the spirit of places, but, further than that, he seems to be able to make it blend into his characters' lives in a quite overwhelming way. In *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*, the steamy river flowing unconcerned to the ocean comes to typify for the sombre Almayer the utter *ennui* of the tropics. His slow decay is like the resistless march of the stream, the heritage of a place where nothing happens. The river keeps flowing, flowing to the sea, bearing with it the hearts of Almayer and Willems, the two outcasts, who cannot escape, who are pressed down by an intolerable burden. In *Lord Jim*, again, the insecure splendour of the tropics is like a glittering and ominous drop-scene to Jim's life of struggle and romance. And it is the East which throws its mantle over Marlow in *Youth*. It is almost the grandest thing in Conrad, this story, like a parable of the vision and the adventure of youth. In *Heart of Darkness* we feel the fatality of the wilds. The terrible river coming from "the heart of darkness," the huge jungle, the weird noises rising and falling at night, "the high stillness . . . waiting for the passing away of a fantastic invasion," are put against the men greedily tearing treasure out of the land, and are shown slowly wrapping them round with a savage demoralization. And it is this also which overtakes Kayerts and Carlier in *An Outpost of Progress*. Gradually the forest closes over their minds, swamping within them the restraints of civilization, corroding them with its despair. In such tales as *Karain* and *The Lagoon* the tropical night pulses with a delicate chorus to the sad Eastern voices murmuring their reminiscences of adventure and sorrow.

And in almost all Conrad's stories of this class the sea is a vital element. It has a kind of emblematic influence over the innermost thoughts of his characters, a kind of magic sway over the motives of the action. In *Typhoon* the frightful storm rushes upon the "Nan-Shan" like a demon full of a violent animosity, in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* the calm sinks into the hearts of the seamen with the serenity of a spirit watching

over the lives of mariners. In *To-morrow* the sound of the swell upon the sea-wall beats in Bessie Carvil's ears like the sound of fate, in *The End of the Tether* the stagnant reaches seem to throw their inexorable disregard over the ageing Captain Whalley.

I don't want to labour this point too much or go on quoting innumerable instances, but, as a last example, I should like to point out a strange thing about *Nostromo*—the sinister influence of the San Tomé mine. It draws from Decoud his life, from Charles Gould his love, from Nostromo his honour. That, too, is the sort of atmosphere Conrad can suggest—the sense of some redoubtable spell upon life.

I shall have more to say about his atmosphere, but, in the meantime, I would like to round off my remarks about his characters. Of course, I haven't the space to go deeply into this question at all, I haven't the space to develop any theories as to what it really is which gives that vivid glow of life to his creations, but I would just direct your attention to the fact that he is a very moving and a very thrilling psychologist. This proves, I think, his peculiarly sympathetic and graphic conception of personality. I should say that Mrs Gould must be one of the most pathetic figures in all literature—certainly I don't know of anyone who touches me more deeply. If Balzac had been a greater artist in words no doubt he would have made Père Goriot extraordinarily pathetic, but, as it is, there is not the sustained, exquisite finish about his portrait that there is about Mrs Gould's. I consider that this power of creating a quite beautiful and tender figure, who passes through the book radiating gentleness and understanding upon all the blind prejudice of life, reveals a very exalted talent. In some respects Isabel Archer of *The Portrait of a Lady* is a similar type. I don't know anything that has moved me more than that scene when she is sitting by the bedside of the dying Ralph Touchett. And Isabel Archer resembles Mrs Gould in her capacity for silent suffering—that sort of dumb loyalty of the spirit.

So here is one of the things I wished to emphasize especially (a thing easily exemplified in other of his characters, in Winnie Verloc [possibly his finest creation], her mother, and Stevie, in Captain Whalley, in Bessie Carvil, and so on); and the other, as I said, is Conrad's ability to make his people thrilling. The Russians could do it, Dostoevsky especially, but I'm not sure about anyone else. And by thrilling I mean something almost indescribable, something intimate like the familiar excitement of a dream. I will give you an example of a thrilling person in Conrad—Giselle Viola. She interests me almost more than anyone in all his books—sitting there with her downcast eyes, silently passionate, secretly stealing away Nos-

tromo's heart. I'll tell you another thrilling person—Falk, with the shuddering motion of his hands, "the vague stir of the passionate and meaningless gesture"—with his love of life, with his inscrutable bearing. And Harry Hagberd is thrilling, and Captain Macwhirr, and Mr Kurtz. . . .

But, indeed, Conrad is thrilling not only in his reading of character, but in his treatment of a situation, in his style, and most of all, perhaps, in his trick of the accumulative effect of repetition. Consider the constant reiteration of Mr Kurtz's name in *Heart of Darkness*, the constant comparison between the fair Giselle and the dark Linda in *Nostromo*, the repeated description of the draped statue of a woman "thrusting out blindly a rigid white arm holding a cluster of lights" in *The Return*, the recurring refrain "an impenetrable mystery seems destined to hang for ever over this act of madness or despair" in the last chapter of *The Secret Agent*, and such like instances. They are sufficient, somehow, in themselves to suggest an air of subdued and threatening excitement.

Again, his books are full of incidents intensely dramatic in the direct sense. The torturing of Hirsch in *Nostromo*, the murder of Verloc in *The Secret Agent*, the end of *The Return* and of *An Outpost of Progress*, the panic on the "Patna" in *Lord Jim*, the whole conversation between Jessie Carvil and Harry Hagberd as mixed with the cries from the two fathers in *To-morrow*, the death of Maggie Colchester in *The Brute*, the escape of Leggatt in *The Secret Sharer*, are representative.

And, after all, Conrad's atmosphere itself is thrilling. That's one of the main reasons why *Nostromo* is so admirable. To me, there is something almost terribly thrilling in the idea of the Placid Gulf with the three little islands lying on its fringe shutting in Sulaco from the sea-breezes, of the sierras capped by "the snows of Higuerota." And observe how he pictures the tropics. They are like a hashish vision—a loveliness tinged with poison. Who could deny that such a story as *Youth* has the quality of a dream which, realized for an instant, departs for ever? This is how Marlow sees the East for the first time:—

"The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into vast masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation, probably—mute and fantastic shapes. And at their foot the semi-circle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave" (*Youth*, "Youth," p. 42).

In *Heart of Darkness* he portrays the might of the jungle. You can almost sniff the "primeval mud" of the Congo:—

"The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of

trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence" (*Youth*, "Heart of Darkness," p. 98).

The fact is, Conrad has an amazing command of language—this in a Pole, to whom English is a foreign language! I don't pretend to account for it. Just look at a description like the following :—

"The far off blackness ahead of the ship was like another night seen through the starry night of the earth—the starless night of the immensities beyond the created universe, revealed in its appalling stillness through a low fissure in the glittering sphere of which the earth is the kernel" (*Typhoon*, "Typhoon," p. 32).

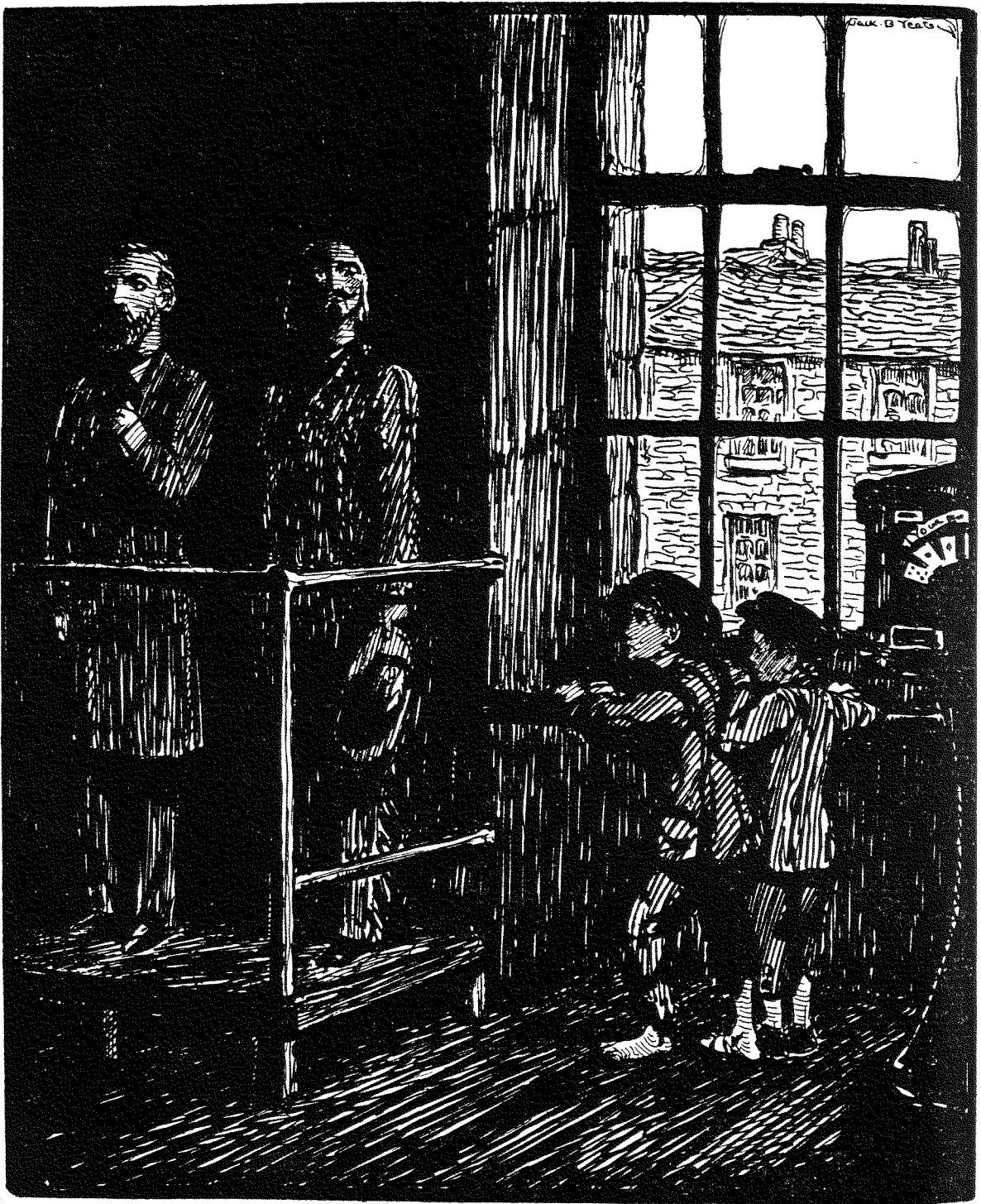
Or at this :—"A multitude of stars coming out into the clear night peopled the emptiness of the sky. They glittered, as if alive above the sea; they surrounded the running ship on all sides; more intense than the eyes of a staring crowd, and as inscrutable as the souls of men" (*The Nigger of the Narcissus*, p. 41).

Or at this :—"She dropped her head, and as if her ears had been opened to the voices of the world, she heard beyond the rampart of the sea wall the swell of yesterday's gale breaking on the beach with monotonous and solemn vibrations, as if all the earth had been a tolling bell" (*Typhoon*, "To-morrow," p. 294).

Or at this :—"A murmur powerful and gentle, a murmur vast and faint; the murmur of trembling leaves, of stirring boughs, ran through the tangled depths of the forests, ran over the starry smoothness of the lagoon, and the water between the piles lapped the slimy timber once with a sudden splash. A breath of warm air touched the two men's faces and passed on with a mournful sound—a breath loud and short like an uneasy sigh of the dreaming earth" (*Tales of Unrest*, "The Lagoon," p. 290).

They are very impressive. Indeed, there is no one who can write such glowing prose poetry, not the usual prose-poetry of word-painting alone, but descriptions of great beauty infused with a sort of melancholy—the melancholy of the wilds, of the sea-wastes, of the craving heart of man. I would like to give here three supreme instances of what I mean—all from *Lord Jim*. I can't help thinking that they must be the most splendid things of their kind ever written :—

"She was headed between two small islets, crossed obliquely the anchoring-ground of sailing-ships, swung through half a circle in the shadow of a hill, then ranged close to a ledge of foaming reefs. The Arab, standing up aft, recited aloud the prayer of travellers by sea. He invoked



IN A DUBLIN WAXWORKS SHOW

JACK B. YEATS

the favour of the Most High upon that journey, implored His blessing on men's toil and on the secret purposes of their hearts; the steamer pounded in the dusk the calm water of the Strait; and far astern of the pilgrim ship a screw-pile lighthouse, planted by unbelievers on a treacherous shoal, seemed to wink at her its eye of flame as if in derision of her errand of faith" (*Lord Jim*, pp. 14-15).

"A marvellous stillness pervaded the world, and the stars, together with the serenity of their rays, seemed to shed upon the earth the assurance of everlasting security. The young moon recurved, and shining low in the west, was like a slender shaving thrown up from a bar of gold, and the Arabian Sea, smooth and cool to the eye like a sheet of ice, extended its perfect level to the perfect circle of a dark horizon. The propeller turned without a check, as though its beat had been part of the scheme of a safe universe; and on each side of the 'Patna' two deep folds of water, permanent and sombre on the unwrinkled shimmer, enclosed within their straight and diverging ridges a few white swirls of foam bursting in a low hiss, a few wavelets, a few ripples, a few undulations that, left behind, agitated the surface of the sea for an instant after the passage of the ship, subsided splashing gently, calmed down at last into the circular stillness of water and sky with the black speck of the moving hull remaining everlasting in its centre" (*Lord Jim*, pp. 16-17).

"The thin gold shaving of the moon floating slowly downwards had lost itself on the darkened surface of the waters, and the eternity beyond the sky seemed to come down nearer to the earth, with the augmented glitter of the stars, with the more profound sombreness in the lustre of the half-transparent dome covering the flat disc of an opaque sea. The ship moved so smoothly that her onward motion was imperceptible to the senses of men, as though she had been a crowded planet speeding through the dark spaces of ether behind the swarm of suns, in the appalling and calm solitudes awaiting the breath of future creations" (*Lord Jim*, pp. 21-22).

Conrad's astonishing power of visualization is shown in such pictures, a power here used poetically, but always evident in his capacity for grasping an atmosphere, and grasping it so strongly that he makes it not only real at the moment of description, but pervasive all through the narrative. For his characters do stand against a background which appears to wield a charm over them. And they gain an added reality from it, because they justify so completely a sense of fitness (I said as much as all this before). Their reality is precisely of the *genre* the setting demands. Thus in *Nostromo*, a figure like Sotillo, the cruel, greedy, and cowardly colonel of the

Esmeralda regiment, has a class of mind impossible outside of a certain type of debased and ignorant South American—a veneer of polish covering a barbarous blackness of the heart. And thus, in *The Secret Agent*, the incoherent and troubled intelligence of Mr Verloc is like a shadow of his incoherent and troubled world.

The Secret Agent is, indeed, one of Conrad's real triumphs in atmosphere. How exactly one can realize the squalid, the sordid neglect of Mr Verloc's shop, and how well it gives at a glance the whole spirit of the underground and compromising life of his anarchists:—

“The window contained photographs of more or less undressed dancing girls; nondescript packages in wrappers like patent medicines; closed yellow paper envelopes, very flimsy, and marked two-and-six in heavy black figures; a few numbers of ancient French comic publications hung across a string as if to dry; a dingy blue china bowl, a casket of black wood, bottles of marking ink, and rubber stamps; a few books, with titles hinting at impropriety; a few apparently old copies of obscure newspapers, badly printed, with titles like *The Torch*, *The Gong*—rousing titles. And the two gas jets inside the panes were always turned low, either for economy's sake or for the sake of the customers” (*The Secret Agent*, pp. 1-2).

Yes, it is very rich, this style of Conrad's. It would be interesting to speculate to what extent his long association with the sea has helped to create not only its spirit in his books, but its very beats within the swell of his periods. For, at its typical, that is what Conrad's style is like—a monotonous and golden rhythm, a sonorous ebb and flow. He is a master in the use of that dangerous thing—adjectives. Just occasionally this does result in a feeling of exaggeration, as in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Return*, but generally it is extremely eloquent and has the effect of a symphony.

Moreover, his language is musical in another sense. As in a composition the same theme will occur every now and again, so it is at times in his stories, in which he will repeat at intervals the same sentence like a slow refrain. The repetition of such a clause as this out of *The Return* produces almost the illusion of sound:—

“The secret of hearts, too terrible for the timid eyes of men, shall return, veiled for ever, to the Inscrutable Creator of good and evil, to the Master of doubts and impulses” (*Tales of Unrest*, “The Return,” pp. 254 [slightly different], and 268).

This is just one instance.

But it is not hard to note that Conrad's style has been changing of late. I fancy *The Secret Agent* was the last of his books written with that kind of tropical exuberance he used to display. Perhaps it really is that such

influences are less strong in him as the years divide more and more his present life from his past, or perhaps it is that he is deliberately setting himself to become, as it were, more purely literary, more impersonal, or perhaps it is, indeed, a natural development that could have been foretold from the beginning. However that may be, I am, for myself, sorry for it, although I have little doubt that there is now a fuller artistic finish about his work. Not that Conrad was ever anything but an artist, but only that the mould in which he cast his stories was, possibly, not of an ideally artistic design. I'm not sure, because I really don't know whether the impersonalism of a Maupassant is the highest form of art; but still, it may be so. The great point about Conrad's books is that they are not overweighted with mechanical plots or improbable coincidences. In that, he is a thorough cosmopolitan. No character can appear actual when it is obvious from the first that its life has to fit into a preconceived dovetailing. Well, it's hardly worth making such a truism! Look at the *dénouement* of a book like *The Mayor of Casterbridge*—it's too absurdly obvious that the author, himself, is pulling the strings of fate

Of all Conrad's many novels and stories, which are the most successful? I don't wish to dogmatize, but, as to his novels, it seems pretty obvious to me that *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo* are the finest. Next to these, one would be likely to place *The Secret Agent*, but there is something over-improbable in its underlying idea—although, I fancy, it's founded on an historical incident. Of the shorter stories, I put *Youth*, *To-morrow*, *The Return*, and *Typhoon* first of all.

But I'm not romancing if I suggest that every word of Conrad is worth reading. He's the most remarkable man of our time, I suspect. Of course, I haven't been able to write of him at all as I should have wished—that's what I guessed would happen. In one flash of my mind I have a clear perception of what I think he is, but I simply haven't the magic word on my lips—I haven't it, and I never will have it. So I may as well bring these desultory remarks to an end. (I remember I began by calling them an essay, but I'm glad to see that I've dropped that now.) Yes, I had better bring them to an end. There are plenty of things that I have not dealt with and others that I have dealt with only summarily. Indeed, I'm not certain that it wouldn't have been wiser, after all, just to have taken one story and to have analysed it in detail, instead of skimming over so many surfaces. For I am very much afraid that I've given actually no proper idea of what Conrad's stories are like; but it's too late to discover that now. I only hope I have said enough to prove my more than admiration for his distinguished genius.

RICHARD CURLE.

THE LODGING HOUSE

When up the fretful, creaking stair,
From floor to floor
I creep,
On tiptoe lest I wake from their first beauty-sleep
The unknown lodgers lying, layer on layer,
In the packed house from roof to basement—
Behind each landing's unseen door;
The well-known steps seem strangely steep,
And the old stairway seems to soar,
For my amazement
Hung in air,
Flight on flight
Through pitchy night,
Evermore and evermore.

And when at last I stand outside
My garret-door I hardly dare
To open it,
Lest, when I fling it wide,
With candle lit
And reading in my only chair
I find myself already there . . .

And so must crawl back down the sheer black pit
Of hell's own stair,
Past lodgers sleeping layer on layer,
To seek a home I know not where.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.



J. D. FERGUSON

UTAMARO

I feel I scent, in facing Utamaro's ladies whether with no soul or myriad souls (certainly ladies, be they courtesans or *geishas*, who never bartered their own beauty and songs away), the rich-soft passionate odour of rare old roses; when I say I hear the silken-delicate summer breezes winging in the picture, I mean that the Japanese sensuousness (is it the scent or pang of a lilac or thorn?) makes my senses shiver at the last moment when it finally turns to spirituality. It was our Japanese civilization of soul, at least in olden time under Tokugawa's regime, not to distinguish between sensuousness and spirituality, or to see at once the spiritual in the sensuous; I once wrote down as follows, upon the woman drawn by lines, or, more true to say, by the absence of lines, in snake-like liteness of attitude, I might say more subtle than Rossetti's Lillith, with such eyes only opened to see love:

"Too common to say she is the beauty of line,
 However, the line old, spiritualized into odour,
 (The odour soared into an everlasting ghost from life and death),
 As a gossamer, the handiwork of a dream,
 'Tis left free as it flaps:
 The lady of Utamaro's art is the beauty of zephyr flow.

I say again, the line with the breath of love,
Enwrapping my heart to be a happy prey:
Sensuous? To some so she may appear,
But her sensuousness divinized into the word of love."

Although I can enjoy and even criticize Hiroshige or Hokusai at any time and in any place, let me tell you that I cannot do so with Utamaro, because I must be first in the rightest mood (who says bodies have no mood?) as when I see the living woman; to properly appreciate his work of art I must have the fullness of my physical strength so that my criticism is disarmed. (Criticism? Why, that is the art for people imperfect in health, thin and tired.) I feel, let me confess, almost physical pain—is it rather a joy?—through all my adoration in seeing Utamaro's women, just as when with the most beautiful women whose beauty first wounds us; I do not think it vulgarity to say that I feel blushing with them, because the true spiritualism would please to be parenthesized by bodily emphasis. It is your admiration that makes you bold; again your admiration of Utamaro's pictures that makes them a real part of yourself, therefore your vital question of body and soul; and you shall never be able to think of them separately from your personal love. When I say that we have our own life and art in his work, I mean that all Japanese woman-beauty, love, passion, sorrow and joy, in one word, all dreams now appear, then disappear, by the most wonderful lines of his art.

I will lay me down whenever I want to beautifully admire Utamaro and spend half an hour with his lady ("To-day I am with her in silence of twilight eve, and am afraid she may vanish into the mist"), in the room darkened by the candle-light (it is the candle-light that darkens rather than lights); every book or picture of Western origin (perhaps except a few reprints from Rossetti or Whistler which would not break the atmosphere altogether) should be put aside. How can you place together in the same room Utamaro's women, for instance, with Millet's pictures or Carpenter's "Towards Democracy?" The atmosphere I want to create should be most impersonal, not touched or scarred by the sharpness of modern individualism or personality, but eternally soft and grey; under the soft grey atmosphere you would expect to see the sudden swift emotion of love, pain or joy of life, that may come any moment or may not come at all. I always think that the impersonality or the personality born out of the depth of impersonality was regarded in older Japan as the highest, most virtuous art and life; now not talking about life, but the art—Utamaro's art, the chronicle or history of the idealized harem or divan. How charming to talk with Utamaro on love and beauty in the grey soft

atmosphere particularly fitting to receive him in, or to be received by him in. I would surely venture to say to him on such a rare occasion: "You had no academy or any hall of mediocrity in your own days to send your pictures to; that was fortunate as you appealed directly to the people eventually more artistic and always just. I know that you too were once imprisoned under the accusation of obscenity; there was the criticism also in your day which saw the moral and the lesson but not the beauty and the picture. When you say how sorry you were to part with your picture when it was done, I fully understand your artistic heart, because the picture was too much of yourself; perhaps you confessed your own love and passion too nakedly. I know that you must have been feeling uneasy or even afraid to be observed or criticized too closely."

As a certain critic remarked, the real beauty flies away like an angel whenever an intellect rushes in and begins to speak itself; the intellect, if it has anything to do, certainly likes to show up itself too much, with no consideration for the general harmony that would soon be wounded by it. Utamaro's art, let me dare say, is as I once wrote:

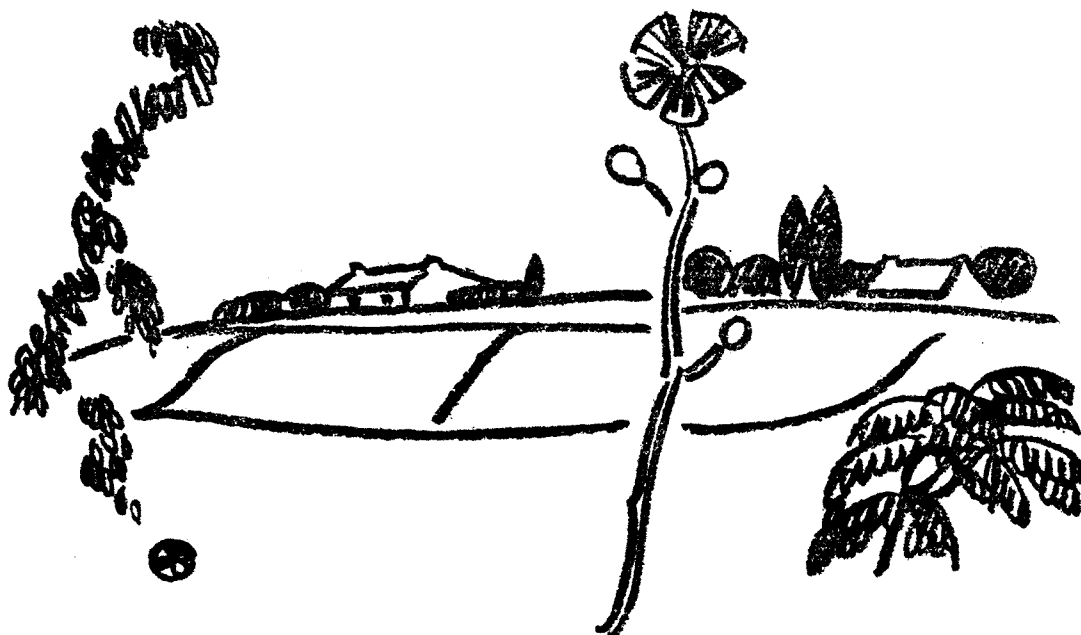
"She is an art (let me call her so)
 Hung, as a web, in the air of perfume,
 Soft yet vivid, she sways in music:
 (But what sadness in her saturation of life):
 Her music lives in intensity of a moment and then dies;
 To her, suggestion is her life.
 She is the moth-light playing on reality's dusk,
 Soon to die as a savage prey of the moment;
 She is a creation of surprise (let me say so),
 Dancing gold on the wire of impulse."

Some one might say that Utamaro's ladies are brainless, but is it not, as I said before, that the sacrifice of individuality or personality makes them join at once with the great ghosts of universal beauty and love? They are beautiful, because all the ghosts and spirits of all the ages and humanity of Japan speak themselves through them; it is perfectly right of him not to give any particular name to the pictures, because they are not the reflection of only one woman but of a hundred and thousand women; besides, Utamaro must have been loving a little secrecy and mystification to play with the public's curiosity.

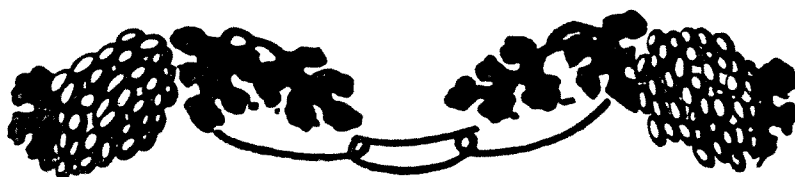
We have his art; that is quite enough. What do I care about his life, what he used to wear and eat, how long he slept and how many hours he worked every day; in fact, what is known as his life is extremely slight. It is said that he was a sort of hanger-on to Juzaburo Tsutaya, the well-

known publisher of his day, at the house within a stone's throw of Daimon or Great Gate of Yoshiwara, the Nightless City of hired beauties and lanterns, where, the story says, Utamaro had his nightly revel of youthful days as a fatal slave to female enchantment; while we do not know whether he revelled there or not, we know that as Yoshiwara of those times was the rendezvous of beauty, good looks and song, not all physical but quite spiritual, we can believe that he must have wandered there for his artistic development. Indeed there was his great art beautifully achieved when he suddenly entered into idealism or dream where sensuousness and spirituality find themselves to be blood brothers or sisters. In the long history of Japanese art we see the most interesting turn in the appearance of a new personality, that is the Ukiyoye woman; and who was the artist who perfected them to the art of arts? He was Utamaro. You may abuse and criticize, if you will, their unnaturally narrow squint eyes and egg-shaped smooth face; but from the mask his woman wears I am deliciously impressed with the strange yet familiar, old but new, artistic personality. The times change, and we are becoming more intellectual, as a consequence, physically ugly; is it too sweeping or one-sided to say that? I have, however, many reasons for my wishing to see more influence of Utamaro's art.

YONE NOGUCHI.



J. D. FERGUSSON



OVERHEARD ON A SALT MARSH

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?
 Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?
 Give them me.

No!

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,
 Lie in the mud, and howl for them.

Goblin, why do you love them so?

They are better than eyes or water,
 Better than voices of winds that sing,
 Better than any man's fair daughter,
 Your green glass beads on a silver ring.

Hush. I stole them out of the moon.

Give me your beads. I desire them.

No.

I will howl all night in a deep lagoon.
 For your green glass beads. I love them so.
 Give them me. Give them.

No.

HAROLD MONRO.

A MORAL LITTLE TALE

There was once an earnest puritan who held it wrong to dance. And for his principles he laboured hard, his was a zealous life. And there loved him all of those that hated the dance, and those that loved the dance respected him too; they said "He is a pure, good man, and acts according to his lights."

He did much to discourage dancing and helped to close several Sunday entertainments. Some kinds of poetry he said he liked, but not the fanciful kind, as that might corrupt the thoughts of the very young. He always dressed in black.

He was interested in morality and was quite sincere, and there grew to be much respect on Earth for his honest face and his flowing pure-white beard.

One night the Devil appeared unto him in a dream and said, "Well done."

"Avaunt," said that earnest man.

"No, no, friend," said the Devil.

"Dare not to call me 'friend,'" he answered bravely.

"Come, come, friend," said the Devil. "Have you not done my work? Have you not put apart the couples that would dance? Have you not checked their laughter and their accursed mirth? Have you not worn my livery of black? O friend, friend, you do not know what a detestable thing it is to sit in Hell and hear people being happy, and singing in theatres, and singing in the fields, and whispering after dances under the moon," and he fell to cursing frightfully.

"It is you," said the puritan, "that put into their hearts the evil desire to dance; and black is God's own livery, not yours."

And the Devil laughed contemptuously and spoke.

"He only made the silly colours," he said, "and useless dawns on hill-slopes facing South, and butterflies flapping along them as soon as the sun rose high, and foolish maidens coming out to dance, and the warm mad West wind, and worst of all that pernicious influence Love."

And when the Devil said that God made Love, that earnest man sat up in bed and shouted, "Blasphemy! Blasphemy!"

"It's true," said the Devil. "It isn't I that send the village-fools muttering and whispering two by two in the woods when the harvest-moon is high, it's as much as I can bear even to see them dancing."

Then said the man, "I have mistaken right for wrong; but as soon as I wake up I will fight you yet."

"O, no you don't," said the Devil "You don't wake up out of this sleep."

And somewhere far away Hell's black steel doors were opened and arm in arm those two were drawn within, and the doors shut behind them and still they went arm in arm, trudging further and further into the deeps of Hell, and it was that puritan's punishment to know that those that he cared for on Earth would do evil as he had done.

DUNSANY.



ANNE ESTELLE RICE



S. J. PEPLOE

OBSERVATIONS AND OPINIONS

IV.—MARRIAGE.

What is it men in women do require?

The lineaments of gratified desire.

What is it women do in men require?

The lineaments of gratified desire.

William Blake.

As the majority of people are born in wedlock they have from their earliest moments the opportunity of observing marriage in operation. Lest they see too clearly, those who begot them throw dust in their eyes, and soothe them with the romantic fictions behind which the unhappy screen themselves from the death of love in their houses. Marriage is of all human institutions that which human cowardice most tremblingly withholds from examination, and yet it is of all human institutions that which most immediately calls for understanding, since by its success or failure all else succeeds or fails. Like all other human contrivances the good and bad of it lie wholly in the use or abuse of it. Every marriage is in itself a sacrament or a piece of blasphemy, and neither the sanction of the State nor the blessing of the Church can alter its character. The responsibility for each marriage lies wholly with the contracting parties. The Church has nothing to do with it: the State is only concerned to see that healthy children will be produced, and that they will be provided for and properly educated, for the State is the trustee of future generations or it is nothing.

A good marriage, being a comely and a pleasurable thing, will endure: a bad marriage will come to an end though husband and wife continue to live hatefully and suspiciously under the same roof to scatter the dust of their misery upon the lives of all those with whom they come in contact. The death that parts husband and wife is the death of love, and, once that comes to pass, though public opinion force the two together, though they are bound with a thousand threads of habit, yet every minute sees them moving further and further apart, each growing more and more a prey to uneasy thoughts and dark desires, and more and more unfitted with another mate to redeem the failure of the past.



FERGUSSON

The majority of marriages are ruined by the absurd masculine theories concerning women, theories to which women, being ill-educated and economically dependent, subscribe. Quite how fantastical are the current notions concerning marriage you shall see from the plays and novels cunningly concocted by the exploiters of the theatres and the printing press to sort with the prejudices and superstitions of the people. First, there are two kinds of women: the women whom men marry, and the women whom, more frankly, they purchase. The Woman with a Past is thrust by public opinion out of any marriage she may desire to make, while the man with a shameful record of lustful conquests is hailed with delight on his entry into the fold. Another school will show you women as huntresses pouncing upon unwilling (and therefore, surely, undesirable) men. Another, perhaps the most wickedly silly of all, weeps with crocodile tears on the mention of the word "mother," and endows women with a curiously detached instinctive desire for children, without any reference to the process by which they are produced. Motherhood is not beautiful except it be warmed and coloured and made lovely by the love that brought it to pass. A woman is a woman before she is a mother: she loves her man before she loves her children. Only those marriages are good in which the one love bends to the other, and there is established the holy trinity of man, woman and child, in the love "which moves the sun and all the other stars."

All other marriages are bad. The seed of death is in them, and they must perish. When the last gleam of life is gone from them, Society, as the trustee of future generations, should see to it that the machinery of their dissolution is easily moved. Like every other partnership marriage in its contract should have adequate provision for its dissolution. As things are, by the eccentric laws under which we live, it is impossible to break a bad marriage without violence, often breeding bitterness, revenge and untruthfulness. Public opinion, being based upon the aforesaid masculine theories, bolsters up bad marriages by the imposition—in England at any rate—of an official morality, which is blind to the facts of human existence, and visits general disapprobation and a sort of outlawry upon those whose actions force them upon its notice. Public opinion will have it that marriage is good, and every other arrangement bad, and purblindly insists that everything recorded in the register is a marriage, and, therefore, not to be ended except in disgrace. Such complication of a natural and simple contrivance by which men and women shall fulfil one of the first laws of their being breeds tyranny, which results, as tyranny always results, in the sacrifice of the well-being of future generations to the cowardice o

the present, whose well-being consists, as one moment of true happiness will testify, in the whole-hearted service of future generations.

You may call this Eugenics or whatever you like. I dislike labels. The old scientific temper had an absurd trick of thinking it had disposed of things when it had found a name for them. My desire is wholly the desire for health, physical and mental, so that body and mind may be freely and nobly employed in the uses of the spirit. I find nothing so inimical to health as the current nonsense about women and its devastating effect upon marriage. I find nothing so hostile to the well-being of the community in which I live and work and pay taxes as the official morality which turns in cold horror from natural law, and, in its action, cannot avoid being hypocritical, as I have a parable to show:—

There was once a certain poor man who wrote his autobiography, and won the interest of the patrons and the practitioners of letters. It was the desire of this man to make his way to a British Colony, there to begin life anew, for he had been miserable enough. He made an application to a certain charitable fund, and his case came under the consideration of three men, who, deciding that a certain episode in his book was unduly coarse, refused him the assistance for which he craved. Of those three men the first was engaged in an intrigue with a servant in his house, the second was the stealthy lover of the wife of the third, and the third was the victim of a secret vice, which delivered his wife up to the sensual cunning of the second.

These men applied the official morality. They could not help themselves, for long ago by subscription to it they had lost their simplicity and their courage, without which they could not be generous. Without simplicity, without courage, without generosity there can be no good marriage, and without good marriage, without an ideal of marriage which can conquer fear of public opinion and its purblind, hypocritical, official morality there can be no health in us.

GILBERT CANNAN.





J. D. FERGUSON

THE PIANIST

He was strong and bearded and ungently formed, and his black frock-coat constrained rather than clothed his peasant body; but in the peasant face, all lined by pain and struggle and disappointment, were set the eyes of a dreamer, and out of the strength of his hands came forth the sweetness of a poet's soul.

Not far from me sat his little boy, whose restless movements were checked by his mother's hand. She was as weary of the scene as he was; her face wore the same lines of struggle and disappointment as the player's, but her eyes, unlighted by the poet's vision, were dulled by the contemplation of sad realities. She thought of the number of people in the hall, many of whom had paid nothing for their seats; the little boy thought of his toys; neither of them heeded the player, who played for them.

And beside me she sat, a presence as soft and gentle as the grey velvet she wore; we did not speak or look at one another, but my thoughts went with hers as one bird sails with another homeward across the evening sky; and when the spirit of Schumann spoke to us my fingers touched the velvet of her dress—a memory to lay amid the lavender of our brief love.

FILSON YOUNG.



LETTRE DE FRANCE

LE ROMAN FRANÇAIS INTRODUCTION

Si nous sommes à la veille d'une renaissance, où les idées de tradition, de clarté, de méthode et d'élégance sont respectées, il n'est pas très facile de prévoir comment cette renaissance se développera. A vrai dire, elle n'est dirigée par aucun grand courant synthétique. On ne peut, partout, que constater un besoin général de naturel et de fermeté. Mais, en plein symbolisme déjà, Oscar Wilde déclara: "Un *sain* équilibre doit être la qualité essentielle du roman." . . . Nous avons mis longtemps à nous pénétrer de cette vérité et je ne sais pas encore si nous la comprenons bien aujourd'hui.

Plusieurs enquêtes, menées récemment dans la presse, en effet, n'ont rien établi de sérieux. Devant produire quelque grande expression de l'époque, elles n'ont révélé que des appétits inférieurs et de ridicules ambitions. A ce propos, la réponse, au *Temps*, de M. Jules Romains est des plus caractéristiques, mais elle a été désavouée par tous. . . . Vraiment, que nous importe l'Unanimisme? Pas plus que "le synthétisme, l'impulsionnisme et le futurisme," il n'a donné de résultats. Toutes ces écoles, basées sur des principes d'utilité personnelle, n'ont rien à voir avec le génie de notre littérature. A établir un jour le bilan de leur évolution et de leurs théories grossières, peut-être fourniront-elles à quelque perfide commentateur la matière d'un nouveau *Moyen de Parvenir*. Laissons là. Mais M. Jules Romains méprise tout ce qui n'est pas "unanimisme." Il écrit, par exemple, du Naturisme qu'il manifesta "plutôt une généreuse ardeur de jeunesse qu'une tendance interne." Or, c'est être de mauvaise foi, car le Naturisme—qui fut moins une école qu'un mouvement assez large et de réaction—a déterminé dans notre génération, qu'il n'a pas directement atteinte, ce besoin d'un retour au ton et au goût français. Son influence est indiscutable.

Né d'une certaine horreur de l'artificiel, du paradoxe et de l'indéfini, le Naturisme opposa tout de suite aux œuvres, d'inspiration purement symboliste, une conception nouvelle de l'univers et se rapprocha de la vie. Nous ne disons pas qu'an début tout n'allât pas sans exagération. Le fait essentiel est que cette attitude ait formé d'excellents écrivains dont les œuvres sont animées d'une foi fervente.

"Nous l'aimons comme une femme cette 'Vie'—dit Vallonges, dans *Aimienne*.—C'est pourquoi les plus belles images des gens qui s'occupent d'idéal ne remplaceront jamais pour nous le plus léger croquis d'une attitude d'*Elle* . . . Nous voulons seulement faire des portraits d'*Elle* . . . comme nous la voyons . . . des portraits d'une simplicité profonde, impitoyable et apitoyée."



Il faut observer que le Naturisme se manifesta surtout chez des écrivains qui, comme Delbousquet, Francis Jammes, Eugène Montfort (*La Turquie*), Jean Viollis, etc., regardant et décrivant les provinces qu'ils habitaient en dégagèrent une signification toute particulière. C'est ainsi qu'à l'amour de la vie s'ajouta, lentement, celui des paysages ou la vie se manifestait et qu'à l'idée d'art et de réaction contre un état d'influences étrangères, se rallia un sentiment, curieux alors, de nationalité.

Evidemment, ce sentiment, flottant et indécis tout d'abord, n'attendait qu'une formule pour réaliser pleinement son action. On sait où M. Maurice Barrés porta son effort. On sait peut-être moins comment la publication d'une petite gazette, rédigée par M. Eugène Montfort, éveilla et entretint chez les "jeunes" le sens de la tradition. *Les Marges* ont contribué à cette œuvre immense en présentant à intervalles réguliers tels sonnet, stance, poème, fragment de vers ou de prose inédits de nos poètes et écrivains les plus riches en couleur et en expression. Des esprits très cultivés, de très grandes intelligences ajoutèrent à cela: M. Rémy de Gourmont dans deux livres remarquables (*L'Esthétique de la Langue française* et *le Problème du Style*) dissipa mainte erreur. Il établit entre les deux frères ennemis une sorte de rapport qu'on devait porter plus loin et pénétrer d'une sensibilité supérieure.



Aujourd'hui, ce qui subsiste dans la "jeune" génération des intentions du Naturisme est assez différent de l'idéal des premiers collaborateurs de *l'Ermitage*, de la *Plume*, de *l'Effort* et de la *Revue Provinciale*. Cet idéal, lui aussi, s'est modifié et le mot: Naturisme, a perdu de sa première signification.



FRANK HARRIS

J. D. FERGUSSON.

Pourtant, c'est à l'esprit de tradition qui l'inspire que nous pourrions ramener une longue querelle qui fut provoquée par M. Henri Clouard en 1908,* dans la *Phalange*, querelle dont la solution n'est pas encore trouvée. Il s'agissait de savoir si une "haute littérature est nécessairement nationale?"

Cela fit du bruit. On s'entendit très mal. Plusieurs, brouillant les termes, pensèrent ingénument qu'il retournait du vieux débat entre classiques et modernes.

Il eût été plus simple de comprendre sur quel terrain d'entente Symbolistes et Naturistes cherchaient enfin à se rencontrer et à discuter.

Car ces deux courants sont complémentaires. Le Symbolisme, d'essence spiritualiste, épuisa vite ses ressources: il déclina. Le Naturisme, s'il n'avait évolué au tour du Symbolisme, par contraste, aurait à son tour connu la même dépréciation.

Or, on peut voir, à présent, la plupart de nos littérateurs s'alimenter à ces deux sources.



Où s'opéra le confluent? Dégagés de leur expression littéraire, Symbolisme et Naturisme représentent deux systèmes éternels de philosophie: le spiritualisme et le matérialisme. Nous n'entreprendrons pas l'histoire de ces deux systèmes. Nous ne les opposerons pas non plus. Il est oiseux. Nous remarquerons simplement que la question du symbolisme et du naturisme—à la fois littéraire et philosophique—fut à tout moment déplacée. Elle a pourtant permis à des romanciers gracieux, élégants et de race très pure (Jean de Tinan, J.-A. Coulangheon, Toulet) de réaliser une œuvre d'un tact surprenant. Mais son objet était plus vaste et nous pouvons nous en rendre parfaitement compte:

"C'est d'un malentendu qu'est né le débat entre le réalisme et l'idéalisme dans l'art—écrit M. Bergson (*Le Rire*). L'art n'est surement qu'une vision plus directe de la réalité. Mais cette pureté de perception implique une rupture avec la convention utile, un désintéressement inné et spécialement localisé du sens ou de la conscience, enfin une certaine immatérialité de vie, qui est ce qu'on a toujours appelé de l'idéalisme.

NOTE.—* Voici le texte même de l'enquête proposée par M. Clouard.

1° Une haute littérature est-elle nécessairement nationale ?

2° Est-il possible de déterminer, dans le cours de notre histoire esthétique, une littérature spécifiquement française ?

3° Si oui, cette littérature est-elle continuée ou du moins susceptible d'être continuée ?

Selon M. Clouard, un chef d'œuvre, avant d'être national, doit être *humain*: universel. Le nationalisme est une nécessité à la base de tout art, mais son sommet doit être humain, c'est à dire universellement vérifiable.



S. J. PEPLOE.

De sorte qu'on pourrait dire, sans jouer aucunement sur le sens des mots, que le réalisme est dans l'œuvre quand l'idéalisme est dans l'âme, et que c'est à force d'idéalité seulement qu'on reprend contact avec la réalité."

Dépassant ainsi l'inquiétude du moment, cette interprétation, dans la sensibilité, d'un immense problème commande à nos intimes directions et les équilibre. Mais il fallait trouver l'esprit de la Vérité et lui donner cette vie prodigieuse.



Spiritualisme et réalisme sont donc pour notre génération étroitement unis. On comprend alors que des romanciers comme Zola et les Goncourt, hier encore estimés et suivis, aient tout à fait épuisé leur règne. D'autre part, le rayonnement d'une intelligence comme celle de Renan ne nous détermine non plus que médiocrement. M. Anatole France nous troublerait davantage s'il ne résorbait sans cesse en lui mille prolongements. M. Maurice Barrès semble avoir accompli sa courbe. M. Paul Bourget se heurte à l'indifférence. M. Paul Adam manque souvent de netteté, et des écrivains aussi audacieux que M. Elémir Bourges n'ont pas le disciples. On trouve l'Académie des Goncourt sans influence effective. Quant à la vieille Académie française, nous savons qu'elle sourit aux misérables fadaises d'un Henry Bordeaux et qu'elle est impuissante.

A qui nous rattacherons-nous? Nos aînés vivent dans une diversité singulière de réalisations. Avec M. Louis Bertrand le roman fait longueur et donne sa mesure; Les Tharaut recherchent la méthode; M. Binet-Valmer écrit de véritables drames (*Les Mètèques* se passent en moins en vingt-quatre heures); M. Romain Rolland adopte une forme immense, féconde et périlleuse; Mad^e. Colette Willy chérit l'impressionnisme le plus éclatant; M. Charles-Henry Hirsch compose une étude pittoresque et nombreuse de la société; M. Boylesve est élégant, sensible; M. Gilbert de Voisins manifeste un tempérament splendide; M. Duvernois est d'une finesse sans défaut, etc. . . .



Je ne pense pas pourtant qu'un seul de ces excellents romanciers exerce sur nous une influence appréciable. Avec eux, le roman se transforme parce qu'il va jusqu'aux limites extrêmes du genre et dans tous les sens. Ou a vu, par exemple, l'exotisme, entré dans le roman avec la douceur un peu molle de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, aboutir aux fleurs empoisonnées du sentiment baudelairien et se modifier. De nos romans coloniaux, soucieux d'un esprit de pénétration et d'économie politique, au décors charmant de *Paul et Virginie*, ou à l'ampleur chatoyante et romantique de Châteaubriand, il y a un monde. De même, la fantaisie piquante

et malicieuse d'un Furetière (*Le Roman bourgeois*) a successivement revêtu la merveilleuse ironie de Voltaire (*Candide*) la grâce philosophique de Diderot (*Le Neveu de Rameau*). Plus tard, elle fut également "l'esprit" d'une génération fameuse du Boulevard (Alphonse Allais, Aurélien Scholl, Courteline, etc.). Voyez où nous en sommes actuellement et combien l'humour d'un Tristan Bernard ou d'un Sacha Guitry s'est assimilé à notre condition.



Cela est curieux. Cela est nécessaire et signifie que l'évolution d'un genre n'est jamais suspendue. . . . La réaction n'est pas la mort. Nous allons à une réaction, mais nous ne voulons pas ramener le roman à ce qu'il était. Actuellement, le théâtre semble opérer sur lui une très grande séduction et, par contre, on a écrit des pièces de théâtre "statiques." Ne confondons pas les genres. La mort est là. Ne le sentons-nous pas? De tous cotés, *l'Education Sentimentale*, *Dominique*, *la Princesse de Clèves* sont uniformément reconnus pour les chefs d'œuvre du roman français. N'est-ce pas une indication: l'indication d'un retour possible à notre tradition la plus pure? Il n'en faut pas douter et nous allons chercher, à présent, à distinguer ce que ces trois livres pourraient accomplir en s'alliant à l'effort de notre jeunesse, après qu'on aura vu toutefois que cette alliance n'est pas illusoire.

FRANCIS CARCO.



J. D. FERGUSON



MARRIAGE. By H. G. Wells. Macmillan. 6s.

The name of Wells is by now so deservedly famous, that a reviewer is constrained to drop the conventional Mr. Among many gifts he has in particular shown an almost unique power of generalizing contemporary life. Accordingly, when he brings out a novel with such a simple title as *Marriage*, we naturally expect a story that will also prove a genuine piece of criticism, a comprehensive and symbolic story, something universal and philosophical in the sense intended by Aristotle, when he said that poetry was more philosophical than history. It is an ambitious demand to make of an author. But we cannot ask less after *Tono Bungay*, and *The New Machiavelli*, books for which we are grateful, with a lively sense of favours to come. They had the effective force of conquests; the socio-industrial and socio-political worlds succumbed to their vigorous attack. Wells has not succeeded in compelling modern domesticity to yield its secrets in the same way. In the first place the man and woman never became intensely interesting. They lack sharp-cut traits. Though we are given to understand that they are fine and temperamental, yet we are not told much that is concrete enough to appeal. Temperament in the abstract is a contradiction in terms. The result is that on the whole we feel that they are rather priggish people, and that we should not much care to meet them. They marry, and gradually come to realize that they are at cross purposes with each other, because Marjorie is ingrainedly extravagant, and Trafford given up to unremunerative research. At length Trafford goes in for making money, succeeds, and in the process frays his nerves to shreds. Whereupon he hales Marjorie off to Labrador, to talk in the wilds. They talk—vaguely—and share in sundry writing adventures; and the book ends when they are on the point of resuming life in London. Now why this urgent necessity to talk? Some couples, no doubt, communicate articulately, logically; others in various differing media. But solitude in Labrador will not turn a non-talking into a talking couple. If talk had been the ultimate need, then in the course of years they would have come to talk in London. Again, the Labrador solution is unfair in a book called merely *Marriage*, because it is in any case *outré* and untypical. Further, it is unthinkable that these two greyish persons would ever have got to Labrador; and the hardships there would almost certainly have had the effect, if not of killing Marjorie, at any rate of breaking and spoiling her. But the whole Labrador episode is pitched in a romantic key, which ruins what must be presumed to be an essay in realism. As soon as we get there, the whole spirit of the writing changes, we are in the realms of fancy. Nor do the characters seem any longer the same. Nebulous as ever, they yet appear to dissolve and reform. The effect is rather that of a cinematograph story, in which, at a change of scene, new actors are introduced impersonating the leading parts. The plot is superficially continuous, but there is a sense of some essential lesion deeper down. In fact, the general impression is atomic. There are ulcerous places, very thinly skinned and filmed. Nor does the quality of the writing yield a compensating pleasure. There is not the usual bite and sting in it; and the author's favourite abstractions suggest for once a want of grip of the particular, rather than a piercing vision of the universal; the movement is often placid to dullness; and at points is to be found lucidity of manner cloaking vagueness of imagination.

So far, so bad. But, of course, if anybody but Wells had written the book, it would be something of an event. For at any rate it reveals a genuine disposition to take a big view of things; and various people with their surroundings are sketched in with that ironical directness of statement and genuine humour which Wells always has at command. For instance, Mrs Pope, Marjorie's mother, is true and amusing with her elaborate plans to smooth domestic troubles over; and so is Aunt Plessington, who has organized a movement. Labrador, too, is rather jolly in so far as it has nothing to do with marriage, and faintly recalls Robinson Crusoe, the Swiss Family Robinson, etc. The most relevant episode of interest is possibly the birth of Marjorie's first baby. But, on the whole, the book is most absorbing where most discursive. For the chief figures, though drawn in the deepest and closest of relationships, never become intense enough to hold the book together.

F.G.

THE TRESPASSER. By D. H. Lawrence. Duckworth. 6s.

There is a plot, of course. But it doesn't count for much. Siegmund McNoir, a musician, having run away when seventeen with a girl a year older than himself, found his married life grow intolerable and fell in love with one of his pupils, Helena, who induced him (aet 38) to go away with her to the Isle of Wight for five days. Soon after their return he commits suicide, his wife takes a boarding-house, and Helena a young man named Cecil Byrne. These later developments, however, seem scarcely to belong to the book; they are tagged on for no other purpose than to make a story. And the story simply doesn't matter; the characters even don't matter. What is important is the curious mood of passion exhibited by Siegmund and Helena on their holiday in the Isle of Wight. The expression of this mood, occupying about 170 pages out of 290, constitutes the whole *raison d'être* of the writing. Who the lovers were, how they had come together, what was in store for them after their parting, is irrelevant. They might be Hero and Leander or any other pair. The point is merely, "Does their passion burn out fine and clean?"—a problem in the valuation of lyrical tone. Now the tone is very curious, almost indescribable, and on the whole unsatisfactory. There is something merely neurotic in the oscillations of the lovers' emotion. It seems to be perpetually marred and balked by some organic weakness. No real strong testing crisis is possible to these people. They waste themselves as they go along. Their nerves never relax and so lose their elasticity. The book then becomes a study in morbid psychology, and as such is written from an unjustifiable point of view. The sympathy is not that of a rich healthy temperament; it is the compassionate fellow-feeling of kindred weakness. The author succumbs to the outlook of his characters; he cannot see them with the Greek objectivity necessary for this kind of writing. A man who, going to his bath on the morning of his return from the seaside, "bent his head and licked his shoulder," and finding "it tasted decidedly salt," said "a pity to wash it off," is a nasty sentimentalist and cannot be made the hero of a tragedy. Significant in this connexion is the fact that Siegmund is a musician, that the whole book is written against a background of "musicalness," that the Greeks failed to develop music very highly, that Plato inveighed against those who melt out their souls through their ears, that Bernard Shaw calls music "the brandy of the damned," and that William James said that we ought, after hearing a sonata, to perform some definite act of courage. Any art may become a drug; but music is the most hazardous, because it can catch and dissipate the emotions at their least conscious. It can give them an outlet almost before they make themselves felt and so disperse them without their ever having brought the character to a point of real tension. That is what is wrong with the atmosphere of this book, and with its hero and heroine. Too much music, a stimulant and anodyne tolerated by the strongest systems only. By the time Helena and Siegmund met, they no longer had nerves to enjoy each other robustly. Each could only love what was unreal in the other. Passion they had in a way, but no courage. If the author is to use his cleverness to advantage, he must get outside this sort of people and put them in their place.

F.G.

RODIN. By Muriel Ciolowska. Methuen. 2s. 6d.

It is with some misgiving that one takes up a volume belonging to one of the innumerable popular Art Series with which, nowadays, the book market is flooded; and on this account it is a pleasure to be able to say that this little book on Rodin is more than a superficial eulogy of a great modern artist. An eulogy it certainly is—at times, perhaps, excessively so—but the authoress shows a thorough knowledge of, as well as enthusiasm for, her subject. She has, however, too carefully consulted the writings of others. It would have been better had she quoted fewer verbatim extracts from somewhat wordy French critics. MM. Alexandre, Geffroy, Roger-Marx do not always tally in their superlatives; even individually they are sometimes hardly worth reading (as for example M. Geffroy in the footnote on p. 24). Miss Ciolowska herself is much more worth while. Her comparison of "Rodin" and "Carrière," her final paragraphs on the honesty of real artists, and their humility, are careful and interesting, her quotations from "Rodin" himself seem excellently chosen. I am inclined to disagree with the stress she lays on "Rodin" as a primitive. The artist's own remark about feminine fashions on p. 129 reveal his affinity to the Symbolists and Impressionists, rather than to their successors. One might further argue the predominance of the curve over the angle in his work as a proof of the same contention. Finally, the quotation from Mr Gosse, which hails Rodin as successor to Whistler, if it is justified, would by itself refute the claim to be a true primitive. However, the ruggedness of some of Rodin's sculpture, and still more his wonderful drawings, of which, unfortunately, only two are reproduced, have exercised a great influence on contemporary art.

Miss Ciolowska does well to stress the importance of the isolating and rhythmical backgrounds which form such a feature of Rodin's work. He is on the way to the revival of bas-relief; that is to say, he is on the way to the neo-primitive school. But I do not think he is more than that.

I am left wishing that all writers of art textbooks were as conscientious and well-informed as Miss Ciolowska.

M.T.H.S.

LIFE OF MICHAEL ANGELO. By Romain Rolland. Translated by Frederic Lees. Heinemann. 6s. net.

This is an extremely good book. It has that best and rarest quality of biography—the quality of discrimination. M. Rolland is neither cynical nor fulsome. *La Foire sur la Place* tells us his opinion of French critique à la mode; this book is his own idea of criticism. He can do more than satirize, he can set an example. He is concerned more with Michael Angelo as a man than as an artist. He shows him to us as the most unflorentine of Florentines, without theories, without social charm or aspirations, ploughing a lonely furrow, wholly unreasonable, wholly lovable. A strange blend of violence and weakness, at one moment he defies a pope, at another prostrates himself in humble self-abasement before some worthless young Adonis. That his misfortunes were his own fault does not lessen our pity for him, and it speaks volumes for the skill of M. Rolland that, while he never gives his hero undeserved credit, he never breaks the impression given by his narrative of a man born to be unhappy. To help his feckless, ungrateful brothers, to soothe and care for an unreasonable father, to satisfy the demands of exorbitant patrons, above all to fulfil the merciless destiny of his artist mind, Michael Angelo worked himself first to physical ship-wreck, and then to death. He had a passion for work, a mind which took fire at every new scheme, a fatal belief in his own infinite capacity for toil. His brief, almost mystical, love story, the few years in which his stormy spirit found in Vittoria Colonna an understanding mother-soul, seem to have been the only peaceful time in his life. From beginning to end he is a great, unhappy child, misunderstood, petted instead of carefully brought out of himself, pursued by sneaking jealousies, harassed by a medley of patrons and creditors.

As I have said, there is but little art criticism in the book. This seems a pity, as the contrast between Michael Angelo and Raphael, between the representative of the great line of artists and the foremost figure of the decadence, is one of the most interesting in art history. With the few judgements that are given I find myself in personal disagreement. The Holy Family in the Uffizi, described by M. Rolland as puritanical, has the lifelessness, not of a Puritan, but of a student of technique. Then those wonderful slave-figures, carved for Julius' tomb, writhing in the grip of the conquering rock, are dismissed as "shapeless"; "barely commenced." Finally, M. Rolland declares that "love is absent from Michael Angelo's powerful sculpture and paintings." I think that had the circular relief of the Madonna and Child, now in the Bargello, been reproduced in this book, as it should have been, many would join me in disagreement.

The illustrations show conventionality of choice. There should have been more drawings, and surely it is hardly necessary to give two reproductions from the Medici tombs. The translator has done his work unobtrusively, and well. Only in one or two places does the language strike one as a translation (e.g. "He had barely made his choice than he began to doubt it," p. 12); and this, in so long a book, is remarkable.

M.T.H.S.

JOHN IN PRISON, and other Poems. By C. J. Thompson. Fisher Unwin. 3s. 6d. net.

Mr Thompson has little or no critical faculty; and this lack of any sense of discrimination has allowed him to print a deal of immature verse. He does, indeed, drop a hint in his preface that he considers the later verses in the book to be on a higher plane than the earlier work: but why should he have printed the earlier work at all? Why should the patient critic be asked to plod through fifty pages or so before he can come on anything worth reading? Poetry should need no preface, no prose introduction, no justification. A man may not be excused for printing a bad sonnet on the plea that he "was just sixteen" when it was written. The obvious retort is: you are no longer just sixteen: why then have you not destroyed it? The first poem comes near to being mere ungrammatical nonsense; and no reader could be blamed for throwing the book aside after reading ten pages. Yet, we should not have troubled to say all this had not Mr Thompson's work interested us. The later poems have a real ardour of inspiration. Religious ecstasy turns a poetaster into a poet—a miracle that has rarely been accomplished; and Mr Thompson should find a secure place in the anthology of devotional verse.

W.W.G.

THE BROAD WALK. By Léonie Aminoff. Constable. 6s.

This is a pretty book; but it is too pretty, and hardly a book. It is one long shapeless Schwärm. The subject is an amiable impoverished noble Russian family, in an amiable huge, fading, and crumbling house, with an amiable overgrown garden among amiable enchanted forests. A charming place, where charming people lead a charming life; but one's day among them is just spoilt by the too insistent cicerone, who *will* point out all the beauties too gushingly, and above all too often. She has, it is true, a merciful dislike for one brother-in-law;

but otherwise no one is allowed a bad or even an unfortunate quality, except what is strictly necessary if there is to be anything at all to come right in the final death-bed scene.

Sentimentality is one fault, and another is the total absence of any kind of construction. The book is like a weak jelly that has fallen in upon itself. But the author is sensitive, and appreciative of really delightful things; and she has occasionally, in the midst of much loose writing, a happy use of language. Her temptation is the abuse of the short paragraph. Such sentences as "There is something rather beautiful about romance," or "The God of humanity, the God of destiny, the God of the just and the unjust," have everything to lose by standing on a lonely pinnacle. E.M.

OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING ESSAYS. Edited by A. H. M. Lunn. Edward Arnold. 5s. net.

This is a very gallant little book; gallant even in its misprints, which not only create a new period of Italian art called the Irecento, but cause an Oxford chimney most unexpectedly to debauch. Such inspired inaccuracy is thoroughly in the Oxford spirit. The first half of the preface with its specimens of badinage transcribed from the minutes of an undergraduate society catches the same ticklish flavour; and the second, very challenging and jolly, has a Stevensonian ring about it that makes you feel that, with a little diligence, you need not not have aged as quickly as you have done. There follow nine essays, which seek justification—not on account of any serious contributions made to our general body of thought or emotion, but by the sincerity of their interpretation of the appeal of mountains to the young and modern. On the whole, they are a success. The writing is fresh and enthusiastic, despite an entirely Oxonian tone of generalizations for generalizations' sake. Mr M. T. H. Sadler, known to readers of *Rhythm*, leads off with an appreciation of C. J. Holmes, whom he claims as *par excellence*, the artist of the true mountain spirit. Yet with what portents does he bring his impressions to birth! "Mountains, more than any other of the features of nature, are fundamental, synthetic." Shades of Devorguilla! Your foundation was not in vain. But what would Mr Sadler have written if, in addition to being an Oxford and Balliol man, he had actually been a greatsman as well? Mr J. S. Huxley seems to be a geologist with a constructive imagination, so that he understands mountains both lovingly and scientifically. A conscientious examination of the Greek Poets induces Mr N. E. Young to conclude that, in spite of appearances, "our mountain-worship is a new epiphany of the spirit of Hellas." The author of "Passes," Mr N. T. Huxley, is a mystic geographer, quite a good thing to be. "British Hills" are Mr Pope's text, while Mr Tyndale compares the modern mountaineer with the mediaeval pilgrim as "one who has made an appointment with his higher self, to meet at some distant date and place." "A Tourney," by Mr H. K. Lunn, is rather delightful in its frankly sentimental self-dissections. If this is the most personal of all these deliberately subjective essays, the most impersonal is, in some ways, that on "Roof-climbing at Oxford," the author of which, with his rollicking style, discreetly prefers to remain anonymous. Finally, the Editor winds up the book with a carefully elaborated note on the development of the romantic mountain-spirit in the individual, that is to say, in himself, using as his title "The Mountains of Youth." It was a volume well worth compiling and bringing out. For, though the writers are sometimes precious and over pre-occupied with style, so that their genuine temperament is overlaid, yet many impassioned, though immature, thoughts and pictures have been held and fixed. And it is curiously streaked with the shy evanescent wisdom of adolescence. But I mustn't go on. The fact is it makes me sentimental. F.G.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Crock of Gold. James Stephens. Macmillan, 5s.; Mrs Lancelot. Maurice Hewlett. Macmillan, 6s.; This and That. Hilaire Belloc. Methuen, 5s.; Poems. John Drinkwater. Nutt, 1s. 6d.; A Dream of Daffodils. H. D. Lowry. G. J. Glaisher; Beyond. C. A. Dawson-Scott. G. J. Glaisher; J. M. Synge. Francis Bickley. Constable, 1s.; Lafcadio Hearn. Edward Thomas. Constable, 1s.; Jelf's. H. A. Vachell. John Murray, 1s. 6d.; The Vigo Verse Anthology. Elkin Mathews, 1s.; Songs from the Forest of Tane. T. C. Chamberlin. Elkin Mathews, 2s. 6d.; Life of Michael Angelo. Romain Rolland. Heinemann, 6s.

PERIODICALS

The Poetry Review; The Irish Review; La Clarté; L'Ile Sonnante; L'Effort Libre; The Idler; The Bibelot; Poetry; The Autograph; The Manchester Playgoer; Rassagnea Contemporanea; Mercure de France, etc.

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