

JUNE SUPPLEMENT TO THE NEW AGE

Edited by HUNTLY CARTER

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

ACCORDING to the latest newspaper reports we are in for a new epoch (whatever that may mean). Mr. H. G. Wells has been writing about it in the "Daily Mail," and as there are many good people who believe that Mr. Wells knows what he is talking about, there are grave reasons for believing that we really are in for something of the sort. But there is one thing which apparently we are not going to have. Though there is a sign of a slight improvement in the artistic aspect of the theatre, there is none of a great and permanent character. And this is not a matter of opinion but a fact capable of demonstration. Before such an improvement can take place the theatre must be entirely reconstructed and in the hands of artists. Artistic co-operation is the basis of the Theatre of Art and the Art of the Theatre, and artistic co-operation in the theatre does not exist. I will prove my remarks presently.

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To the question that is being asked, Have we that which we call the Art of the Theatre? the answer is emphatically, No. To the question, Ought there to be an Art of the Theatre? the reply is emphatically, Yes. Unless, and till the theatre is established on an artistic basis it can have no lasting value; it will not become a national power, or of any importance whatever. That the moment has arrived for a development of the kind is beyond question. We are faced with an epoch in the making. We live in an age of transition, of changing ideas and ideals, of readjustment and reorganisation, of new spiritual, philosophic, and artistic longings, leanings and learnings, which not even the theatre, pagan and heathen, unconscionable and unaccommodating though it be, can avoid. Indeed, so far as its drama is concerned, it has been caught in the wave of reform, and slowly but surely it is changing its unnatural attitude towards life, and one can no longer safely predict that it will not at last have a shaping influence upon public thought and action, or even declare that it does not, to some slight extent, materially affect them to-day. It may be said that we are entering upon our dramatic period for the first time in our history; it may be conceded that an English Drama worthy to be ranked among the great Continental Schools of Drama has been initiated; it is readily granted that we are in close proximity to an intelligent state of affairs, at least in regard to the Drama, and partly in regard to its instruments of expression; it is clearly felt that the theatre is not without artistic intentions, and it is thought that if it is ever to attain that great and enduring character which belongs to it by right, and which art alone can bestow upon it, if it is ever to become recognised as both an art and an artistic centre, here and now is the moment to add the necessary impulse.

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Real reform has entered the theatre, and the possibility of the latter emerging from a primitive condition

is no longer a Utopian dream. An instinctive appreciation of the spirit of art that should be behind the theatre and all its undertakings is already there. Everywhere repertory theatres, and theatres that lend themselves to as much beauty as present circumstances will allow them to bestow upon the drama, are springing into existence. Such theatres clearly demonstrate that we are trying to be artistic, in spite of our instinctive love for ugliness. They are the direct outcome not only of the spirit of the new age, but of the pressing need of that spirit. They are the result not only of a public experience demanding the clearest vision, but of one seeking the fullest expression.

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In this way we find that the theatre is responding to the call now being made upon it. As the interpreter of human experience in many and varied forms of thought and action, it is readjusting itself to a new interpretative purpose. It is, so to speak, touched by a new vision of life; it has formed an original conception of the world within and without us; it aims, for the first time in its history, truly to record the moment in which it lives. The questions arise, Can it fully respond to this call? Is it efficiently equipped to serve its interpretative purpose? Is it constituted to express phases of social life in the most impressive manner, with power, with charm, or with interest? Can it achieve a work of art? The answer is, No.

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The theatre is neither fully equipped nor fully organised to give complete expression to a complete conception of individual and social life. As it stands it is quite unable to carry to its logical climax a work conceived in the first place by the poet and dramatist. All that it can do is to show artistic intention, give hints, throw out suggestions, offer scraps of vision and interpretation, turn out pretty odds and ends of pictures, wonderfully pretty bits of imagination, wonderfully ugly bits of so-called realism, wonderfully deft bits of stagecraft. But nothing it has ever done or can do in its present condition has brought it or brings it within measurable distance of producing the complete picture, the perfect work of the poet or dramatist, in a perfect manner, unified and vital in all respects. In fact it has never been properly constituted to produce a work of the kind. The finest play ever written has never escaped being butchered in some of its essential details. The demonstrable fact is that the theatre always has been, and is still, a vastly inferior, imperfect, and disjointed instrument of expression.

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There is no need for me to pause to demonstrate the fact here. An intelligent person can see at a glance that the theatre is a most imperfect instrument, both in its mechanical and human aspect. Its surroundings are grotesque and degrading; in most instances it is but an annexe to a gin-palace. Its construction is mainly inartistic and mostly unscientific. Its form is obsolete; its design and decoration serve neither to preserve the gravity, dignity, and simplicity of beauty,

nor to promote the demands of vision and sensation. Its auditorium is rudimentary; its three-sided stage belongs properly to the nursery; and its lighting, canvas scenery, and props., though highly effective on occasion, never escape the suspicion of being what they really are—theatre stuff.

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And if the temple is imperfect, its priests are not much better. If the construction and mechanical contrivances of the theatre are crude and bad, the human directing, controlling, and interpreting force is disorganised. It lacks unity. Its parts do not harmonise; they do not work independently yet together. In plain words, the army of persons engaged in the work of the production of a play are not properly constituted as a body to give that play adequate and complete artistic expression. They have not a vision and a power of interpretation in common, and therefore they cannot give a full and faithful reading of the emotional and imaginative ideas contained in a drama; they cannot carry the thing through to its logical issue.

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What is needed is a new and harmonious body of interpreters in which all the instruments, processes, manifestations are complementary and complete. Such interpreters may be briefly divided into five classes, the author, producer, artist, actor, and critic classes. Each class should possess some of the attributes of the other classes. Thus, the author should be an artist with a powerful, interesting, or charming personal vision, able to form a true conception of some phase or other of human experience in thought and action, and to give it complete expression. The producer should be an artist capable of understanding the author's conception and the dramatic expression it requires. The artist should be competent to appreciate the conception, and to clothe it with appropriate decoration. The actor should be an artist who can form a true conception of the author's conception and aims only to give it adequate interpretation. Finally, the critic should be an artist capable of understanding the author's conception, and of judging the truth of it and of its dramatic interpretation. This is the interpreting body necessary to the production of a perfect work of the dramatic form of art. These are the various human instruments, as it were, that should centre round an original conception and co-operate in its complete expression. Possessing the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word, the fullest comprehension of the power, charm, and interest of the harmonies of line, colour, and composition, such persons are constituted to produce the finest melody of a work. Without a combination of the kind there can be no art of the theatre.

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A theatre constructed, equipped, and staffed in a truly artistic fashion certainly does not exist in this country, and till it does, any attempt to make the theatre artistic must be a failure. What does exist are theatres containing elements of the necessary combination. Theatres with efficient machinery of the old pattern, authors with vision and no interpretation, and vice versa, and authors with both; the new interpreting producer and the old incompetent butcher of masterpieces; scenic artists and designers who understand their business and artists and designers who do not; intelligent limelight men and limelight men who ought to be employed looking after street lamps; actors that are perfectly natural, and actors that are as perfectly unnatural; critics who seek to understand the intentions of all concerned, and critics who ought to be dipped in the nearest horse-trough.

Still a theatre completely equipped on the human side might be established, for the elements essential to it exist, and, though scattered, might easily be brought together. There are to-day authors with startling vision and powers of interpretation; producers of genius whose varied ideas and methods, symbolical, idealistic, poetical, realistic, naturalistic, are hampered by the gross conventions and the limitations of the present theatre; scenic artists and designers with marvellous gifts; actors and actresses with exceptional powers of interpretation. We have, in fact, everything except the structure and the mechanical appliances.

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There are many good people not actively engaged in the theatre who believe that art should and could be living within the theatre just as it is living without it. To these I would say, especially if they represent the wealth of England, make it possible for art to live in the theatre. Build a new theatre constructed on an entirely different plan from the old one. Do not believe that the suggestion is by any means an over-ambitious flight, for the plans are already to be had. Then give that moral support to the desperate efforts of reform and repertory theatres which is not being extended to them by our benighted race. Know, too, that artists are asking for encouragement in their ambitious flights towards the theatre; and it would not disgrace this country if some of the millions that are being devoted to missionaries and the civilisation of Central Africa were diverted to this purpose. Seek, also, to establish research centres and experiment stations, where the merit of new discoveries and inventions could be investigated and put to practical tests. A few hundred thousand pounds spent in establishing and endowing a settlement or two where authors, producers, artists, etc., could cultivate the mood for associated studies might prove a profitable investment. A scheme that might very well be promoted and copied is that of Gordon Craig, who has secured the Arena Goldoni in Florence, and proposes to gather together men from all parts who are working to perfect the theatre, and those who wish to become in the truest sense artists of the theatre.

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As to the evidence in support of my contentions, I will now let those speak who are actually engaged in the work of the theatre. Four of the articles and the correspondence contained in the Supplement are designed to throw further light on this matter. Mr. William Poel's comparative study of stage realism in its relation to costume and stage lighting is of great interest, as coming from one who has spent many years of strenuous and cultured endeavour in the enlightened service of the Elizabethan drama. Thanks to Mr. Martin Wood, we are enabled to form a very reliable estimate of what is being said and done at the Haymarket Repertory Theatre, where an attempt is being made by Mr. Herbert Trench to pay an artistic and poetical tribute to the drama. Miss Pamela Colman Smith's article is largely the outcome of practical experience. The application of her ideas may be studied in Granville Barker and Laurence Housman's "Prunella," now being played at the Duke of York's Repertory Theatre. Mr. Norman Wilkinson has also done valuable work in connection with the same theatre, and his opinions on co-operation, lighting, and so forth, have a practical basis. Mr. Sturge Moore's paper continues the line of stimulating thought laid down in his contribution to the April Art Supplement. Mr. Stephen Haweis sends his contribution from Florence. As the matter concerning the theatre in Italy is of no particular interest, he has dealt with general art criticism. With the exception of Mr. Poel, the writers are painters.

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I have received certain correspondence on the subject of the Art of the Theatre. By way of excuse there come four interesting letters. One comes from Mr.

W. B. Yeats, who was to have contributed an article on the staging of tragedy, but was obliged to set it aside in order to edit the works of the late Mr. Synge. He concludes: "THE NEW AGE has always my sympathy, and I would like to have written for the supplement." A similar note of sympathy comes from Mr. Harvard Thomas, over whose "Lycidas" the R.A. disgraced itself. He writes: "I wish every success to, and I am much in sympathy with the objects of, THE NEW AGE." Another missive comes from Mr. Cayley Robinson, who had promised to write on the subject of the staging of the drama, but was prevented from doing so. By way of suggestion of reform he writes:

"Perhaps one may safely say that the forcing of colour and effect (necessary, no doubt, to a certain extent) is usually much overdone, and that a greater simplicity and reticence may safely be recommended. The scene designer should obviously endeavour to interpret into his art the spirit of each scene, infusing it with a living vital quality.

"This applies also to the programme and poster. Unity is the first and last essential."

Another is from Mr. Charles Ricketts, who writes at length. The following extracts from his letter will show that he does not entirely agree with the modern theatre and its joyless ways.

"If I once started I should wish to write a whole volume against the existing state of things, the ludicrous construction of theatres in London, with their eighteenth century auditoriums, and their stages in which both the construction and lighting are still in the Stone Age, without, however, any of the pathetic charm of real antiquity. My remarks on any manager would oblige me hastily to leave the country. Then to explain anything in England is to excite a lust for contradiction, and to excite a rage against that which nice and blameless people like yourself have liked up till now. . . . I believe a good deal could be done for the theatre, but not in this golfing age. . . . It would have been a great advantage if the Haymarket stage had been allowed to remain bare as a background to Lear. It would have seemed much more barbaric and remote than the canvas Cromlechs of the actual production."

I note that Mr. Ricketts has discovered that I am "a nice, blameless person." Well, this is an improvement on another opinion which I happen to have in my possession, and which refers to me as "a bilious curiosity with barnyard morals." But neither of the opinions is correct. Mr. Byam Shaw also writes at length:

"I certainly think that the stage, as far as 'producing' goes, has made, and is making, great advance. I think that Mr. Dion Boucicault (Duke of York's Repertory Theatre) has brought realistic production as near perfection as one can imagine. I am sure that a great deal has been learnt, perhaps unwillingly, from men like Mr. Poel and Mr. Gordon Craig, in the way of the enormous value of space and light and shade. I consider that some of the scenes in Sir Herbert Tree's reproduction of 'Faust' were very fine indeed, and it is seldom now that one goes to the theatre without seeing at least one beautiful picture, and this could certainly not have been said a very short time ago.

"From my very small experience I would say that if one could get some really intelligent 'lime' men, far greater beauty could be seen in stage pictures in the way of light, and more particularly shade, a thing which, until lately, has been sadly neglected. I am perfectly aware that the 'picture' must be a setting to the acting, and that in one's zeal to get certain effects one is apt to forget this, but this can be overcome by the two artists working *together* instead of trying to cut each other's throats, as is so often the case."

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The following questions are being put by THE NEW AGE to many persons connected with the theatre, both in this country and abroad:—

1. Have recent developments, in your opinion, shown

any advance in the direction of increasing the beauty of the stage picture?

2. Do you think that managers and producers are yet using to the full all the advantages offered by the modern studio?
3. Would you say that artists are availing themselves as fully as they might of the opportunities open to them in the modern theatre?

We print below some of the replies received, and further series will be published as they arrive.

SIR HERBERT TREE.

1. I certainly think recent developments have shown an advance in the direction of increasing beauty in the stage pictures.
2. I could not say that managers and producers are using to the full all the advantages offered by modern studios, but I think they have gone far in this direction.
3. Perhaps artists might avail themselves more fully of the opportunities open to them in the modern theatre, but it must be remembered that the art of scene painting nowadays stands on a very high plane, and it requires a long and special training, to which, I take it, many artists would not care to subject themselves, seeing that the work of the theatre is not of an abiding nature.

MR. ARTHUR BOURCHIER.

Though I am of the opinion that recent development in the direction of stage production most certainly tends towards increasing the beauty of the stage picture, I still think there is plenty of room for improvement. Undoubtedly managers and producers, headed in this respect by Mr. Herbert Trench, of the Haymarket, are using the advantages offered them by the modern studio, though scarcely perhaps, as yet, to the full, and the same remark applies to your third question. In brief, on all three counts, whilst there is still a very commendable fusion between the sister arts in progress, there is still very much more to be done before anything like perfect harmony can be reached.

MR. GRANVILLE BARKER, Duke of York's Repertory Theatre.

1. Except in a few special productions, no.
2. Equally, no.
3. No; but how can they? They can't assault a theatre and paint scenery by force.

If I were a millionaire, one of the things I would do would be to hire an empty theatre for a year and turn some artists and electricians and stage carpenters loose into it to play about in it as they liked. It is (a) the lack of money and (b) the lack of time for experiments that keeps the theatre backward in these respects.

MISS HORNIMAN, Manchester Repertory Theatre.

I have no sympathy with the wish to let artists loose in theatres so that they may advertise themselves at the expense of the playwright. Over-ornamentation and extravagant staging on the one hand I consider to be vulgar; but on the other, I have seen "artistic" effects which I consider to be absolutely perverse. The scenic artist, the musical conductor, the electrician and the call-boy, as well as the manager, the producer, and the actors, should look on themselves as servants of the Drama. Ballets and masques and such-like, are on a different footing.

MR. F. R. BENSON, Shakespearean Repertory Co.

Many thanks for your letter; I feel honoured by your request. I am too much in the thick of the life and death struggle that we as a nation have to wage to do anything worth publishing on the matter. Ruskin said it all years ago, I am so tired of words, words, words. Please do not think me churlish, I think your questions are most interesting, but I feel the answers have to be worked out.

MR. LAWRENCE IRVING.

I feel that the questions you ask could be best answered by a scenic artist. My knowledge is merely the practical one of producer and actor.

On Stage-Realism, Past and Present.

By William Poel.

To one who studies the evolution of the Theatre, the talk about Shakespeare's stage being "archaic" is amusing because of its fallacy; but modern playgoers have been fed for so long on theatrical shams that they can no longer accept what is simple and true. As a fact, the conventions of the Elizabethan stage are insignificant compared with those in the modern theatre, for an Elizabethan performance was as real as Elizabethan life. When a servant appeared on the stage of the Globe playhouse to inform his mistress that her coach was in readiness, the effect, in its reality, was the same as it is to-day when a butler enters a drawing-room to announce "My Lady's carriage." To the Elizabethan playgoer the illusion was complete, because the conditions under which the announcement was made were the same as in real life; the coach, it was presumed, had actually arrived and was in waiting in the courtyard below. But on the modern stage, which in other words is the picture-stage, no such forcible and natural impression can be made on the spectator by the entrance of the servant with his announcement, because the picture dominates the attention. In looking at a picture the first impression of the onlooker has to do with the composition which connects the parts with the whole. The entrance of a character on the picture-stage changes the form of the *tableau*, and this provokes a comment—perhaps to some extent made unconsciously—"does the new-comer look out of place in the picture?" "Is his costume out of keeping with the others?" Meanwhile attention has been diverted from the purpose of the entrance and from insistence upon the fact that My Lady's carriage has arrived. There can be no doubt that in so far as drama concerns character and action, the various pictures on which the eye of the modern playgoer rests lessen interest in the story, and that the method of representing drama on the Elizabethan stage was nearer to reality than it is to-day.

In fact the introduction of the proscenium-stage created a revolution in the art of the theatre, with the consequence that we are acting Shakespeare to-day under conditions that belong neither to his own time nor to the real life of any time, and that, therefore, we are doing no sort of justice to the plays of the world's greatest dramatist; and unless the National Theatre Committee has the courage to try and put things right between the stage and the poet, the fewer of his plays that are seen on its stage the better. But, unfortunately, two centuries of wrong-doing will not be righted in a hurry, and the first thing to try and do is to get rid of the fallacy that the visible representation of a scene, in which the action of an Elizabethan play is supposed to take place, is a help and not a hindrance to the proper understanding of that play, because the point of interest centres not on where the characters are, but on what they are doing and on what is going to happen to them. And if we could only free Shakespeare's plays from those ridiculous interruptions of acts and scenes and *pseudo* stage directions which now appear in every popular edition, and which the author never wrote or sanctioned, readers would begin to see the plays in their right perspective, and to realise how unsuited they are for representation within the picture-frame of the modern stage. The British public, however, has been taught to believe that Shakespeare's plays cannot exist on their own merit, but need exploiting by the editor and the lecturer and the stage-manager, who all still insist on ignoring the conditions under which the plays were written or the stage upon which they were acted; and it should be the first business of those who regard Shakespeare with affection and reverence, and who wish to see a closer intimacy established between the poet and his public, to resent the ignorance of those

who insist on pushing modern theatrical notions into Shakespeare's plays. Let it therefore be openly acknowledged that the Elizabethan stage was not a mimic world, such as our modern stage is mistakenly regarded, and that it could no more be used to illustrate a change of scene than can a concert platform be so used to-day. There was only one locality recognised, and that one was the platform, which projected to the centre of the auditorium where the story was recited; there was, besides, only one period, and that was "now," meaning the moment at which the events were being talked about or acted. All inconsistencies, then, that are apparent in the text, arising from change of place, or break in the time, should be ignored in representing the play, because the author ignores them; and it is no advantage to re-arrange the order of the scenes to better illustrate the change of locality, or to lower a curtain to mark a pause in the progress of the story. Any tampering with the plays, with this object, does not in the least help to make the performance appear more real, but less so.

It is generally admitted, among experts, that in the representation of a play it is well for the actors to avoid unnecessary movement, which distracts the attention of the audience from the dialogue. In fact the best stage-management is that which gives most prominence to what the characters are saying. Action, besides, in the sense of walking from one part of the stage to another, is unnatural except when used to illustrate character or to show what the words by themselves are not sufficient to explain. This maxim applies to the picture-stage even more forcibly than it does to the platform-stage, and yet excess of movement and restlessness are acknowledged faults among our actors to-day, so that here, too, the incongruous and unreal exist on the modern stage. To thrust into a picture-frame, which has been adapted for *tableaux* effects, movements of everyday life does not reproduce nature.

And now as regards portraiture, by which I mean the appearance of the actors in their costumes; in this, too, the modern stage cannot compare with the older one for realism, at least, not in Shakespearean performances. To an Elizabethan audience the characters did not look like the Greeks and Romans of classical times, nor are we sure that Shakespeare intended his creations to be regarded as portraits of any period but his own. Even when he draws well-known historical characters he seldom troubles to give them the manners of their own time. And since the costumes were the same as those worn every day by Elizabethan men and women in the street, the playgoer realised that accuracy in costume with regard to any particular period was not essential to the proper understanding of the author's play. But he expected the actors to wear clothes suitable to their character and rank, and in Shakespeare's time, the nobleman, the servant, the fop, and the braggart were as easily recognised by their dress as by their speech. Judged by this standpoint, how incorrect and unreal are often the costumes in our modern Shakespearean performances! Take as an instance Mr. Benson's production of "Much Ado." Don John and Borachio come on the stage dressed like the two uncles in the pantomime of "The Babes in the Wood"! Such an exhibition would have shocked the Elizabethan. Don John, who was the prince's brother, would have appeared on the stage of the Globe playhouse as handsomely dressed as was the Earl of Essex! And Borachio, who was a gentleman of distinction, would be as easily identified by the audience as is a lord-in-waiting at the Court of King George. By overlooking these details and their dramatic importance, Shakespeare's plays, on our stage, get quite out of touch with real life, past or present. They are simply theatrical exhibitions.

But it is in the matter of lighting, perhaps, that the picture-stage most loses the resemblance to reality. Now the lighting of the picture is considered to be of equal importance to the lighting of the characters, and in some theatres it is regarded as of more importance;

and although the lights in the battens and wings illuminate the scene, they give no appreciable light to the faces, which have to be independently lit in a very artificial way, one which not only distorts the countenance, but often interferes with the lighting of the picture. Unfortunately, the construction of the modern stage allows of no top light reaching the faces, as is the case in daylight, because limelight thrown on from the perches lights the figures only from the side or from the back. But a study of the portraits of our great painters shows that the artist aims at concentrating the light on the features, while the outline of the figure is made to fade into the background, and in order to produce this effect in the theatre it would be necessary to light the actors by arcs placed in the front of the house where the audience are seated. But as this cannot be done, the only other light which can reach the faces is that from the footlights, which is an upside-down method of illumination, causing seven parts of the whole light, which reaches the face, to come from the ground instead of from the sky; hence the need for the actor to "make up," which further destroys any approach to realism; while the necessity for two different and independent schemes of lighting to be used at the same time, one to light the scene and the other the characters, brings into the universe of stage-land two suns, a phenomenon that no man, dead or alive, ever saw outside of the theatre. No favourable comparison, therefore, is possible in the matter of realism between modern stage-lighting and the daylight that fell on the actors from the open roof of the Globe playhouse. Of course, this light could not be varied, when the action of the play was supposed to take place at night, or in twilight, or during thunder and rain, but here the art of the dramatist came to the rescue, and it was his business to indicate during the progress of the play the varying conditions of the environment. With what skill this was done by Shakespeare can be put to the test any day by assembling an audience on a grass lawn before a house at noon time, with a Juliet speaking from the balcony and a Romeo among the laurels. The most casual listener will not fail to gather from the dialogue that the action takes place between night and early morning. This is because the word night is spoken eleven times, besides frequent allusions to the moon and the stars, with a reference besides to the dawn.

It would be unreasonable to pass over the question of elocution. In modern comedy our actors to-day speak their lines naturally and easily. They copy the tones of the voice as they are heard in every-day conversation, but when verse dialogue is spoken the actor generally comes to grief, and fails to convey the impression of natural conversation. There is abundant evidence, however, that in Shakespeare's time the verse was spoken easily and rapidly. The length of the plays and the discursive nature of the dialogue rendered this necessary. There was, of course, the declamatory school headed by Alleyn, and the natural school led by Burbage, and we know which Shakespeare preferred. But at all times the verse must have been spoken with intelligence, which now no longer seems possible. Our actors forget that when dramatic dialogue is written in verse there are more words put into a sentence than are needed to convey the actual thought that is uppermost in the speaker's mind. The actor, therefore, by means of modulation and inflection of voice, should arrest the attention of the listener by the accentuation of those words which convey the central idea or thought of the speech he is uttering, and should keep in the background the redundant words with which that thought is ornamented. But the fault of English actors, in Shakespeare, is over-emphasis, which tends to rob a sentence of its meaning. Most actors, if they emphasise the right words, emphasise the wrong ones too, so that it is impossible to understand the object of the speech. Here is an illustration taken from some lines in the second scene of the first act of "Macbeth":—

"or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting?"

In this sentence it is usual to mark the words in italics as if they were all equally important, except that, generally, there is given a double emphasis on the word "blasted." But what did Shakespeare intend the sentence to mean? The witches are standing in the middle of the path, barring Macbeth's return to the King's camp, and the chieftain says:—

"or WHY
Upon this blasted heath you STOP our way
With such PROPHETIC greeting?"

There are only three words that need vocal inflection in the sentence, with the emphasis either upon "stop" or "prophetic." If these three words are rapped out and heard distinctly the listener understands what is going on in Macbeth's thoughts. Now it will be obvious that the words inflected as they are marked, in the second quotation, will come much nearer to natural speech than those spoken as they are shown in the first. But, more than this, the words as thus inflected will be spoken in one-half the time. This explains the intolerable length of a Shakespearean performance on the modern stage. The actor's redundancy of emphasis lengthens a two-hours' play into one occupying four hours, and necessitates the omission of a third of the play to bring it within actable limits.

These few remarks do not, of course, exhaust the subject, and there is no doubt much more to be said in defence of the modern stage, but my object is attained if I have drawn attention to the fact that realism on the picture-stage is an impossible thing to accomplish.

Stage Co-operation.

By Norman Wilkinson.

IN dealing with the question of the painter in the modern theatre, I find it impossible to discuss his work apart from that of all other theatrical artists.

The art of the theatre to-day is not a simple art.

Where Shakespeare dealt in words just given forth, and, perhaps, appropriately gestured, we attempt to embody, all within a proscenium frame, human thought and emotion reproduced imitatively by human beings, natural scenery and light effects reproduced by painted canvas and artificial light, and natural sounds and noises by an orchestra supplemented by all the strange apparatus—thunder, rain machines and the like.

In short, nothing is spared to create illusion in every possible way—we accept no limitations in methods of expression; and admitting the complex nature of such an art, we must realise that perfect co-operation is necessary between the artists involved to produce a result that is good as a whole.

If the art of the scene designer and painter, or likewise of the dramatic author, are considered as separate arts, only attempting in the theatre to be complementary to one another, we at once admit a sort of jealousy that saps the very life out of them all.

It is obvious that the business of the scene-painter as well as of the dramatic author, the producer, the actor, and all others concerned is to work only for the one result, the stage play.

And for this is needed a much greater knowledge and sympathy between the artists involved than exists at present.

Although there is now a movement towards something better in the theatre, it is not altogether towards a more comprehensive understanding, towards a communal artistic interest.

There is a sort of Napoleonic tyranny (possibly to be excused under immediate conditions) which prevents any sympathetic feeling between the artists, except through the figure-head.

We may wonder for a moment at the result such a method produces; but like the Napoleonic Empire, it vanishes when the figure-head is removed, and no tradition of work has been founded.

Surely we need in the theatre to-day not the one great man, but a group of sympathetic, technically efficient workers, who will produce something as alive as the great works of any era—as fine, say, as a great Gothic building or a modern Atlantic liner, with all its parts accurately to measure, so accurate that we lose the sense of measurement in a sense of apparent perfection.

As it is, the theatre to-day necessitates a fatal compromise—a poor attempt at unity, that lacks both proper adjustment and focus, and only brings about a fogged and indefinite result.

Our actors and actresses in the latest of modern plays properly simulate the natural movements of human beings detail by detail, all kept in due proportion. Yet those who have brought about such things have failed to realise that as a whole the effect is badly marred unless the room or natural landscape, in which the characters would so fitly move, is absolutely reproduced.

There can be no compromise made in the light effects to show expression on faces.

One cannot get bright sunlight without deep shadow.

If the dramatic author aims at, and is inspired at all comprehensively by the actual details of nature, he must realise that speech and gesture are only a portion of the theatrical machine, and to play any tricks infallibly destroys the whole mechanism.

For this reason alone it is necessary that any one concerned with the designing and painting of scenery for a modern play should be from the first co-worker with others; in fact, he should be in a sense of the word, part-author. In this one is asking for a most difficult method of collaboration, one is trying to follow a method of work that is set with endless pitfalls.

But such after all is the modern theatre, and if we are to found any lasting tradition the whole must be made an organic structure, vitalising the work of its proudest and humblest workers, all alike.

Such a method only applies to the modern theatre.

We cannot attempt, for example, such intimacy with the Elizabethan dramatists or their followers that would amount to anything like genuine co-operation.

If one may say so without wishing to appear too antiquarian, it is better that we should try to copy accurately the methods of production contemporary with any play that is not cast in the modern mould. Modern scenery makes a play of Shakespeare's slow, heavy, and trivial in idea; and in order to allow for the changing of the many "sets," one has to sacrifice its only continuity and many of its beautiful lines.

Many people in their heart of hearts must feel how stupid it is to see Horatio point into the wings or at the front-cloth and say:—

"But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

And they may have wished that either the scenery should be done away with, or that Horatio, or anyone else, should be debarred from saying such flattering things about prosaic paint and canvas. We cannot practice the scenic art as we have it to-day in connection with Shakespeare's plays, because he has quite forestalled us and painted his own scenery.

If our actors were aware of and would render the beauty of such scenery as he gave us, the play would be more than adequately supplied, and the audience would realise what a consummate admirer and reproducer of natural effects Shakespeare was.

I suggest that his scenery has scarcely been surpassed, and the very elusiveness of it—being given in words, makes it almost magic by the side of our paint and canvas.

The Staging of Plays, And a Conversation with Mr. Herbert Trench.

By T. Martin Wood.

IN regard to this subject I see everything from the point of view of those in front. This is, of course, the only point of view from which criticism is of any value, but at the same time, ideas formed there have to pass those tests as to practicability with which experience behind the scenes alone acquaints the play producer.

My ideas have been somewhat put to the test by a visit to Mr. Trench on behalf of the *NEW AGE*. I had not had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Trench before this, and in regard to his enthusiasms had looked forward to a poet's garrulity to which I should only have to act as amanuensis, and write an article virtually his. But I found that he affected almost as much tentativeness in his attitude towards our subject as myself.

The question is, is it possible to treat effects on that large space on the other side of the footlights as one great canvas? And asking him whether one artist could not do this, his reply conveyed to me that the artist might be a literary one quite as well as a painter, given the initial power of clear imagining. Nevertheless, I had his agreement that it is the painter who essentially comes by his inspiration through the eyes, and it is the painter whose inner vision most precisely mirrors, perhaps, shapes and their colours, and whose memory turns at a suggestion in words to an almost tangible imaginative stock-in-trade. So well known a lover of pictures, one so intimate with art as Mr. Trench, participates in a painter's advantages in this respect, and by reason of his appreciation enters into the painter's belief in unity of effect and in design when it comes to the taste of realising in a plastic form the stage directions of a play. He is then fitted in almost dual capacity for his task as stage director, as sympathetic interpreter of dramatic aspiration through the stratagem of stage device. It is not improbable that he is the nearest approach to an ideal director there has been since Goethe's time. His extreme practicableness comes as a surprise in a great poet, the combination is of the rarest nature and everything is to be hoped for from it—from the submission of every detail to illuminative mind. Every step taken in the production of the "Blue Bird" was personally attended to by Mr. Trench. It is easy to understand how little of all the litter of florid convention that overwhelms the stage was permitted to filter through. Fantasy had to be introduced, and it is never easy to provide the environment, only partly real, for this. Without inspiration the unreal will always tend to fringe upon the idiotic. Mr. Trench was very anxious to put from himself on to Mr. Lyal Sweete as much as possible of the credit of the success of staging the "Blue Bird," and such a tribute to Mr. Sweete it gives us the greatest pleasure to set down. But still, Napoleon's generals often won his battles for him and his genius was in his preference for these generals, the noble "pieces" in the place of pawns. And the great man would use Marat and Ney together to produce an effect upon the field, as Mr. Trench would use the art of Mr. Cayley Robinson and Mr. Sime to produce an effect upon the stage. He told me that he would go to one man for his statuesque and architectural qualities and to another for his fantasy, and so on, seeking, I suppose, sometimes a possible combination. It is easy without looking for Mr. Robinson's name on the programme to see to whom he went for the serenities that lift the "Blue Bird" setting to the "Blue Bird" plane.

If I understand Mr. Trench aright, instead of the painter-producer staging a play as if the stage was his huge canvas and the materials the recalcitrant ones we know, a director should again stand behind that painter, himself a super-painter, as it were, choosing specialists as he might choose his brushes, using one man's qualities against another's to achieve a larger end. Such

a programme obviates the likelihood of the presentment being one-sided and failing in the universality of appeal which the stage must make. In spite of this admission, however, all my own beliefs are with the advantages of making use of a painter-producer whose scheme the play shall be from beginning to end, as once set forth I think, by Mr. Gordon Craig.

An actor, of course, would point out that we are all in danger of losing sight of him. He has, for instance, his objection—upheld for him by Mr. Trench—to being put in under shadow. There is many a prominent star whom I would gladly put under a dish-cover. But it is considered essential that an actor should be in the light, and it has been pointed out to me that if he is not in the light his gift as actor is somewhat "up in the air." I was very anxious to learn from Mr. Trench whether there could not be mysteriously silhouetted faces, as in speech there are mysterious hushes and many syllables played in as contrasts to the raised voice. His reply was that he very much looked forward to some society of artists who would experiment together on a small scale in stage effects; we should, of course, have to begin with simple effects, and, he added, simplicity in these things is of the essence of the poetic drama, a point upon which I believe the whole artistic world is in unity. All that he proposes for the immediate future in his own theatre is at present in the tentative stage in which freedom of speech is impossible to some extent even to himself. He inferred that all his views, however, were at my disposal, but in the absence of garrulity that I have deplored, I had not the practised art of extracting them and the conversation drifted.

We would all like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Trench. He, more than another, has precipitated this question of the artistic drama into the arena of questions to be settled out of hand. And he puts it all forward without any superior airs. There is nothing to frighten that admirable chap "the man in the street."

Mr. Trench even spoke of himself as a beginner, and told me he was still learning. Well, it is hoped that a doctor can learn at his patient's bedside, for here we have an art that is slowly "coming round."

I had amused myself with writing the reflection which I add to this before my call on Mr. Trench, and I leave it as it stood, in the hope that it has survived the encounter. The conversation at the "Haymarket" was most courteously accorded and I really do apologise that it should have slipped through my fingers in my attempt to pin a little of it down above.

REFLECTION.

Lying between them, author and reader, an unopened book is dead, its life as a work of art begins in the mind of the reader. In this significance stage directions carry us a little way, but the genius of the reader taking the text as the starting point, and not the boundary, of his fancy, finds that if there is inspiration at all in the work it is not to be defined, and least of all by a few stage properties. He will conclude that these last must be used only to suggest everything, and that at all costs they must not be allowed to curtail the impulses of our own imagination.

Every play that is worth playing, like every book that is worth reading, has within it an influence with which it drenches the air, and the world alters around us for a moment.

When a rose changes hands between lovers it is something more than a rose; a significance no less than this clings to every object under the influence of art, and it is in such significance that we should be able to regard the objects on the stage if they are to assist expression. Every single object that can be introduced to the stage in staging a scene has its own associations, according to the circumstances with which we are familiar with it off the stage. It is these associations which have to be so carefully watched. Proceeding by them a given atmosphere can be produced, but one false note and the results of the most imaginative labour can be shattered. It is these associations that are the most elusive things in under heaven;

they are echoes wherever life has been; spirits also, reincarnating in the most familiar objects.

It is impossible in living art, as in nature, to separate matter and spirit, and Walter Pater's famous "Approach to the condition of music" was his better way of saying this same thing. Like a good novel, a play is to be judged by the atmosphere it disseminates. Unfortunately the atmosphere of staginess in the theatre to-day is such that it is impossible for a work of the highest art to survive in contact with it. An unreal white sun shines there in a world of muslin and powder, prettily bright, into which it seems nothing can enter that will not assume the guise. Those who can remember their first visit to the theatre, if they did not go too young, can remember, no doubt, the disillusion when the curtain went up on such brightness and unreality, but with years of theatre going they have accepted it all. The critics of the drama have asked of the theatre, "Why have you a stale conventional drama?" as if they had not recognised that there was not a setting on the stage at present for any other kind.

Why should there not be dark shadows on the stage? Mysterious is the relationship between our emotion and the play of light and shadow; it is just in these effects that the close relationship of the known to the unknown in life is suggested. A world without shadow is a world without mystery, and this is the world of the stage; there at present—except when our senses are music-drugged—form and colour are human gesture and the variations of the voice struggle up and unavailingly contend for beauty against the lime-light.

Let us in this art, as we should in every other art, aim at beauty before everything in the world. And beauty, there is no such thing, except as the reflection of something that is real. We do not yet know what appearances are real in this world, but about beauty there is some agreement.

Appropriate Stage Decoration.

By Pamela Coleman Smith.

ABOUT us is the glowing beauty of the world, with its leaves and flowers, rags, gold and purple. Kings on thrones of iron, beggars on beds of clay, laughing, weeping, dreaming.

And this pageant of life moves before us, intensified, in the theatre.

People go, most of them, to the play to be amused, and in spite of themselves, are often tricked into a mode of thinking quite contrary to their usual habit of thought. That is why the theatre is the place where all beauty of thought, of sound, of colour, and of high teaching, comes to be of use.

All arts are branches of one tree.

There in the theatre, unconsciously, the onlooker is moved, or interested, and finds himself agreeing or disagreeing with the playwright; and every time he enters a theatre he comes out with a little more knowledge than when he went in. Agreeing or disagreeing, it brings uppermost in his mind some thought which crystallises and becomes a new intelligence.

Theatre-going is a habit, where one cultivates a new kind of observation, a new pair of eyes and ears.

What strikes one most, when thinking of the theatre as a whole, is the lack of beauty, the formlessness, as regards costumes, scenery and properties; those things which are next in importance to the play, players, and producer.

The large playhouses are kaleidoscopes of meaningless colour and over-elaboration. The great bulk of stage-production is unbeautiful, elaborate and vulgar. There is a glut of technical ability with an inability of mind to perceive beauty, or to apply it.

The perfection of art is when one does not see the artifice. "Ars est celare artem."

Good acting appears so easy that we overlook the fact that it is the result of fine technique, and of genius in some cases. Fine technique is visible in all the arts

at the present day, but it is a shallow and empty mask, a self-conscious sham, without sincerity and meaning.

On the one side is vulgar display, on the other, affected simplicity, while in the middle Realism panders to the sensation-loving Ignorant, by the introduction of real animals, real trees, real water, on the stage.

Those in power have not remembered that Illusion is the aim of the theatre. It is a great game of pretence that recalls the time when, as children, we baked stones in the sun for cakes, and feared the dragon that lurked behind the garden wall, or by the pond. A remnant of that imaginative life we re-live in beholding a play set forth before our eyes.

If the illusion is good, we follow it more easily, and illusion to be good need not be realistic. *Realism is not Art.* It is the essence that is necessary, to give a semblance of the real thing.

Absolute correctness in dress or scene does not necessarily give the illusion. Everything must be exaggerated in order that it may be visible across the foot-lights.

There are conventions in the form of a theatre, such as the proscenium, the stage, the wings and flat back-cloths, which should be an aid to the designer, not a hindrance.

An artist should use the conventions that are to his hand and make them subject to his skill, trying to simplify rather than elaborate.

From the first he must be able to see in his mind the whole production complete.

Certainly a knowledge of the working of a theatre is as necessary to a costume-designer as it is to a playwright. A designer of patterns for fabrics, or a painter of portraits who is asked to make a set of costumes for a stage play, is apt to do so without the knowledge of the technical working of a theatre, the difficulties and conventions of lighting, and the host of details which make up the component parts of a modern playhouse; and so, too often, their well-intentioned efforts, though possibly correct in historic detail, are more or less lacking in effectiveness and suitability for dramatic purposes.

A coat of curious cut should not be made *less* fantastic than the original, but more so. For the use of costume on the stage, cut is more important than material. The textiles now used in the dressing of costume plays are far too expensive and ineffective. Cotton stuffs and woollens can be used with greater effect, in many cases, than silks, satins and cloth of gold.

The most important part of costume is the wearing of it, and is the greatest difficulty met by the designer. How few players know how to put on, and wear, their clothes with an air of distinction! One sometimes wonders whether the fear of seeming ridiculous to the people "in front" is the reason why many an actor finds it beneath his dignity to wear a fantastic coat which he does not like, or understand.

I have often noticed the unsuitability of dress worn by some actresses. Their dresses would appear to be provided according to the length of their salaries, or their parts.

If players would only realise the importance of dressing their heads correctly, not leaving it to facial make-up! It has caused me much annoyance to see ladies-in-waiting in a Shakespearean play with their hair done exactly as they wear it at a party, but with the addition of a string of pearls! This on top of a good Elizabethan dress.

The wardrobe mistress, or whoever is in charge, should see that the clothes are worn correctly. It is most distressing to a designer to see some detail which has cost much anxious thought, worn incorrectly, or repaired in such a manner as to have lost all its primary significance.

The great need in a theatre is a person who will supervise for the designer. After production, there is often a lamentable want of care in the wearing and repairing of clothes. The Supervisor should be able to help the designer by bringing into use a practical knowledge of stage effects, and, after production, should be

responsible for the wearing and repairing of the costumes throughout the run of the play.

Scenery is far too elaborate at present. A cleverly painted scene gets a round of applause, from the same people who admire a Royal Academy landscape. Costume is more important than scenery, which should be simple and in harmony with the dresses. How can a designer know how his dresses will look in a realistic wood, lit by glaring electric light? The scene-painter and designer of dresses should work in harmony, so that the work of one may not jar upon the colour scheme of the other, and both should read the play, before setting out to design a background for it.

At present, a designer does not see the lighting or scenery until the dress-rehearsal, when it is too late to alter any important dress.

Colours are forces but little understood. Strong colour is disliked, and perhaps the fear and hatred of strong, clean colour is due to ignorance. People think they like "sweetly pretty" soft and "art" colours, muddy, dirty and wishy-washy tones. Yet did they but know it, grey is the admixture of pure colours, as we observe in the work of the French impressionist painters, who use red, blue and yellow side by side to get the effect of light and atmosphere. Is it the fear of the dreaded accusation of vulgarity? I believe the public would prefer the effect got by the use of strong primitive colour, if they saw it.

A reform need not always necessarily take the form of savage force, but by gentle ways and patient insistence the truth may be inserted and the public pleased.

The designer must insist on the balance being kept, and work in harmony with, and not be ruled by, the producer or stage manager. Of course the producer must have confidence in the designer to complete his work.

Let us see what happens now.

A costume play is to be produced. The present course is simply to hire from a costumier a set of costumes considered suitable for the play. These possibly have neither beauty nor historical accuracy, and quite often are merely in the tradition of the part, the model having done duty in many revivals. How is it possible that these dresses should bear any relation to their setting, or to each other?

Or, supposing the manager wishes to do the thing handsomely, he calls in a designer. Judging by the results, it is left by the designer to the costumier, who cuts the dresses by the traditional pattern, softening down the characteristic points to please the wearer. The designer may see the dresses tried on two or three times, and, should he make a suggestion that the cut should be more exaggerated, he is told by the costumier that it is impossible, "it is always done this way."

How rarely does one see an entire production welded together into a thing of beauty by artist hands?

"Supers" are most important. Where ten men, if skilfully used, could represent an army, there are now perhaps fifty or so, unintelligently-trained supers who only represent a muddle, and are an unnecessary expense. The money paid to extra supers could be saved, and young members of the company might thus learn their craft, with one or two good actors scattered among them to play crowds and soldiers. This is actually the case in some provincial Shakespearean repertory companies.

What a useful thing a dramatic library would be. In such a place students of the drama, actors, producers, designers, and others, could easily refer to valuable material. At present it takes endless trouble and time to find what is wanted in a library or museum not intended for this particular study.

Take a case in point. Where would one look for the dress of a Jewish woman in England in the year 1185? I think that would baffle most people! There is the material to go on, given the knowledge of where to find it. The much-talked-of National Theatre should

include a carefully classified and arranged library, to which donors could give prints and scrap-books of value for the study of historical and international costume.

Æsthetic Aims.

By T. Sturge Moore.

UNDER this title a few weeks back appeared the suggestion that though good art depend on the study of visible objects, and may choose the aspect to be represented under the influence of a mood, it can never be properly described as mere realism or mere impressionism; such aims being so narrow that a work rigidly controlled by them is no longer addressed to rational beings so variously gifted as men.

Those who practise painting or wax eloquent over pictures have, however, at times fanatically isolated other aims.

Decoration.

The skill of savages is everywhere nonplussed as ours still is when a zigzag has to stand for lightning. A school boy with five or six jointed strokes draws a man; in the dawn of time a parallel resort to make-shift was imposed on the born artist.

The intelligibility of such signs, whether rudely or neatly rendered, varies little.

The content of art thus shares the fixity of an alphabet, and effort goes to perfecting crisp or steady line or smoothness in laying on and brightness in mixing colour. Preoccupations, which, in time, lead to the invention of symmetry, proportion, and spacing, and result in patterns and arabesques, or, finally, in those mysteries of the palette "body," "glazes," "scumbling," "patina" and the thousand delicious qualities of surface, once highly prized but for which so spare a minority of painters hankers to-day.

Imagination warms over doing well that which costs pains and playing with skill, suggests refinements, till it may be a Zulu has produced exquisite bead-work or decoration; nay, has appealed to our sense of harmony far more directly than ninety-nine hundredths of the pictures in the Academy, though these be the work of men who read, record their vote, and are shocked by cruelty. The old English patterns for printed earthenware (on account of its leadless glaze, recently restored to æsthetes by philanthropy), were saved from perdition by the negroes of the Gold Coast, who refused to buy the ugly printed crockery which absolutely usurped the home and colonial markets. In the caves of Altamira* or those which harboured the now disappearing Bushman,† contemporaneously with early stages of decorative development, the absorbing preoccupation of the hunter with his quarry, bison or eland, has endowed the portraying hand with a precocious power of realism, which yet as strangely deserts it for all other forms, man's, tree's, or leaf's, any object, in short, not a staple of the sportsman-artist's food. Yet even when undisturbed by clairvoyance attained through such a vital and enthralling pursuit, more and more verisimilitude is imposed on the hieroglyphs of pattern. The process may be traced in the vase rooms at the British Museum, from rudeness to fully significant masterpieces, from these again to pretentious and effete elaboration.

But before this, in arts of less restricted application, the road has forked. By some bent on emulating nature, the decorative element is neglected, and decays; others, seizing on this and summarising the initiative effort, strive by rhythm, chiaroscuro or colour schemes to suggest movement or prevail with emotion. Geniuses alone invent; the less talented hope to out-strip the many in vying with appearances. A sense of wasted skill obtrudes; reaction sets in; primitive art is admired, imitated, but, ill-understood, too often opens

a fool's paradise. Conventions developed in wrestling with one set of conditions are transported to another, for which similar limitations do not exist, and we have seen pictures in oils ape church windows, the Japanese print, or the Greek vase. Such efforts will sometimes show appreciation for a pattern, but never for its propriety in regard to the materials which suggested its character to the original designer, and therefore they will rarely grasp the distinction of its more subtle proportions, or respect the medium they are actually employing.

Thus artists parrot-like mimic out of season, and in falsetto, manners that have impressed but not inspired them. Decoration, as these understand it, is a third door opened on a hopeless country.

Symbolism.

By introducing to unexpected places hour-glasses, skulls, wings, nightgowns, or else naked women, some have hoped to suggest the profundity of a mind in which things foregathered so strangely.

True, equally arbitrary assortments occur in the naive illustrations of ideal scenes, religious or poetical, and are loved.

True, traditional symbols may serve decoration or figure in powerful pictures, since they can be visualized and are often in themselves impressive or shapely. The whole and only absurdity cleaves to the artist who prides himself on their mere introduction, rather than on the sensuous propriety or perfection with which he has treated them; for the delineation and colouring of an emblem import as much in a design as those of any other object. Such symbolism as ignores this can therefore only prove a fourth short cut to nowhere.

Taste.

Realism, impressionism, decoration, symbolism, some true aim of art has dazzled those who lay a maniac stress on one of these ideas alone. Turn to great art and you will find at least three of them pursued simultaneously.

Where there are no symbols, the imitation of appearances will be superior, the address will convey some personal delicacy or power, while the eye will gladly greet proportionate spacing and masses assorted or contrasted finely.

If, however, conventional formulas are preferred to studied observations, association will chime magically, and a mosaic of hues, a music of outline, correspond to it.

There is, I think, no painting that has often been called great, which does not belong to one of these two groups by the general ordinance of its presentation, while to whichever an artist belong, he must creatively take advantage of some charm proper to the materials he employs before his workmanship can acquire distinction.

The Great Unwanted.

By Stephen Haweis.

THE great trouble about Modern Art is that the bulk of the people do not like it, and do not want to like it. They do not want it, and will not pay money for it. That is their answer.

There is a minority, however, who do want it, and would pay for it if they could be sure of getting it; but in this age of spurious imitations they are never quite sure that they are not hall-marking themselves untutored heathen by buying the wrong thing, and so rendering themselves ridiculous.

What art owes to Ruskin, artists are paying for in full, for if he pointed to what was admirable in art, he also invented the cult that is ashamed of not thinking beautiful that which the cultured critic points at.

It must be lived down slowly.

Then, again, there is a small number of people who buy works of art in the right way, those who buy because they love and need them, who do not care for its present or future value, and do not care whether it is fashionable or not. It is a very small number indeed

*Frescoes from the caves of Altamira, Cortailhac and Brenil.

†Bushman paintings copied by Helen Tongue. Clarendon Press.

and growing beautifully less, in that such devotees are soon drawn into the desire to do something themselves with the disastrous facility for studying the arts that every suburb affords.

"Il faudrait supprimer les arts," Meunier once said to me. "Then only those who must would dare to attempt, but what will you, the Art School is open and the people flock into it like sheep one upon the other."

The artist thinks that the public should be taught to appreciate him, but it is usually the second-rate man who thinks so. The great man is appreciated because he is great in whatever walk of life he be found.

The days of genius starving in attics are over. There are far too many people interested in finding it. It is fashionable to "discover" a genius, if you can do it; but you generally find only the spurious imitation, and then the world is apt to laugh unkindly and say rude things. The world is rather like a vulgar little boy who respects only the man who wields the cane.

You can fool some people all the time, all people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time, and in the long run the public gets what it wants most—and it is not art.

The artist produces works of art because he cannot help it. His instinct is to go forward, and not to stop and chuck over his egg. That is the business of the critic, and what a business it is becoming, to be sure!

A picture is not finished that can be added to by talking. It should be complete in itself. Who can expound the *Monna Lisa* to one that loves her? Why babble about technicalities before Michelangelo?

Take care, good critic, that you do not admire the gods for the one quality that is not there!

"Of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh," but it often speaketh inarticulate, foolish things that in no wise explain anything. It does not speak good, popular commercial art criticism; that is a gift apart, depending upon the knowledge of what the public wants, or is willing to hear. It must be capable of being boiled down into good tea-table culture. It is abominable, and insufferable—and I loathe it.

We hear much about the aims of the artist. The aims of the artist do not matter any more than he matters. What he expresses to you is what matters—to you. In any other walk of life or work this would be conceded at once, but for the artist, Monet's advice: "*Travaillez, si c'est affreux ce que vous faites, tant pis . . .*" is enough. It is the last word.

But it is all very well to tell a man not to think about the public, to work faithfully, and so forth, when his belly is full of the none too succulent East wind.

The artist must live, or think he must. So he must have something or someone to live on, and if he is to make good things he must have enough to eat, drink, and be a little merry on, or his case is a sorry one.

A wise nurse, euphemistically called a patron, is what he usually requires, for the true artist is a Peter Pan who never quite grows up. He is one who cannot lose his ideals, because they are the vital part of him, even if he only expresses their existence by the bitterest irony.

It is easy to buy works of art, if a man have the wherewithal, and with good advisers it is the shortest road to fame. There are many collectors whose minds or personality would exclude them from the Society of the Earth's élite, but for the fact that they possess half a dozen pictures which the distinguished circle cannot do without.

But if it is easy to be a patron of the arts, it is not easy to be a good one. It needs infinite discrimination, tact, and psychological faculty to catch, patronise, and keep the evasive quarry that an artist is.

I do not refer, of course, to the man who sticks to recognised brands and pays the long price, but of the man who takes up one or more young men, sure that they will develop some day into the "old masters" of the Future.

He can afford to be disappointed in some if one do but succeed, and as to the risk, by watching the art criticism half as carefully as he watches the "latest

prices" on the Exchange, a man of moderate intelligence can procure for himself a good art-broker, after which it is merely a question of investment.

The life of a private patron is indeed a happy one, why is he so few? The Plutocrat, suffer he never so badly from ingrowing money and the boredom of satiety, at first meets what seems to him—the bored us not pretend anything—a strange, tailless, anthropoid animal who eats strange food and does strange things, taking no delight in the manly exercise of the swing chair and the roll-top desk, whose delight and enthusiasm is infectious, and yet, to what end? That he may make paintings, that "don't look like anything much, and yet, by gad, when you get a long way away. . . . Gradually you begin to see what they are about." Aye, and worse, even before you can honestly say you like the new work, before you have even begun to realise what its aims are, a sense of dissatisfaction with the old comes over you. That white horse in the battle scene begins to look petrified, and a strange simper appears in his swollen eye that once looked so proud. The dead bunny with his hind leg tied to the ceiling by a ribbon, over the fruit dish, how glassy the grapes, how solid the plums, and how badly upholstered the pine-apple. But a fortnight since, and it seemed "suitable for a dining-room," and now, how very nearly it is suitable for the third-rate auction room.

The "new art" does not yet look quite right, but the old art looks quite wrong. Only the very greatest names will bear the odious comparison. Certain illusions are crumbling with dry rot, but a new interest is born not only in art, but in life.

But heaven forbid that the Government should subsidize what governments think are artists! The standard of futile accomplishment that obtains in seminaries for the cultivation of the divine germ subsidized by the Government is a thing to be deplored. The ease with which a certain type of fool can get a certificate entitling him to spread his foolish facility is its condemnation. There is no training in art which suits every one alike.

Are we not glad that Rossetti gave up trying before his mind gave way?

"How clever, and how foolish," Whistler would occasionally say of technical details in the most ordinary commercial paintings.

Art is expression; métier is not merit, it is a necessary evil which curbs the flow of the tide until the river of some genius sweeps over it a silver mirror for the sky, but it does not destroy or abolish the foundations.

How futile are the regrets that one sometimes hears expressed, that we no longer live in the fourteenth century. In the age of chivalry—and indifferent drainage.

With more reason future ages will envy us the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the greatest art epoch since Egypt gave out its best to the earliest Greek.

At what time has so much great work been done as in the past century? There are as many men of the first rank living, or but just dead, as have ever existed together before. There is a large number of lesser men of great talent and originality who are expressing themselves without imitating their greatest contemporaries. And of the horde of clever imitators, who will doubt that the standard of general ability has risen when we compare the great annual exhibitions with what is left of the third-rate work of other periods?

Best of all we have seen the painting of the eighteenth century perfected, spoiled, and expire. Impressionism and realism burst from bud to bloom. We have eaten the fruit, and it has changed painting for ever.

It has invented new colours, more of the old, and demanded purity in their preparation. The craze for colour has exploded the bitumenous parodies of Reynolds and Gainsborough, that society at large still thinks is art. For the first time art has been used deliberately to express the inexpressible.

Throughout all the arts is the desire for truth and

reality of fact and fancy—in contradistinction from conventional flattery and the manifestly false. Strauss and Debussy have made new music; Whitman turned his eyes from the turtle doves upon the thatched cottage roof to see love and beauty arise from the refuse pile of the war hospital.

Shaw has striven for honesty by day, Nietzsche for innocence by night. Fierce fighters like Bradlaugh and Manet, bitter souls like Toulouse Lautrec and Otto Weininger—and a hundred others greater and less than these have worked their wills, and their efforts have inspired the younger men to fight for the complete freedom of art, in whatever, and in whatever guise the goddess next shows herself to a startled and inarticulate Bourgeoisie.

Art in the Making.

The Seed.

THE seed of art is born with the artist. Whether it germinates, ripens and bears fruit depends largely on the nature of the seed itself. It may be constituted to destroy its possessor. It appears to be the fate of all initiators, men and women of daring and original vision, to achieve their purpose—the realisation of that vision—only in the face of the most violent opposition. The psychology of this persecution is not difficult to understand. Each new vision is a direct challenge to intolerance. Intolerance co-exists with the spirit of persecution. The history of new developments of art is the history of the persecution of those who take part in them. History is full of records of the activity of the persecuting spirit. Thus, the story of Manet and the French Impressionists as told by M. Duret is in a sense an oft-told tale. It is the story of a man born with an original vision and the strength and determination to express it. It is a powerfully dramatic story, full of the usual circumstances of the struggle of original genius against great odds. "Manet experienced the common fate of those independent painters, who, earlier in the century, had broken with tradition and routine. Like himself, all the other masters had to submit to slights, jeers, abuse. Thus, at the beginning of the century, Ingres was scorned because he was suspected of being under the influence of the then despised Italian primitives. Later, Delacroix, who was said to have abandoned himself to a debauch of colour, and to have violated all the laws of drawing, was covered with abuse. Then, for a long time, two great landscape painters, Rousseau and Corot, who introduced novel formulas, were held up to laughter. Finally, Courbet, who looked for the motives of his pictures in the life around him, was dragged in the mud and accused of absolute ugliness. Last of all came Manet, upon whom the opposition and attacks, which the others had had collectively to sustain, seemed to be concentrated with increased violence." It is a story of impious hate and all uncharitableness, when the cry of mad dog rends the air, and the fear of hydrophobia sends men livid. It is a story of striking characters, "of the original group of impressionists, including Pissarro, Claude Monet, Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Cézanne, and Guillaumin. They shared the same ideas, and, keeping in close touch with one another, all contributed to the perfecting of their system, and to the discovery of the laws which were to be applied." It is a story of fine and generous impulses, showing how Manet and his group sacrificed themselves for each other in their days of adversity, and how help and patronage came to them from strange and unexpected quarters. The broad sympathy shown by Choquet and Charpentier, and Muret the restaurant proprietor writing novels in his eating-house and providing the Impressionists with free meals—recalling the friendship of

the poetaster pastry-cook for Cyrano and his ragga-muffin crew of cadets—all this reads like a romance. To the list of those who gave material assistance to the Impressionists throughout, must be added the author of his volume. His simple and whole-hearted and active friendship for the cause has given this country a book which it ought to possess. In it he has set down clearly and convincingly the events, circumstances and traits of personality just as they affected his mind, and has added adequate illustrations and a full list of Manet's works. Every person who takes an interest in art and desires to understand the desperate struggle which artists have to make themselves heard in new directions, should read it.

"Manet and the French Impressionists." By Theodore Duret. (Grant Richards.)

The story of the Impressionists is repeated with variations in that of the Pre-Raphaelites. Though the two schools used utterly opposite methods, they had much in common in other respects. Each was revolutionary, each sought to break away from tradition, each opposed itself to public and academic opinion; each was scorned, spat upon and derided; each emerged triumphantly from the struggle. But here resemblance ends. The Impressionists were great painters; the P.R.B. great illustrators. The one initiated a literary movement in painting with its end in a Dutch-like literalness; the other sought to record the effects of light and atmosphere at all hours of the day. But the parallel may be pursued endlessly. Mr. Symons pursues it to some extent in his study of Rossetti, where he tells us "The aim of the Pre-Raphaelites was to attain a literal accuracy in the rendering of beautiful things; to be truthful, in short, to nature. But then, what is truth? I can see identically the same attempt in Holman Hunt and in Manet, only Holman Hunt has the short-sighted Dutch pryingness, and Manet trusts his eyes and what light chooses to reveal to them." What this passage means I leave other people to guess. Mr. Symons has undertaken to explain Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelitic mysticism represented in his works. His contention is that Rossetti was the victim of a passion for beauty. A desire to express intense beauty coloured all his thoughts and actions. He loved beauty too well; was obsessed by it. It haunted him, wrecked his life, and finally killed him. This is Mr. Symons' contention. If the book does not fully bear it out, it is because in the first place Mr. Symons has not troubled to define his terms. He uses truth, beauty, art and other abstractions recklessly. In one place he says "beauty must be the supreme aim of the artist." Beauty is the sole aim of an artist or he is not an artist. Again, "Hogarth sought to depict art of a higher standard." This is nonsense. In the second place the text of this book, as well as of most volumes of the International Art Series, is so full of mistakes that it is unfair to gather the author's entire set of opinions from it.

The two revolutionary movements, the Impressionists and the P.R.B., may be said to have been linked up by a visionary-realist who was also a revolutionary. Whistler not only felt the influence of both schools, but also experienced the intolerance and persecution which it is customary to bestow upon visionaries. He derived something from the Pre-Raphaelite mysticism, and something from the more realistic French methods. But above all he developed under the direct influence of Japan. In this way Japan was the means of fertilising the wonderful seed of art within Whistler, just as it has had a strong influence upon Western painting and design for the last quarter of a century, and just as the Chinese secular form of art fertilised the painting of Japan about the fifteenth century. The latter influence was manifested in the work of the Kano school—a school that produced some of the greatest Japanese masters and formed the finest period of Japanese painting and draughtsmanship. To those who wish to study the evolution of the Kano School I would commend Mr. Laurence Binyon's work devoted to the subject. It is an exhaustive survey by one who thoroughly knows

his business, and who, as assistant to Mr. Sidney Colvin, has all the materials for a study of this kind at his disposal. A chapter devoted to Hokusai, showing how he carried on the tradition of the Kano School and how, through Hokusai, it came to affect Western traditions, would have been interesting. But apparently it did not come within the scope of Mr. Binyon's study. In the same way as the Japanese may be said to have exerted a beneficial effect on the West, so the Impressionist school has exerted an important influence on Europe. It has attracted attention everywhere by its novelty and boldness, and has found its way to Switzerland among other places. Here its influence is prominent in the work of Ferdinand Hodler, who was a disciple of Böcklin and Courbet, and who in his later style developed a strange mixture of the Giottoesque and modern Impressionism. The eccentricity of his drawing may be seen in the illustrations to the volume written by Mr. Rudolf Klein, but not of his colour, put on in large, violent patches. Constantin Guys, the volume of whose work makes an interesting addition to the International Art Series, was self-fertilised as it were. He had no training, but possessing a natural instinct for draughtsmanship, was able to put down life as it appeared to him under the second Empire, naturally and passionately. Mr. Georges Grappe has undertaken to give a sympathetic account of the life and work of the soldier-artist who was art correspondent of the "Illustrated London News" during the Crimean War. Mr. Grappe, like Mr. Klein, appears to be a perfect master of Babu English. The illustrations are the best feature of the book. They display the fine characteristics of Guy's work, and fully illustrate his use of a beautiful, soft, expressive line. The volume is worth possessing for its examples of beautiful drawing alone. Those who desire to read about Guys must turn to Baudelaire. Each of these four volumes contains numerous drawings on superfine glazed art paper, and tinted and colour illustrations, fully representative of the work of the artists dealt with. In this respect they are really valuable volumes. In regard to the volume on Rossetti, I would offer the same objection as I raised concerning the Hogarth volume, namely, that some of the reproductions are on too small a scale to permit the minute details to be seen.

"Dante Gabriel Rossetti." By Arthur Symons. "Japanese art." By Laurence Binyon. "Hodler and the Swiss." By Rudolf Klein. "Constantin Guys." By Georges Grappe. (Unwin, International Art Series), 5s. each.

The Flower.

The companion picture to that of heretical artists brought to trial by accusers who are mainly irritated by their revolutionary ideas in regard to art, is that of the first experiment in any kind of toleration. It reveals the fertilizing seed come to flower in the artist's mind and accepted as such by those who formerly predicted that the flower would be the rankest weed. Every revolutionary school of painting forms a monograph of the trial of that school for heresy, and the principles of persecution and toleration developed during the course of the trial. The works of each school reveal how the revolutionary ideas have affected the painter, and have been expressed accordingly. In a little book, "Christian Symbolism," we see very clearly how religious concepts have touched the mind of the artist and have been expressed according to his technical ability. "The function of symbolism in art" we are told, "is to portray to the mind, by necessary visible images, conceptions of the soul." The book, copiously illustrated, gives a complete and adequate summary of symbolical expressions in form and colour used in Christian forms of art. In these symbolical expressions the personality of the painter is revealed in the beauty of his execution, and the original vision is made objective by the power of interpretation. It is a

fascinating little register containing the signatures, so to speak, of painters who have signed themselves in religious symbolical characters.

"Christian Symbolism." By Mrs. Henry Jenner. (Methuen, 2s. 6d. net.)

The Fertilising Force.

The question whether the critic is necessary to the artist finds a reply in a chapter on "The Art of Criticism." Says Mr. Blaikie Murdoch, "The poet or painter who is really able to create a new world will never suffer from the clamour of criticism, for the man who is loyal to his ideals does not take heed of comments on his work, but strives incessantly after self-expression, and towards what he regards as perfection." From this it would seem that creative artists have the habit of ignoring criticism. But it is not true, for there is Keats to prove that poets not only seek praise and encouragement, but are profoundly touched by what is said regarding their work. The psychology of the matter is that the artist soul thrives on praise, and is withered by unkind blame. It makes praise a symbol, and the symbol becomes to it the keystone of appreciation and success. Mr. Murdoch defines criticism as an art, and "its object is beauty rather than the administration of justice." "The good critic comes to his work in strenuous mood, writes from emotion and inspiration, and evolves the spell of imagination." In fact, Mr. Murdoch writes in favour of creative criticism. He has many interesting things to say about it, and he applies his theories convincingly to a number of well-known artists—Swinburne, S. J. Peplow, George Moore, James Guthrie (not Sir), W. E. Henley, amongst others, adding samples of the work of the painters, and portraits by Rothenstein, Rossetti, Rodin and Nicholson. Though I do not agree with him that the creative artist takes no heed of comment, for it is human to seek criticism, I do agree that the business of criticism is grossly exaggerated and vastly misunderstood. It should be in every sense a fertilising force; in many instances, it is the deadliest enemy to art and literature.

"Memories of Swinburne and Other Essays." By W. J. Blaikie Murdoch. (Gray, Edinburgh), 3s. 6d. net.

HUNTLY CARTER.

Walks and People in Tuscany. By Sir Francis Vane. (Lane. 5s. net.)

If you are going to Italy this summer and want to make excursions arranged and systematised on geographical lines, using Florence and Bagni di Lucca as convenient starting centres; if you require a guide book to the Tuscan people, their habits, customs, industries and country, written in the first person singular, with the personal note added, and with bits of practical information thrown in; if you want a pleasant account of all sorts of people in all sorts of Italian places, tested by the author's South African experiences: here is the very thing. But you must not expect too much of this book. It will reveal bits of economic Italy, which like most other countries has had its industrial renaissance, and has developed plague spots and Manchesters, and which, sunny though it be, contains "habitations vile and unsanitary, where few of the decencies and none of the comforts of modern existence are possible." It will tell you about "Florence as the clearing house of international thought." And it will afford glimpses, and only glimpses, of charming "bits" of scenery, but it will not tell you anything about the old masters—a task from which the author excuses himself—or the bad system of railways, or the execrable roads, or the large and unnecessary army. The book rather too rapidly unfolds a panorama seen through modern glasses. The glasses have the dust of Toynbee Hall upon them. The spirit of Whitechapel—social service—is very insistent; while the spirit of Italy—poetry and romance—is not insistent enough.