

Volume I Number II

JUNE 1913

One Shilling Net

THE BLUE REVIEW

LITERATURE DRAMA ART MUSIC

MARTIN SECKER PUBLISHER
NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET ADELPHI

The Imprint

May 17th, 1913

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF WOOD-
ENGRAVING: By J. H. MASON

POST-IMPRESSIONISM: By A. S. HARTRICK, A.R.W.S.

LITHOGRAPHY: IV. DRAWING MATERIALS: By F.
ERNEST JACKSON

TRIFLING WITH THE CODE: By JOSEPH THORP

SOME 18TH CENTURY SONGBOOKS: By WILLIAM MAAS

PRINTER'S LIEN: By C. D. MEDLEY

DECORATION & ITS USES: V. By EDWARD JOHNSTON

TEN HONEST MEN: II. By A MASTER PRINTER

INTAGLIO PRINTING: By DANIEL T. POWELL

THE PLAIN DEALER: V. By EVERARD MEYNELL

PRINTERS' DEVICES: By the Rev. T. F. DIBDIN: PART V
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE. PATENTS

Price One Shilling net

Offices: 11 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

Annual Subscription: 12s. post free.

JUNE

CONTENTS

	Page
Joachim Among the Sheepcotes	By S. Spencer <i>Frontispiece</i>
Yasmin	By James Elroy Flecker 77
The End of the Lonely King	By Norman Boothroyd 78
Lines Spoken at the Opening of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre	By John Drinkwater 79
Millie	By Katherine Mansfield 82
Anger and Dismay	By J. D. Beresford 88
A Fresh Start in Music	By E. J. Dent 97
Epilogue : II.	By Katherine Mansfield 103

CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

The Theatre :	
Caps, Bells and Legs	By Gilbert Cannan 110
Theatres in the Air	By John Drinkwater 113
Poetry	By Lascelles Abercrombie 117
The Novels	By Hugh Walpole 123
General Literature	By Frank Swinnerton 128
French Books :	
A Classical Revival	By John Middleton Murry 134
Recent French Novels	By X. Marcel Boulestin 138
Music	By W. Denis Browne 141
The Galleries :	
Mr. Max Beerbohm's Exhibition	By Edward Marsh 143
Indépendants and the Cubist Muddle	By O. Raymond 146
Drey	
Drawings by G. S. Lightfoot, J. D. Innes and Frances Jennings	

Editor : John Middleton Murry

Associate Editor : Katherine Mansfield

Editorial Office : 57 Chancery Lane, W.C.

Telephone 2132 Holborn

AP4
.862
v.1
no.2

"Quite the most brilliant novel of the year."—GLOBE.

6/-
AT ALL
LIBRARIES

SUCCESSION

3rd
IMPRESSION

By ETHEL SIDGWICK

Author of "Promise," "Le Gentleman," "Herself."

TIME'S WALLET :
By Lucy Dale & G.
M. Faulding. 6s.
"Delightful commentaries
and clever asides."—
Sunday Times.

AN INN UPON THE
ROAD : By Janet Dodge.
6s.
"A curiously interesting study of
two women."—*Morning Post.*

DISCOVERY : By
Harold Williams. 6s.
"Will give peculiar
pleasure to the cultivated
reader."—
Daily Telegraph.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE
THEATRE: By William Poel.

This book is a statement of the ideals of
Shakespearian production to which Mr. Poel,
the Director of the Elizabethan Stage Society,
has devoted his life. Demy 8vo. 5s. net.

FOUR PLAYS BY
GILBERT CANNAN
James and John—Miles Dixon—Mary's
Wedding—A Short Way with Authors.
"These plays contain the best work he has
yet given to the public."—*Scotsman.*
Crown 8vo. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net.

SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, LTD.

COMPTON MACKENZIE'S Famous Novel

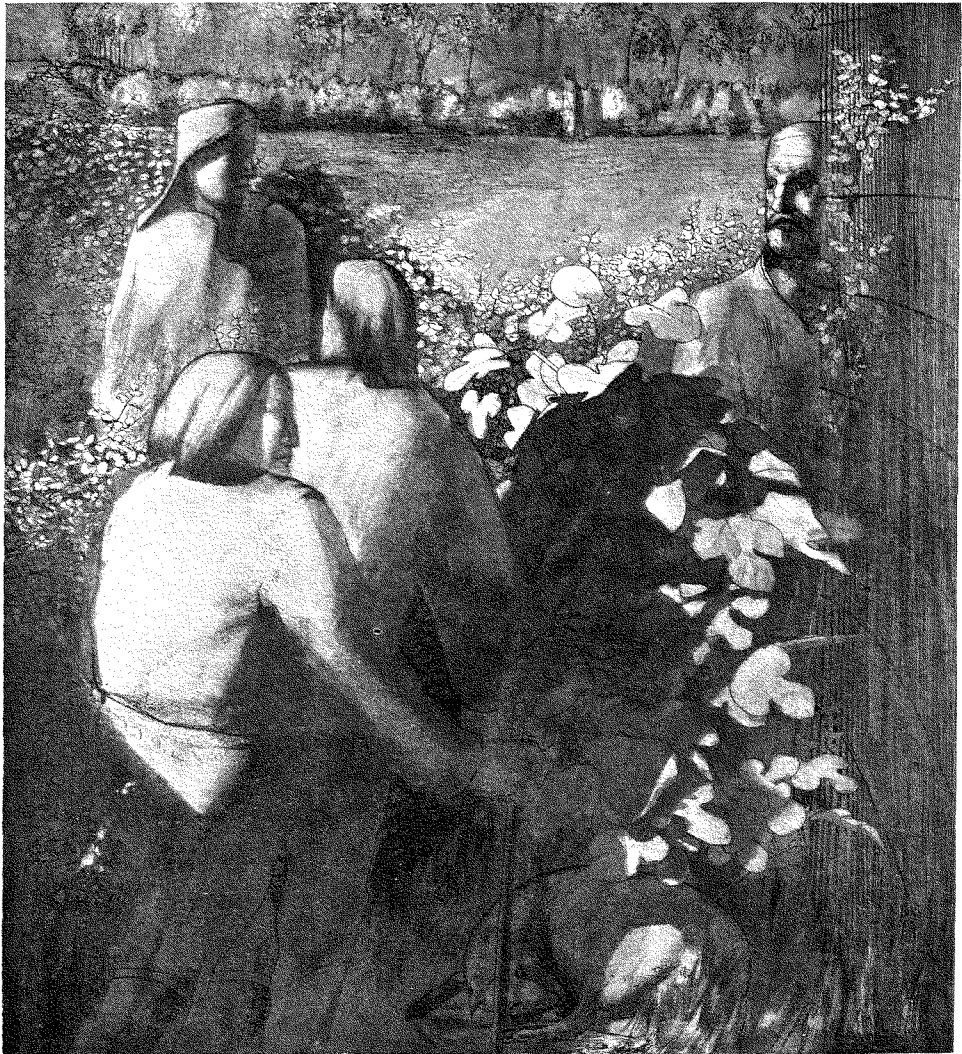
CARNIVAL

A new and cheaper edition of one of the most successful
novels of recent years. Cover design by Norman
Wilkinson. Ask for it at any bookstall.

One shilling net.

Postage 3d.

THIRTY-FIFTH THOUSAND



Joachim Among the Sheepcotes

By S. Spencer

YASMIN

A Ghazel

How splendid in the morning glows the lily : with what grace he
throws
His supplication to the rose : do roses nod the head, Yasmin ?

But when the silver dove descends I find the little flower of friends
Whose very name that sweetly ends I say when I have said—
Yasmin.

The morning light is clear and cold : I dare not in that light
behold
A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin.

But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway,
And some to Mecca turn to pray, and I toward thy bed, Yasmin,

Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul aswoon,
And harping planets talk love's tune with milky wings outspread,
Yasmin,

Shower down thy love, O burning bright ! For one night or the
other night
Will come the Gardener in white ; and gathered flowers are dead,
Yasmin.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

THE END OF THE LONELY KING

They brought him down from Kharmadin
Beyond the narrow mountain pass
That leads again to Murias—
All pale, and worn, and deadly thin,
And covered with sweet-scented grass,
Upon a lordly palanquin.

They set him on the silver bed—
(The silver bed that seemed so small
Among the pillars of the Hall).
No sound was heard : no word was said,
As secretly they worked the pall
With shining moons of silken thread.

The hours dragged heavy in their flight,
Yet none paid heed unto the King ;
There seemed no air of sorrowing
As in the feeble candle-light
They toiled at their embroidering
With eager hands throughout the night.

They shed no tear : they prayed no prayer,
Nor gave the King a benison ;
But when at last the pall was done,
They covered him with heedless air
All silently ; then, one by one,
Crept out, and left him lying there . . .

NORMAN BOOTHROYD

LINES SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE BIRMING-
HAM REPERTORY THEATRE, FEBRUARY 15th, 1913.

To you good ease, and grace to love us well :
To us good ease, and grace some tale to tell
Worthy your love. We stand with one consent
To plead anew a holy argument—
For art is holy. We, to whom there falls
The charge that men may see within these walls
The comely chronicle of comely plays,
You, who shall quicken us with blame or praise,
Desire alike but this, that here shall spring
Such issue of our labour as may bring
Fresh laurels to the altars that have known
Service of men whose passion might atone
For worlds than this more faithless, men whose names
Are very life—aye, swift and urgent flames
Of living are they. These are over us
To lighten all our travel : Aeschylus,
Euripides, the Sophoclean song,
And Aristophanes who captured wrong
In nets of laughter, lords of the Attic stage,
The fourfold Greek dominion ; and the age
Of nameless poets when the hope began
To quicken from the blood of *Everyman*
Into the splendour of Marlowe's kingly lust
Of kingly life, the glory that thieves nor rust
Can ever spoil, whose name is manifold—
Ford, Massinger, Dekker, Webster aureoled
With light of hell made holy, Middleton,
Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, aye, and one
Whom even these the lords of beauty's passion
Might crown for beauty's high imperial fashion
In classic calm of intellectual rule,
Ben Jonson. Sirs, I am nor wit nor fool
To speak in praise of him whose name is praise,

The Blue Review

Whose word is on the forehead of the days,
Shakespeare, our master tried and proved how well,
Mortality's immortal chronicle.

Under the warrant of these men we sail,
And theirs whose later labour these might hail,
Congreve and Otway : the Good-Natured Man,
Proud tattered Oliver : Dick Sheridan,
Who played at passion but free-born of wit
Put scandal out to school and laughed at it ;
These few that stand between the golden age
When poets made a marvel of the stage
And—do we dare to dream it ?—an age that stirred
But yesterday, whereof the dawning word,—
Spoken when Ibsen spake, and here re-set
To many tunes on lips untutored yet
For speech Olympian, albeit pure of will,—
Shall ripen into witness that we still
Are countrymen of those glad poets dead ;
The seed is sown, the barren days are sped.

And they who sowed, are sowing ? He, beguiled
By who shall say what envious madness, Wilde,
Misfortune's moth and laughter's new wing-feather,
Remembering now no black spiteful weather :
Hankin, and he, the cleanser of our day,
Whose art is both a Preface and a Play,
And he who pities, as poets have pitied, life
Of *Justice* reft, so driven and torn in *Strife*,
And one who cries in *Waste* some news of man,
And one who finds in the bruised hearts of *Nan*
And *Pompey* tragic and old yet timeless things :
And that dead Playboy, and his peer who sings
Yet of Cuchulain by the western sea—

Opening of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Of these is sown the seed that yet shall be
A heavy-waggoned harvest, masters mine,
Gathered by men whom now the immoderate wine
Of song is making ready.

In these walls

Look not for that light trickery that falls
To death at birth, wrought piecemeal at the will
Of apes who seek to ply their mimic skill :
Here shall the player work as work he may,
Yet shall he work in service of the play.
Nor shall you here find pitiful release
From life's large pressure, nay, but new increase
Of life made urgent by these master-men
Who are our captains. Life, and life again—
Tragic or brave, free-witted, gentle, signed
Of beauty's passion or the adventurous mind,
Or light as orchard blossom, motley wear
But life's wear always—that shall be our care
And all shall surely follow. What may be
Hereafter—to the heavens, to us to see
No will transgressing on the poet's wish,
To you to judge the meat before the dish.
May you that watch and we that serve so grow
In wisdom as adventuring we go
That some unwavering light from us may shine.
We have the challenge of the mighty line—
God grant us grace to give the countersign.

JOHN DRINKWATER

MILLIE stood leaning against the verandah until the men were out of sight. When they were far down the road Willie Cox turned round on his horse and waved. But she didn't wave back. She nodded her head a little and made a grimace. Not a bad young fellow, Willie Cox, but a bit too free and easy for her taste. Oh, my word ! it was hot. Enough to fry your hair ! Millie put her handkerchief over her head and shaded her eyes with her hand. In the distance along the dusty road she could see the horses—like brown spots dancing up and down, and when she looked away from them and over the burnt paddocks she could see them still—just before her eyes, jumping like mosquitoes. It was half-past two in the afternoon. The sun hung in the faded blue sky like a burning mirror, and away beyond the paddocks the blue mountains quivered and leapt like sea. Sid wouldn't be back until half-past ten. He had ridden over to the township with four of the boys to help hunt down the young fellow who'd murdered Mr. Williamson. Such a dreadful thing ! And Mrs. Williamson left all alone with all those kids. Funny ! she couldn't think of Mr. Williamson being dead ! He was such a one for a joke. Always having a lark. Willie Cox said they found him in the barn, shot bang through the head, and the young English " johnny " who'd been on the station learning farming—disappeared. Funny ! she wouldn't think of anyone shooting Mr. Williamson, and him so popular and all. My word ! when they caught that young man ! Well—you couldn't be sorry for a young fellow like that. As Sid said, if he wasn't strung up where would they all be ? A man like that doesn't stop at one go. There was blood all over the barn. And Willie Cox said he was that knocked out he picked a cigarette up out of the blood and smoked it. My word ! he must have been half dotty.

Millie went back into the kitchen. She put some ashes on the stove and sprinkled them with water. Languidly, the sweat pouring down her face, and dropping off her nose and chin, she

Millie

cleared away the dinner, and going into the bedroom, stared at herself in the fly-specked mirror, and wiped her face and neck with a towel. She didn't know what was the matter with herself that afternoon. She could have had a good cry—just for nothing—and then change her blouse and have a good cup of tea. Yes, she felt like that ! She flopped down on the side of the bed and stared at the coloured print on the wall opposite, “ Garden Party at Windsor Castle.” In the foreground emerald lawns planted with immense oak trees, and in their grateful shade, a muddle of ladies and gentlemen and parasols and little tables. The background was filled with the towers of Windsor Castle, flying three Union Jacks, and in the middle of the picture the old Queen, like a tea cosy with a head on top of it. “ I wonder if it really looked like that.” Millie stared at the flowery ladies, who simpered back at her. “ I wouldn't care for that sort of thing. Too much side. What with the Queen an' one thing an' another.” Over the packing case dressing-table there was a large photograph of her and Sid, taken on their wedding day. Nice picture that—if you *do* like. She was sitting down in a basket chair, in her cream cashmere and satin ribbons, and Sid, standing with one hand on her shoulder, looking at her bouquet. And behind them there were some fern trees, and a waterfall, and Mount Cook in the distance, covered with snow. She had almost forgotten her wedding day ; time did pass so, and if you hadn't any one to talk things over with, they soon dropped out of your mind. “ I wunner why we never had no kids . . .” She shrugged her shoulders—gave it up. “ Well, *I've* never missed them. I wouldn't be surprised if Sid had, though. He's softer than me.”

And then she sat, quiet, thinking of nothing at all, her red swollen hands rolled in her apron, her feet stuck out in front of her, her little head with the thick screw of dark hair, drooped on her chest. “ Tick-tick ” went the kitchen clock, the ashes clinked in the grate, and the venetian blind knocked against the kitchen window. Quite suddenly Millie felt frightened. A queer trembling

The Blue Review

started inside her—in her stomach—and then spread all over to her knees and hands. “There’s somebody about.” She tiptoed to the door and peered into the kitchen. Nobody there; the verandah doors were closed, the blinds were down, and in the dusky light the white face of the clock shone, and the furniture seemed to bulge and breathe . . . and listen, too. The clock—the ashes—and the venetian—and then again—something else—like steps in the back yard. “Go an’ see what it is, Milly Evans.” She darted to the back door, opened it, and at the same moment some one ducked behind the wood pile. “Who’s that,” she cried, in a loud, bold voice. “Come out o’ that. I seen yer. I know where you are. I got my gun. Come out from behind of that wood stack.” She was not frightened any more. She was furiously angry. Her heart banged like a drum. “I’ll teach you to play tricks with a woman,” she yelled, and she took a gun from the kitchen corner, and dashed down the verandah steps, across the glaring yard to the other side of the wood stack. A young man lay there, on his stomach, one arm across his face. “Get up! You’re shamming!” Still holding the gun she kicked him in the shoulders. He gave no sign. “Oh, my God, I believe he’s dead.” She knelt down, seized hold of him, and turned him over on his back. He rolled like a sack. She crouched back on her haunches, staring, her lips and nostrils fluttered with horror.

He was not much more than a boy, with fair hair, and a growth of fair down on his lips and chin. His eyes were open, rolled up, showing the whites, and his face was patched with dust caked with sweat. He wore a cotton shirt and trousers with sandshoes on his feet. One of the trousers stuck to his leg with a patch of dark blood. “I *can’t*,” said Millie, and then, “You’ve got to.” She bent over and felt his heart. “Wait a minute,” she stammered, “wait a minute,” and she ran into the house for brandy and a pail of water. “What are you going to do, Millie Evans? Oh, I don’t know. I never seen anyone in a dead faint before.” She knelt down, put her arm under the boy’s

Millie

head and poured some brandy between his lips. It spilled down both sides of his mouth. She dipped a corner of her apron in the water and wiped his face, and his hair and his throat, with fingers that trembled. Under the dust and sweat his face gleamed, white as her apron, and thin, and puckered in little lines. A strange dreadful feeling gripped Millie Evans' bosom—some seed that had never flourished there, unfolded, and struck deep roots and burst into painful leaf. "Are yer coming round? Feeling all right again?" The boy breathed sharply, half choked, his eyelids quivered, and he moved his head from side to side. "You're better," said Millie, smoothing his hair. "Feeling fine now again, ain't you?" The pain in her bosom half suffocated her. "It's no good you crying, Millie Evans. You got to keep your head." Quite suddenly he sat up and leaned against the wood pile, away from her, staring on the ground. "There now!" cried Millie Evans, in a strange, shaking voice. The boy turned and looked at her, still not speaking, but his eyes were so full of pain and terror that she had to shut her teeth and clench her hand to stop from crying. After a long pause he said in the little voice of a child talking in his sleep, "I'm hungry." His lips quivered. She scrambled to her feet and stood over him. "You come right into the house and have a set down meal," she said. "Can you walk?" "Yes," he whispered, and swaying he followed her across the glaring yard to the verandah. At the bottom step he paused, looking at her again. "I'm not coming in," he said. He sat on the verandah step in the little pool of shade that lay round the house. Millie watched him. "When did yer last 'ave anythink to eat?" He shook his head. She cut a chunk off the greasy corned beef and a round of bread plastered with butter; but when she brought it he was standing up, glancing round him, and paid no attention to the plate of food. "When are they coming back?" he stammered.

At that moment she knew. She stood, holding the plate, staring. He was Harrison. He was the English johnny who'd killed Mr. Williamson. "I know who you are," she said,

The Blue Review

very slowly, "yer can't fox me. That's who you are. I must have been blind in me two eyes not to 'ave known from the first." He made a movement with his hands as though that was all nothing. "When are they coming back?" And she meant to say, "Any minute. They're on their way now." Instead she said to the dreadful, frightened face, "Not till 'arf past ten." He sat down, leaning against one of the verandah poles. His face broke up into little quivers. He shut his eyes and tears streamed down his cheeks. "Nothing but a kid. An' all them fellows after 'im. 'E don't stand any more of a chance than a kid would." "Try a bit of beef," said Millie. "It's the food you want. Some-think to steady your stomach." She moved across the verandah and sat down beside him, the plate on her knees. "'Ere—try a bit." She broke the bread and butter into little pieces, and she thought, "They won't ketch 'im. Not if I can 'elp it. Men is all beasts. I don' care wot 'e's done, or wot 'e 'asn't done. See 'im through, Millie Evans. 'E's nothink but a sick kid."

Millie lay on her back, her eyes wide open, listening. Sid turned over, hunched the quilt round his shoulders, muttered "Good night, ole girl." She heard Willie Cox and the other chap drop their clothes on to the kitchen floor, and then their voices, and Willie Cox saying, "Lie down, Gumboil. Lie down, yer little devil," to his dog. The house dropped quiet. She lay and listened. Little pulses tapped in her body, listening, too. It was hot. She was frightened to move because of Sid. "'E must get off. 'E must. I don' care anythink about justice an' all the rot they've bin spouting to-night," she thought, savagely. "'Ow are yer to know what anythink's like till yer *do* know. It's all rot." She strained to the silence. He ought to be moving. . . . Before there was a sound from outside Willie Cox's Gumboil got up and padded sharply across the kitchen floor and sniffed at the back door. Terror started up in Millie. "What's that dog doing? Uh! What a fool that young fellow is with a dog 'anging about. Why don't 'e lie

Millie

down an' sleep." The dog stopped, but she knew it was listening. Suddenly, with a sound that made her cry out in horror the dog started barking and rushing to and fro. "What's that? What's up?" Sid flung out of bed. "It ain't nothink. It's only Gumboil. Sid, Sid." She clutched his arm, but he shook her off. "My Christ, there's somethink up. My God." Sid flung into his trousers. Willie Cox opened the back door. Gumboil in a fury darted out into the yard, round the corner of the house. "Sid, there's some one in the paddock," roared the other chap. "What's it—what's that?" Sid dashed out on to the front verandah. "Here, Millie, take the lantin. Willie, some skunk's got 'old of one of the 'orses." The three men bolted out of the house and at the same moment Millie saw Harrison dash across the paddock on Sid's horse and down the road. "Millie, bring that blasted lantin." She ran in her bare feet, her nightdress flicking her legs. They were after him in a flash. And at the sight of Harrison in the distance, and the three men hot after, a strange mad joy smothered everything else. She rushed into the road—she laughed and shrieked and danced in the dust, jiggling the lantern. "A—ah! Arter 'im, Sid! A—a—a—h! ketch 'im, Willie. Go it! Go it! A—ah, Sid! Shoot 'im down. Shoot 'im!"

ANGER AND DISMAY

A Footnote on the Writings of H. G. Wells By J. D. Beresford

MR. WILLIAM WATSON believes in Dickens but not in the future of the novel ; he has credited the former and discredited the latter quite explicitly in that new collection of his "The Muse in Exile." Dickens is presented as a fighter, and the nature of his belligerency is formulated in the couplet : "He did not fight to rend the world apart, He fought to make it one in mind and heart." I suppose the same thing might be said—by himself, at least—of any propagandist whose temperament was too mild to face the alternative of the sword. We see the magnificent excuse of the Church "militant," that description which was once so perfectly justified, but has no application to the incredibly padded gloves of the modern ring. The truth is that Mr. Watson's statement is absurd, a mere sentimental trifling with ideas. If I fight my enemy I have one of two objects in view ; either I desire to silence any further expression of his for ever, or I desire to convince him that I am the better man and that he had better not contradict me in future. I am not fool enough to suppose, however, that my thrashing of him will make him one with me in mind and heart. I know perfectly well that his object was the same as mine, and that if I had been beaten, I might have knuckled under, but I should not have adopted his accursed heresy in the secret places of my mind.

The whole fallacy arises from the sentimentalisation of the word "fight." Dickens was no fighter himself, and he could not portray the fighter. His ideal was the sweet-tempered, flabby propagandist, whose weapon was the model of his own virtuous life. Dickens's only notion of a hypocrite was of one who covered a secret vice by a profession of virtue and humility. When he attempted to draw a real fighter, he always assumed that the person was mad.

Let us descend, for a moment, to a consideration of that maligned and temperamental woman, Mr. F.'s aunt. I confess with joy that I share her contempt for the precocious, do-my-little-best

Anger and Dismay

spirit of Clennam. I, too, hate a fool, and envy that wonderful old lady's honesty in openly proclaiming the fact to the fool himself. I have often wondered whether Dickens had not once been confronted by the original of Mr. F.'s aunt ; pelted, perhaps—I sincerely hope so—with hard and well-aimed crusts of toast. I can imagine how he would have resented the bold expression and the militant act ; he who was so entirely incapable of running amuck. Virtue, not aggression, was his specific, and his ideal of virtue was mid-Victorian ; tainted with Samuelism. Was he not, after all, a Smiles of genius ? It is an amazing thought that all the great mid-Victorian figures in poetry and fiction were born during that extraordinary period of revolt which lasted from 1780 to 1830, and that they lived through the wonderful year of 1848 without learning a single lesson. . . .

Is it that we may perceive here some formulation of the law of reaction, of the great and increasing beat of the pendulum with its long swing from century to century ? . . .

Whatever the cosmic rule which shall account for the alternation, I turn with relief to the contemplation of the real fighting spirit. I was born to witness the opening movement of the diastole : and I have been so far affected by the impetus of my own times that no philosophic reflection will allay the irritation I feel when I consider the ideal of placid acceptance, of resignation, of plenitudinous satisfaction. It all appears so stagnant, so circumscribed ; involuted in fold after fold of snug complacency.

Nevertheless in my youth my revolutionary spirit found little material to work upon. I was the son of middle-aged parents ; I was hedged about by the old conventions, and I had not the wit or the originality to find a ladder or to tear a hole in the fence. The escalade, indeed, was not rapid when it came at last. My ladder had many rungs, and—to come after so long an introduction to the particulars of my present purpose—I willingly acknowledge that more than one rung was made negotiable for me by the writings of Mr. H. G. Wells.

The Blue Review

The first of his books which nudged my attention was "The Wheels of Chance." From one point of view, it has little bearing on the subject of this paper. It is touched by the Smiles tradition. Hoopdriver's potentialities are those of the old disciple; the best we can expect from him is application to study, he is an indeterminate dreamer with no capacity for iconoclasm. The same thing may be said of his expansion, Arthur Kipps. Both are studies of that undeveloped man who once appeared to their creator as himself—himself at sixteen or so. We find a little passion in these two quite lovable little men, but it is only a weak explosion of hesitating temper.

With "The Invisible Man," however, we have a clear sight of the true Berserker. Griffin comes before us a complete antithesis to the Kipps type—the union is a later development. Griffin is a selfish anarchist. Wrapped in that cloak of invisibility which was to serve him, he hoped, so much better than the wolf-shape of the Norse legends, he is bent on self-aggrandisement. As he develops, the lust of killing grows upon him, he is one against humanity and he dies fighting the world, his hands clenched, his eyes wide open, and his expression one of "anger and dismay." And always as I read that last wonderful account of his career, I forgive him for his obsession with self, for his pig-headedness and his ultimate futility. The form of him returns to visibility in my imagination as it returned to the sight of that little foolish crowd about him, glowing with those two fundamental emotions, "anger and dismay,"—the very elements of man's revolt against imprisonment in the flesh. These are transcendental things; and they are for me in this connection the basis of study. I take them naked and titanic as two essentials of the artist; while I admit—not without a faint regret—that they are not the only essentials, and that they represent but two aspects, however well marked, in my image of Mr. Wells—who, by the way, is quite unknown to me except from his works. . . .

With the invisible man, megalomaniac that he was, anger took

Anger and Dismay

precedence, and only defeat and death could bring dismay. But when the Berserker is transformed from beast to artist, it is dismay which represents the generating emotion, and it seems to me that it is of a type which is possible only to those who have the power of withdrawal from their surroundings. This elemental dismay of which I speak now, for instance, is of a type quite other to that felt by the sentimental Charles Dickens. His preoccupation with injustice of the Squeers pattern, had the peculiarly human quality which comes from intimacy with the world of men. He battered—a little feebly perhaps—at the heart of humanity, but always he kissed the gods' feet.

Mr. Wells has had the power to stand aside from these preoccupations, and I quote a passage from "The War of the Worlds," which has always appeared to me as certainly representative of phases of his own experience. "At times," he writes, "I suffer from the strangest sense of detachment from myself and the world about me ; I seem to watch it all from the outside, from somewhere inconceivably remote, out of time, out of space, out of the stress and tragedy of it all."

The penalty imposed for the ecstasies of this abstraction, is a return to dismay, and thence to anger—partly, maybe, at the cursed spite which has saddled him with the recognition. The world of those far imaginings is such a fine place, that the immediate presentation of the world as it appears, strikes the dreamer as a fierce impossible horror. He sees all too clearly that he is imprisoned, and if he were of the primitive Berserker type he would end in red rage, amuck among the unspeakable futilities of our present life. But the artist is confined by the necessities of his temperament, he is conscious before all of the urge to create rather than to destroy. In brief moments of madness he may flap his hands wildly and cry out, "Oh ! let us *do* something, for Heaven's sake, do *something* to alter all this " ; but presently the old command will compel him once more, and he will settle down with little spurts of passion and impatience, either to create a picture of the thing

The Blue Review

he desires, or to display his own vision of the repulsive thing which the mass of mankind accepts as the best of all possible worlds.

It is these spurts of passion and impatience, symptoms of the transcendental dismay and anger of the spirit, that have evoked this tentative analysis. I find them mirrored in the persons of Mr. Wells's stories: in Lewisham's attack upon the sheep-faced Parkson; in Graham, the sleeper, when he is in the "Silent Rooms"; in the time-traveller when "he raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate"; in Bedford (another Berserker) blindly killing the Selemites; in Capes smashing glass in his preparation room; in George Ponderevo and Remington, though somewhat more restrained; in other characters too numerous to instance; and finally with a growing difference in Trafford. I have picked out my examples haphazard as they have occurred to me, but I believe that there is hardly a novel or a romance by Mr. Wells in which the signs of this primitive anger cannot be discerned, while I cannot recall (to mark my early antithesis) a single true instance of the same passion in all the novels of Dickens—the nearest approach to it is in the portrait of Mr. F.'s aunt. . . .

I am laying stress on this contrast not because I wish in any way to belittle the genius of Dickens—for whose work I have a great admiration—but because I wish to thrust a particular distinction into prominence. It may seem that I have indicated the distinction as that between the fighting and the merely propagandist spirit, but the thing goes deeper than this. As I see it, indeed, it is a difference between two fundamental attitudes of mind, between the spirits of acceptance and rejection, between worshipping, idealising the past and glorying in the possibilities of the future.

Mr. Wells, if my induction is a true one, has little or no respect for the past. His war is not against individuals but against conventions. He comes out of the transcendental, a bright unprejudiced spirit aghast at the dull prejudices of our civilisation. He sees our futility, our indolence of mind, our blind leaning upon

Anger and Dismay

tradition, and it may be that his first impulse was to explain in a few clear sentences the mistakes under which we are labouring, to make one definite statement so incredibly convincing that the world would at once recognise its stupidity.

That impulse, indeed, is the primitive urge of genius. The remedy proposed is of less importance than the great desire to reconstruct. It was in this that Nietzsche was magnificent ; while his disciples (including Strindberg) have failed, in as far as they have adopted only the critical premises and neglected the constructive deduction.

But neither Mr. Wells nor any other prophet, however inspired, can build until he has persuaded mankind to clear the site, and in the present case I see a life work devoted to that magnificent task. His methods may be divided broadly into two categories : a criticism of the present building and an exhibition of the new elevations.

The first category must be subdivided. Under one head falls all that is merely analysis of existing conditions, all that critical attack which admits the stereotyped response, " Have you anything better to offer ? " Under the other with which alone I propose to deal, our civilisation is shown by romantic means to be ephemeral. The assault is shifted from the convention to the individual. The endeavour represents the attempt to persuade complacent, bigoted, unthinking man that his civilisation is impermanent, to lift him momentarily from his contemplation of his surroundings and give him wider vision.

Many of Mr. Wells's romances fulfil this purpose. As I think of that list of books, I remember first how they gave me the delight of living in a changed world, and secondly how they led me to understand that all life, as I knew it, was open to criticism; that it was a phase in evolution, and not, as I had once believed, essential, ordained and static. Those books (I may instance more particularly the " Food of the Gods," " The War of the Worlds," " The First Men in the Moon," " The War in the Air," and certain shorter

The Blue Review

stories, lifted me from my contemplation of my immediate surroundings. While I read I gloried in the freedom of moving in new worlds. This uplifting was due to my author's gift of presentation, and if the effect produced had been no other than this, I must have written down these romances as a failure. If, for instance, Mr. Wells's romances had been of the same quality as those of Jules Verne—to whom he has been so foolishly and purblindly compared—I should have come back to earth unaltered. I should have had the new experience of exploring air or water in an unknown machine, but I should have had no new sight of the world from the outside.

In the case of the five books I have mentioned, the effect upon myself was permanent. I had been led to look down upon the whole machinery of civilisation from outside. My habit of thought with regard to life was broken. If I did not believe in the possibility of, say, such a discovery as Herakleophorbia IV., I did very truly believe henceforward in the essential instability of society.

(It may be remarked that I have omitted "The Time Machine," and "The Sleeper Awakes" from my list. I have done so because these two books vary quite definitely in intention and method. They do not break but develop; they are in no real sense constructive. "The Sea Lady," "The Island of Dr. Moreau," and "The Wonderful Visit," I have omitted for other reasons. They are more nearly allegories of the older type, and while I do not fail to perceive the essential allegory of "The Food of the Gods," the constructive intention of that work places it in the other category. If Mr. Wells had written only the first five romances mentioned in this interpolation, he might with some slight show of reasonableness have been likened to Jules Verne.)

I see that I have laid myself open to a charge of egotism in thus laying stress upon the effect which these books have had upon my own mind. But I have adopted the first person deliberately because I have found that the majority of readers have read Mr. Wells's romances as they might have read those of the ordinary

Anger and Dismay

author ; and so have come back to earth unchanged. And when I consider this amazing blindness and engrossment in personal affairs, I suffer a reflex of that primitive dismay and anger. I desire fiercely to expound and am brought back to that realisation which led me to this long parenthetical explanation, and examination of categories.

For we are confronted with the extraordinary difficulty of opening men's eyes. I have touched briefly on the method of the first category, and the second I must dismiss briefly. This exhibition of the new plans is to be found in such books as "The Days of the Comet," and "A Modern Utopia," but it appears to me that men will not seriously regard the new until they have become dissatisfied with the old, and that they turn from these pictures of a brighter future with the comment, "Very pretty, no doubt, but we have to live in the world as it is."

I see that this imaginary remark directly contradicts the spirit of that earlier reply I put into the mouth of mankind, namely, "Have you anything better to offer?" but the contradiction is not mine. In my opinion mankind as a whole is as I have thus drawn it. I find both remarks perfectly characteristic of the same type. Both arise from a failure to look out, from the elementary inability to withdraw momentarily from the immediate pressure of life. . . .

So I return—perhaps by a personal example—to a defence of that "anger and dismay" with which I began. I have heard these fine passions criticised, and I am up in arms to exalt them. I am willing to beg the question that they are effects and not causes, but I find that that assumption in no way weakens my championship. For I know nothing of prime causes, and I believe that admission is implicit in all that I have written here, as I believe also that the unthinking adoption of a cut and dried cosmogeny is responsible for much of the blindness which Mr. Wells has so valiantly attempted to cure.

All that I have so feebly and curtly attempted to champion is

The Blue Review

the militant spirit that lies behind all that has been expressed by these various books, combining so many methods, of Mr. Wells. To me the purpose of them is not many but one. I am conscious of man triumphant in thought, battering not altogether vainly at the feet of the gods. I see man regarding the limitations of the flesh with anger and dismay.

MUSIC is in the melting-pot, we are told nowadays. Was there ever a time when this could not be said? The great upheavals associated with the names of Monteverdi or Wagner may be perhaps considered to have been exceptional; twenty years ago, say both revolutionaries and reactionaries, there was peace and tranquillity, steady progress and obedience to sound tradition. Yet a reference to Dr. W. H. Hadow's "Studies in Modern Music" (second series, 1895) will show us that in those days it was necessary to make an elaborate *apologia* for the audacities and originalities of Dvorak, a composer who appears now to be remembered only by an occasional amateur performance of his chamber-music. If we are conscious of a state of flux at this moment, the cause is to be sought elsewhere. The real change that has taken place in the last twenty years is the enormous development of musical intelligence in this country. The general public is more interested in music; it is even beginning to be interested in its young English composers. This interest has to some extent raised the standard of their work. Twenty years ago the young English composer was an obedient and industrious lad who thought it the highest of compliments when his teacher in a moment of cordiality said that his work quite suggested Parry or Stanford; and far away in the distant heavens shone the star Brahms, whom all were told to worship, though none could ever hope to imitate him. The young composer of to-day seems much more determined to be himself and himself only: if he is told that his works have a flavour of Vaughan Williams or Delius he feels quite rightly that that is not what he is aiming at, however deeply he may admire either musician. His teachers are consequently beginning to find out that the old methods of teaching composition will not last much longer, and the problem of finding new methods is an extremely difficult one.

Teachers of composition tend to fall into two groups, which we may call the academics and the modernists. The results of

The Blue Review

their instruction may be observed at any concert where our young composers' works are performed. If we except the few who show a really strong individuality of their own, the crowd of the second-rate either goes on writing well-constructed sonatas and symphonies of the Brahms period and even earlier, or it gives us symphonic poems and "fantasies" which sound very modern at first, but which after a few years time, if not sooner, are seen to consist merely of a string of journalistic *clichés* borrowed from the foreign composers in vogue at the moment.

It is the teachers of the second class who constitute the real danger to our national music. The work of the second-rate academic is so dull that there is no risk of its having any influence on the public, and the first-rate pupil of an "academic" school is probably the better, if he is a real genius, for the careful training. As long as pupils are taught to *think logically in terms of music*, they are safe, and to grasp even the externals of academic sonata-form requires a certain amount of musical reasoning. The modernist does not teach his pupils to think in sounds. Sonata-form, he says, is obsolete, and he may very well be quite right on this point. But has he any constructive principle to put in the place of it? If one can judge by such results as come to a hearing, he apparently has not. The general rule given to the young composer seems to be that he must let the shape of his work be determined merely by the story chosen for illustration, and that logic may take care of itself, as long as the orchestration is effective, that is, as long as the orchestral effects sound sufficiently like those which have been made familiar to the writers by Strauss, Debussy or Stravinsky.

The tendency of the age, we are told, is towards orchestral music. Pure line, say the modern critics, has had its day, and the future is to express itself mainly in terms of colour. For the further elaboration of this thesis the word "Post-Impressionism" will be found very useful. Having no knowledge whatever of the art of painting, I must apologise for being compelled to restrict

A Fresh Start in Music

myself to the technicalities of music. Helmholtz adopted the word *Klangfarbe*—tone-colour—as a German equivalent of *timbre*—quality of tone ; but I see no reason to suppose that the function of “tone-colour” in music is therefore identical with that of colour in painting. The survival of the word *chromatic* is proof that musicians of an earlier age had completely different views on the question.

We must not be misled by false analogies and picturesque phrases. When critics tell us that modern music depends mainly on colour, they simply mean that they themselves are satisfied with music that presents certain varieties of quality of tone, obtained either by combinations of orchestral instruments, or possibly even by combinations of notes sounded simultaneously on one instrument. The rapid complication of the mechanical resources by which music is made audible has in fact dazzled many people so completely as to make them forget the absence of that logical sense of continuity of thought which is the only foundation of true music.

This tyranny of the instrument forms the subject of an interesting paper by Ferruccio Busoni in a recent number of the German weekly, *Marz*. The article bears the title *Neuer Anfang*, “a fresh start.” If a young composer writes as he feels, his teacher will be sure to tell him that he does not know-how to write for the instruments. “Look at the scores of Wagner or Strauss,” he will say, “and learn from them how to score effectively.” The result, says Busoni, is that every modern orchestral work presents us with the same complex of sounds—the violoncellos always trembling with exuberance of emotion, the horns making the most of their natural hesitance of attack, the hautboys always breathless and embarrassed, the clarinets always ostentatious of their voluble facility. There is no room for originality of thought, it is crowded out by the necessity of conforming to the conventional modern technique. Beethoven, almost alone among modern composers, ignored the requirements of the instruments, and made them play

The Blue Review

what he wished. Poor old Beethoven ! say the teachers of composition ; he was deaf and had no idea of orchestration.

“The born creator of the future,” continues Busoni, “will first of all have to face the responsibility of setting himself free from all that he has learnt at school, all that he has heard at concerts, all that is reputed to be “musical” ; and when he has cleared his mind of all that is unnecessary, he will have to bring himself into a state of ascetic and devout concentration, which will enable him to listen to the secret voice within him, and ultimately to arrive at the further stage of communicating this message to mankind.”

All this is perhaps less revolutionary than it appears at first sight. We are to give up considering the technique of instruments, and simply write abstract music, indifferent to the means employed for translating the signs into sounds. Beethoven's posthumous quartets, I imagine, show some sort of attempt to work on the lines indicated. But the Giotto of the musical renaissance, as Busoni calls him, will have to be a very much greater man than even Beethoven, and we may be pretty certain that his contemporaries will have a proportionately greater difficulty in understanding him. In the meanwhile, what can we ordinary mortals do towards turning Busoni's advice to some sort of account ? It is useless to set about finding a Giotto, but we can at least try to prepare the way for him. The main thing is that we should concentrate our attention on thinking musically, or grasping the principles of musical logic. We must learn to insist on truth and sincerity in the works which are put before us, we must learn to refuse all that is merely formal and traditional, all that dreary waste of artificial art which charitable critics describe as “very musical”—the sad equivalent of what in literature is classed as “scholarly verse.” This does not mean that we must burn all our classics, still less that we should throw in our lot with the party of programme-music. It is the writers of programme-music, more than any others, who have fallen victims to the tyranny of the instruments. Let us

A Fresh Start in Music

learn all we can from the classics, let us love them if we will, but let us beware of reverencing them. Moreover, if we are going to study the classics, let us study them widely (not confining our attention solely to Bach, Beethoven and Brahms), and study them always with a critical eye, never accepting any work as great merely because it bears the name of a great man.

In the case of composers, a good case may be made out for a more restricted investigation of the music of the past. Verdi advised his pupils to take no notice whatever of modern music. They were to work hard at fugue-writing, probably in a rather severe style, and to study no classics apparently, except Palestrina and Marcello, the latter as being the best possible model for the declamation of the Italian language. The selection of these two composers (the English reader may substitute Byrd and Purcell if he likes) shows us that Verdi realised the same essential point which underlies Busoni's counsels of apparent anarchy. We can perfectly well afford to make a bonfire of all our instruments, for the best of all instruments will still be left to us—the human voice.

Even if we keep our instruments, it is undoubtedly on singing that all musical education must be based, whether for the ordinary amateur or for the Beethoven of the future. No one can enter fully into the understanding of music unless he can feel every musical idea from the point of view of the man who first conceived it and used his voice to express it. The experience of controlling our lungs and vocal cords is the best possible training, if rightly planned, for the perception of the rhythmical continuity of sound which is the basis of music. Voices have their limitations, we are told ; but have we considered what we might have achieved had we from the days of Jubal devoted as much physical labour to singing as we have done to playing instruments, and as much intellectual energy as has gone to the development of speech ? All instrumental music, except in so far as it is derived from the primitive tom-tom, is originally an imitation of singing, and it is barely two hundred years since the artistic supremacy of the voice began to be con-

The Blue Review

tested. It is the last hundred years that has brought about the disastrous virtuosity of the orchestra, the perfection of instrumental mechanism which has made the instruments less human and personal in their expression in proportion as they have become more elaborate in their technique. The primitive hautboy, for instance, was the nearest approach that its maker could contrive towards an imitation of the human voice ; the modern hautboy claims a separate individuality, and has stultified its improvement in fluency and in accuracy of intonation by an exaggeration of its characteristic deficiencies. Music has to be written for it which will draw attention to its being a hautboy and not any other instrument, and in this way the situation has gradually arisen that it is the over-development of mechanical facilities which is blocking the composer's way to real originality. For the present, it is probably in the sphere of chamber-music that we may hope for some attempt to make real progress. The stringed instruments are less tyrannical, they approach more nearly to the ideal of a normal type of musical sound which can be utilised (as Beethoven showed) for almost any idea which the composer wishes to express. The string quartet is almost the only form of music that has had an absolutely continuous history for two hundred years. Debussy and Ravel have found it as satisfactory a medium as Scarlatti for the expression of pure musical thought. It is often said that modern conditions are not favourable to its development ; but the fact remains that the most modern composers, even if they employ the form but rarely, do at least continue to make use of it, and that section of the public which is seriously interested in music continues, though in small numbers, to listen to them. Until we have recovered the use of our own voices, it seems that it is from writers of quartets that we may most reasonably expect new departures—departures that are really new, and that will lead along a road from which there need be no turning back.

“ *I met a young virgin
Who sadly did moan . . .*”

THERE is a very unctuous and irritating English proverb to the effect that “ Every cloud has a silver lining.” What comfort can it be to one steeped to the eyebrows in clouds to ponder over their linings, and what an unpleasant picture-postcard seal it sets upon one’s tragedy—turning it into a little ha’penny monstrosity with a moon in the left-hand corner like a vainglorious threepenny bit ! Nevertheless, like most unctuous and irritating things, it is true. The lining woke me after my first night at the *Pension Seguin* and showed me over the feather bolster a room as bright with sunlight, as if every golden-haired baby in Heaven were pelting the earth with buttercup posies. “ What a charming fancy ! ” I thought. “ How much prettier than the proverb. It sounds like a day in the country with Katherine Tynan.’ . . . And I saw a little picture of myself and Katherine Tynan being handed glasses of milk by a red-faced woman with an immensely fat apron, while we discussed the direct truth of proverbs as opposed to the fallacy of playful babies. But in such a case imaginary I was ranged on the side of the proverbs. “ ‘ There’s a lot of sound sense in ’em,’ ” said that coarse being. “ I admire the way they put their collective foot down upon the female attempt to embroider everything. ‘ The pitcher goes to the well till it breaks.’ *Also gut.* Not even a loophole for a set of verses to a broken pitcher. No possible chance of the well being one of those symbolic founts to which all hearts in the forms of pitchers are carried. The only proverb I disapprove of,” went on this impossible creature, pulling a spring onion from the garden bed and chewing on it, “ is the one about a bird in the hand. I naturally prefer birds in bushes.” “ But,” said Katherine Tynan, tender and brooding, as she lifted a little green fly from her milk glass. “ But if you were Saint Francis, the bird would not *mind* being in your hand. It would *prefer* the white nest of your fingers to any bush.” . . . I jumped out of bed and

The Blue Review

ran over to the window and opened it wide and leaned out. Down below in the avenue a wind shook and swung the trees ; the scent of leaves was on the lifting air. The houses lining the avenue were small and white. Charming, chaste looking little houses, showing glimpses of lace and knots of ribbon, for all the world like country children in a row, about to play " Nuts and May." I began to imagine an adorable little creature named Yvette who lived in one and all of these houses. . . . She spends her morning in a white lace boudoir cap, worked with daisies, sipping chocolate from a *Sèvres* cup with one hand, while a faithful attendant polishes the little pink nails of the other. She spends the afternoon in her tiny white and gold boudoir, curled up, a Persian kitten on her lap, while her ardent, beautiful lover leans over the back of the sofa, kissing and kissing again that thrice fascinating dimple on her left shoulder. . . . when one of the balcony windows opened, and a stout servant swaggered out with her arms full of rugs and carpet strips. With a gesture expressing fury and disgust she flung them over the railing, disappeared, reappeared again with a long-handled cane broom and fell upon the wretched rugs and carpets. Bang ! Whack ! Whack ! Bang ! Their feeble, pitiful jiggling inflamed her to ever greater effort. Clouds of dust flew up round her, and when one little rug escaped and flopped down to the avenue below, like a fish, she leaned over the balcony, shaking her fist and the broom at it.

Lured by the noise, an old gentleman came to a window opposite and cast an eye of approval upon the industrious girl and yawned in the face of the lovely day. There was an air of detachment and deliberation about the way he carefully felt over the muscles of his arms and legs, pressed his throat, coughed, and shot a jet of spittle out of the window. Nobody seemed more surprised at this last feat than he. He seemed to regard it as a small triumph in its way, buttoning his immense stomach into a white piqué waistcoat with every appearance of satisfaction. Away flew my charming Yvette in a black and white check dress, an alpaca apron, and a market basket over her arm.

Epilogue : II.

I dressed, ate a roll and drank some tepid coffee, feeling very sobered. I thought how true it was that the world was a delightful place if it were not for the people, and how more than true it was that people were not worth troubling about, and that wise men should set their affections upon nothing smaller than cities, heavenly or otherwise, and countrysides, which are always heavenly. With these reflections, both pious and smug, I put on my hat, groped my way along the dark passage and ran down the five flights of stairs into the Rue St. Leger. There was a garden on the opposite side of the street, through which one walked to the University and the more pretentious avenues fronting the Place du Théâtre. Although autumn was well advanced, not a leaf had fallen from the trees, the little shrubs and bushes were touched with pink and crimson, and against the blue sky the trees stood sheathed in gold. On stone benches nursemaids in white cloaks and stiff white caps chattered and wagged their heads like a company of cockatoos, and, up and down, in the sun, some genteel babies bowled hoops with a delicate air. What peculiar pleasure it is to wander through a strange city and amuse oneself as a child does, playing a solitary game.

“ Pardon, Madame, mais voulez-vous ” . . . and then the voice faltered and cried my name as though I had been given up for lost times without number ; as though I had been drowned in foreign seas, and burnt in American hotel fires, and buried in a hundred lonely graves. “ What on *earth* are you doing here ? ” Before me, not a day changed, not a hairpin altered, stood Violet Burton. I was flattered beyond measure at this enthusiasm, and pressed her cold, strong hand, and said “ Extraordinary ! ”

“ But what are you *here* for ? ”

“ . . . nerves.”

“ Oh, impossible, I really can't believe that.”

“ It is perfectly true,” I said, my enthusiasm waning. There is nothing more annoying to a woman than to be suspected of nerves of iron.

“ Well, you certainly don't *look* it,” said she, scrutinising me

The Blue Review

with that direct English frankness that makes one feel as though sitting in the glare of a window at breakfast-time.

"What are *you* here for," I said, smiling graciously to soften the glare. At that she turned and looked across the lawns, and fidgetted with her umbrella like a provincial actress about to make a confession. "I"—in a quiet affected voice—"I came here to forget. . . . But," facing me again, and smiling energetically, "don't let's talk about that. Not yet. I can't explain. Not until I know you all over again." Very solemnly—"not until I am sure you are to be trusted."

"Oh, don't trust me, Violet," I cried. "I'm not to be trusted. I wouldn't if I were you." She frowned and stared.

"What a terrible thing to say. You can't be in earnest."

"Yes, I am. There's nothing I adore talking about so much as another person's secret." To my surprise, she came to my side and put her arm through mine.

"Thank you," she said, gratefully. "I think it's awfully good of you to take me into your confidence like that. Awfully. And even if it were true . . . but no, it can't be true, otherwise you wouldn't have told me. I mean it can't be psychologically true of the same nature to be frank and dishonourable at the same time. Can it? But then . . . I don't know. I suppose it is possible. Don't you find that the Russian novelists have made an upheaval of all your conclusions?" We walked, *bras dessus bras dessous*, down the sunny path.

"Let's sit down," said Violet. "There's a fountain quite near this bench. I often come here. You can hear it all the time." The faint noise of the water sounded like a half-forgotten tune, half sly, half laughing.

"Isn't it wonderful," breathed Violet. "Like weeping in the night."

"Oh Violet," said I, terrified at this turn. "Wonderful things don't weep in the night. They sleep like tops and 'know nothing more till again it is day.'"

Epilogue : II.

She put her arm over the back of the bench and crossed her legs.

"Why do you persist in denying your emotions? Why are you ashamed of them?" she demanded.

"I'm not. But I keep them tucked away, and only produce them very occasionally, like special little pots of jam, when the people whom I love come to tea."

"There you are again! Emotions and jam! Now, I'm absolutely different. I live on mine. Sometimes I wish I didn't—but then again I would rather suffer through them—suffer intensely, I mean; go down into the depths with them, for the sake of that wonderful upward swing on to the pinnacles of happiness." She edged nearer to me.

"I wish I could think where I get my nature from," she said. "Father and Mother are absolutely different. I mean—they're quite normal—quite commonplace." I shook my head and raised my eyebrows. "But it is no use fighting it. It has beaten me. Absolutely—once and for all." A pause, inadequately filled by the sly, laughing water. "Now," said Violet, impressively, "you know what I meant when I said I came here to forget."

"But I assure you I don't, Violet. How can you expect me to be so subtle? I quite understand that you don't wish to tell me until you know me better. Quite!"

She opened her eyes and her mouth.

"I *have* told you! I mean—not straight out. Not in so many words. But then—how could I? But when I told you of my emotional nature, and that I had been in the depths and swept up to the pinnacles . . . surely, surely you realised that I was telling you, symbolically. What else can you have thought?"

No young girl ever performs such gymnastic feats by herself. Yet in my experience I had always imagined that the depths followed the pinnacles. I ventured to suggest so.

"They do," said Violet gloomily. "You see them, if you look, before and after."

"Like the people in Shelley's skylark," said I.

The Blue Review

Violet looked vague, and I repented. But I did not know how to sympathise, and I had no idea of the relative sizes.

"It was in the summer," said Violet. "I had been most frightfully depressed. I don't know what it was. For one thing I felt as though I could not make up my mind to anything. I felt so terribly useless—that I had no place in the scheme of things—and worst of all, nobody who understood me. . . . It may have been what I was reading at the time . . . but I don't think . . . not entirely. Still one never knows. Does one? And then I met . . . Mr. Farr, at a dance——"

"Oh, call him by his Christian name, Violet. You can't go on telling me about Mr. Farr and you . . . on the heights."

"Why on earth not? Very well—I met—Arthur. I think I must have been mad that evening. For one thing there had been a bother about going. Mother didn't want me to, because she said there wouldn't be anybody to see me home. And I was frightfully keen. I must have had a presentiment, I think. Do you believe in presentiments. . . . I don't know, we can't be certain, can we? Anyhow, I went. And *he* was there." She turned a deep scarlet and bit her lip. Oh, I really began to like Violet Burton—to like her very much indeed.

"Go on," I said.

"We danced together seven times and we talked the whole time. The music was very slow—we talked of everything. You know . . . about books and theatres and all that sort of thing at first, and then—about our souls."

". . . . What?"

"I said—our souls. He understood me *absolutely*. And after the seventh dance . . . No, I must tell you the first thing he ever said to me. He said, 'Do you believe in Pan?' Quite quietly. Just like that. And then he said, 'I knew you did.' Wasn't that extra-or-din-ary! After the seventh dance we sat out on the landing. And . . . shall I go on?"

"Yes, go on."

Epilogue : II.

“ He said, ‘ I think I must be mad. I want to kiss you—and—I let him.’ ”

“ Do go on.”

“ I simply can’t tell you what I felt like. Fancy ! I’d never kissed out of the family before. I mean—of course—never a man. And then he said : ‘ I must tell you—I am engaged.’ ”

“ Well ? ”

“ What else is there ? Of course I simply rushed upstairs and tumbled everything over in the dressing-room and found my coat and went home. And next morning I made Mother let me come here. I thought,” said Violet, “ I thought I would have died of shame.”

“ Is that all ? ” I cried. “ You can’t mean to say that’s all ? ”

“ What else could there be ? What on earth did you expect. How extraordinary you are—staring at me like that.”

And in the long pause I heard again the little fountain, half sly, half laughing—at me, I thought, not at Violet.

CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

THE THEATRE

By GILBERT CANNAN

Caps, Bells and Legs

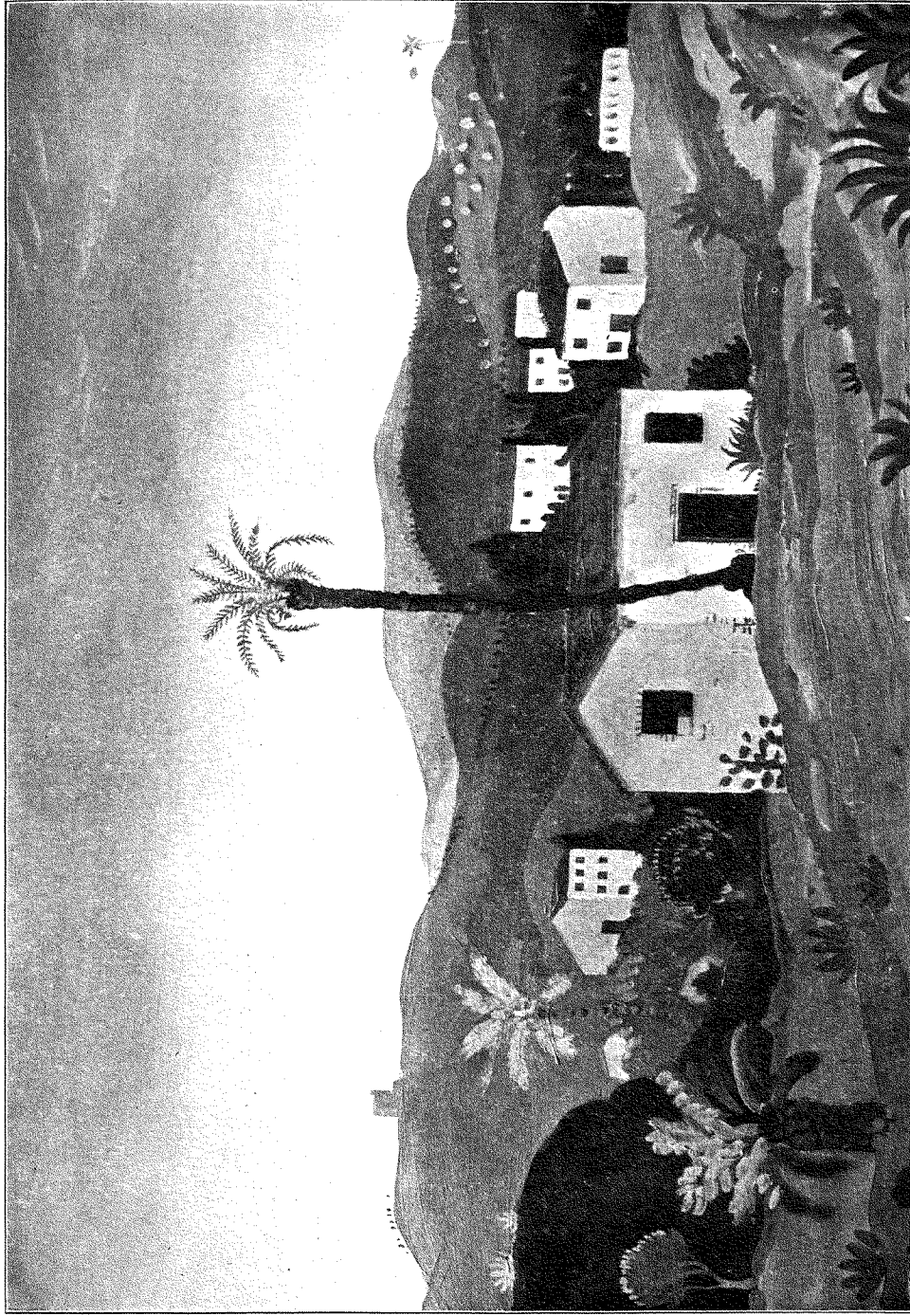
IT is extraordinary how scattered are the impressions to be got in the theatres of London—a good piece of acting here, a colour there, a witticism or two in another place, a tune in another. When you disentangle them you will find always that each moment of pleasure came by accident and existed entirely apart from the general intention. There is a comedy at the Little Theatre by a new and rather skilful writer, a Mr. Vansittart, who dons the cap and bells and jingles them for a couple of hours, during which and to their accompaniment, a comic drama ought to have started, reached its climax, and come to a close. But, though there was a company of very competent actors on the stage, nothing was heard but the accompaniment, so that I was constantly reminded of an undergraduate neighbour I once had who evolved an unvarying accompaniment of C, E and G in waltz time for every tune that happened to stick in his unmusical memory. Impossible when he played, to distinguish anything but his thudding accompaniment. . . It may be said that, as a critic, I have no business when witnessing a play to go back over the years to undergraduate memories. In the theatre, drama can hold my attention (and, I believe, everybody else's) and I can think of nothing else when it is presented on the stage. When it is absent, my faculties are not engaged, and any wandering idea can creep into my head. (That this happens to other critics is shown by the *comptes rendus* in the newspapers.) That Mr. Vansittart's cap and bells played the old C, E and G refrain is regrettable, but, having tested my power to respond to drama with *Hamlet* at Drury Lane, I refuse to believe that the fault was more mine than the author's. I wish him well, and pass on to record other disappointments.

The new American Revue at the London Opera House has a good illustrated-paper kind of poster of a *Merveilleuse* lady, which



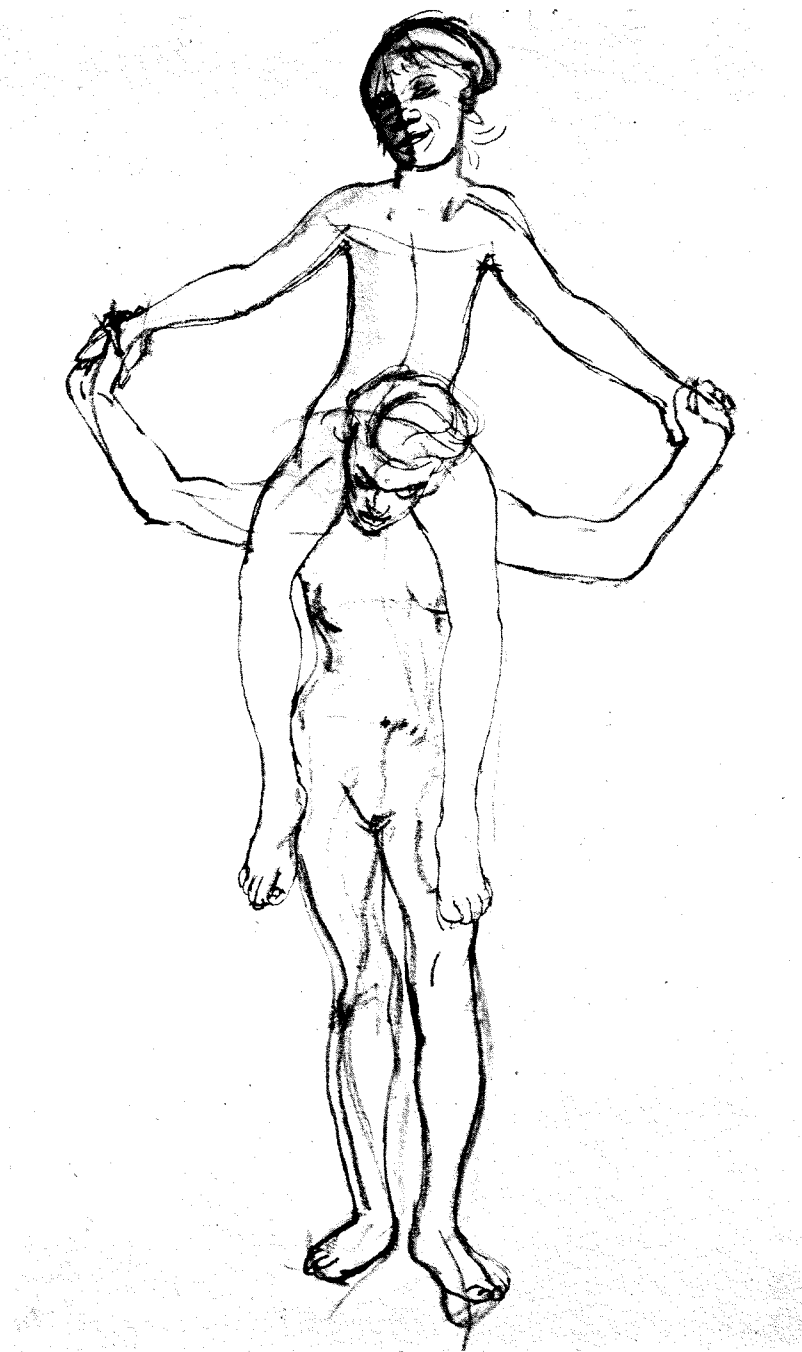
A Composition

G. S. Lightfoot



The Palm Tree

J. D. Innes



Children

Frances Jennings

The Theatre

has only had an effect on me in one place. There is a certain wall in a main thoroughfare which proved too small for its length. The bill-sticker, concerned only to fulfil his functions, and caring nothing for anatomy, has folded up the bottom third of the picture, so that the lady's leg, attractively revealed by an aperture in her gown, grows out of her waist. This fascinated me, and when I saw the Revue I found that this poster gives a truer idea of the performance than its more fortunate duplicates do. At the London Opera House the ladies' legs do grow out of their waists, or, at least, such is my impression. They have a great many legs, but every attempt I made to count them was baffled, for they were for ever on the run, running out of nothing into nothing, aimlessly, without purpose, without humour, without zest. There was one period when I thought I should achieve my reckoning, but suddenly sixteen legs disappeared into a pool of water and I had to begin again, and before that I had been put out by the entertainment taking a sudden plunge into Max Reinhardt's *Arabian Nights*, so that I was forced into a curious contemplation of two pairs of male legs. Till then I had decided that the purpose of the entertainment was to display a large selection of female legs, but when I was presented with these four—two white and two stained brown—my ideas were upset and I was set wondering why four male legs should be enough for the female public of London while for the male public an unascertainable number should be necessary. This problem is still unsolved, though it remains interesting. There was no effective humour in the display, very little musical ability, no romance, no intelligence, hardly any of the qualities with which in musical comedy and English revues the appeal of legs is salted. Here, bluntly (and most expensively) was the stage used to satisfy that element in human nature upon which Mahomed founded a vision of Paradise. Less efficient than the One Prophet, the Americans responsible for this "colossal success" have bungled their use of their material and give the impression that female legs grow out of the female waist. Perhaps my friend

The Blue Review

the bill-sticker had seen the show and had been horrified into an access of honesty, for certainly his is the only poster that gives a correct idea of the new Revue, and it remains its aptest criticism.

A wicked spirit of irreverence almost drives me to wish that there were a few pairs of legs in *Strife*. Respect for the play and its author however win the day. The back-cloth of the speech scene in *Strife* is a picture of Welsh hills. These and the action that takes place among them call back to the mind that there are winds in the world, winds and foul weather and a hard living to be gained, harsh facts from which our townish huddling away leads us to take a dull delight in caps and bells and legs. To read the word *Strife* and the name John Galsworthy in the list of plays is to be braced to new hope. To attend the play is to have the comforting assurance that here at least is one man in the theatre who will not fawn upon his audience, or leer at it, or mewl at it, or strut before it, but one who to the best of his ability will in terms of the theatre set before his audience the facts that have stirred his emotion and by his art lead them into sharing his feeling, his desire, his warm perception of the forces that play about and through human action. He is an upright man that will not indulge in showman's tricks, nor mental tricks, nor make any appeal save through his art and the legitimate use of the machinery at his disposal. It is rather his sense of law and order than his sense of justice that will not let him allow his conflicting forces actually come to grips, and makes him state rather than reveal, deal with types rather than characters. That must be granted him. It is in his attitude, in his essence. What is so valuable is that within its scope his art is admirably disciplined, economical and effective. His is a stern wistfulness that is the most telling antidote to caps, bells and legs. These also are good things, admirable in their place, but, if they are not used in terms of the theatre they are as distasteful as any other raw material, as distasteful as Mr. Galsworthy's emotions would be, if he were ever slovenly enough to dump them down on the stage, without moulding them into form. Really the

Theatres in the Air

whole problem is resolved into a question of the right use and the wrong use of the theatre. Caps, bells and legs are every bit as good as wistful emotions if they are rightly used. The performance of *Strife* at the Comedy reveals an efficiency which is not to be found at any other theatre, except, perhaps, on a lower level, the Royalty. What a fortune that man will make who discovers the right use of legs in the theatre! Stravinsky and Fokin are very near it.

THEATRES IN THE AIR

By JOHN DRINKWATER

MR. GORDON CRAIG ("Towards a New Theatre," Dent, 21s. net) has produced a beautiful book, and in that he justifies himself. If we complain that it fails in its primary intention we are ungracious, for the gift of a beautiful book can in no case be just cause for complaint, no matter how capricious its service may be. The imaginative reader of great dramatic literature is accustomed to create ideal performances in his mind, a visionary conduct of movement and conflict that is unimpeded by the thousand embarrassing circumstances of the theatre—mechanical difficulties and mishaps, the personality of the actor, the enormous problem of investing the complicated and delicate piece of machinery which is comprehensively called the stage with the freedom and elasticity of art. And he will, too, often set this ideal performance against an ideal background without consideration of time and space—of the theatre's walls. This background Mr. Craig does much to realise for us—on paper. These designs, with their admirable economy of detail and their stirring suggestion of height and distance cannot but leave our imagination the richer and more apt for the creation of those performances that outrun all the possibilities of theatrical device. Mr. Craig has dreamt well, and for this we are grateful. It may be said here that his new book is not greatly concerned with the opposition to words as the primary

The Blue Review

medium of drama that found an advocate in the author's "Art of the Theatre," and there is no present necessity to dispute Mr. Craig's denial of poetry on the stage. Many of these designs are made for accepted masterpieces of poetic drama, and whatever the designer's quarrel with the spoken word may be in general, it is not laboured here. Nor are we disposed to pay very much attention to the text of this present volume ; Mr. Craig is not a good writer either in style or temperament. His prose is constantly apeing the ease of the conversational stylists, and always failing to catch their secret ; it is rather like Mr. Newman or Mr. Montague on stilts, the fine lissomness of gait that is natural to them turning to awkward condescension, as who should walk a little way with Tom and Dick, poor fellows. There is, moreover, scarcely anything in these notes that was very much worth saying—rather an irritating wagging of the head with an "I could an if I would." So that dismissing the book as telling us but little of Mr. Craig's views of the whole art of the theatre and finding annoyance rather than pleasure in his writing, we are left with the bare designs themselves, which are indeed the sole—and ample—justification of the volume. We wish that they had been published in a folio without any trappings, but since their maker decided against this we are not disposed to quarrel unduly with what we take to be an indiscretion. These designs are full of imaginative beauty, and no one can look at them without realising that Mr. Craig is one of the most gifted men of his time. He has, as we have said, dreamt finely and cleanly ; the imagination is never dissipated into mere fancy. But Mr. Craig calls his book "Towards a New Theatre," and it is at this point that the real trouble in his work begins.

A great play does not necessarily need the stage to prove its greatness, but it is certain that the dramatist can only achieve high mastery of construction by knowledge of, and in terms of, the theatre. It is questionable whether, apart from this gain, the artist can secure any profound and lasting pleasure from work in the

Theatres in the Air

theatre, but, however this may be, every artist who has any experience of such work knows that whatever the theatre may or may not be, it cannot possibly be a place of dreams. Life in a theatre is a life of continual conflict with immediate and practical difficulties on the stage, a daily compromise of ideals with necessity, of dreams with stubborn physical facts. The supreme virtue of the theatre is that it is the one instrument by which it is possible to make great art popular, and it is an understanding of this condition that is drawing so much of our best work to-day into its service. But the theatre is definitely a place in which to do and not to dream. Mr. Craig gives us a design for the last scene of the first act of *Hamlet*. It is extraordinarily impressive and really quickens our perception of the poet's mood. At the back of the stage is the figure of a man ; behind him rises a great square-cut block of building ; measuring this from our figure we find it to be sixty feet high, and the sky goes up above it. We do not see the full breadth of the scene, but measuring that part which is visible by the same standard we find it to be seventy-five feet—ninety feet if we allow a small margin on either side. It is, as we say, undeniably impressive, but will Mr. Craig put it on a stage for us ? We have another design : a dark flight of steps—thirty-five steps as nearly as we can count them ; a foreground of perhaps ten feet. On the steps is the figure of a woman, an isolated point of light in the surrounding darkness. Mr. Craig sees much emotional value in the design, and so do we ; will he put it on a stage for us ? It does not help us to tell us that he is working towards *a* new theatre and not *the* new theatre. The fact is that there is not the remotest possibility of a theatre in which these designs could be translated into terms of the actual stage. You cannot have sixty-foot high buildings with the sky over them on the stage, and if you could you would have a stage that would be useless for everything but pantomime. And you cannot light a single figure without lighting a surrounding space. At least, you cannot do these things in the theatre that is already beginning to announce again that it

The Blue Review

will have its own passionate and vigorous life, whatever might be done in the theatre towards which Mr. Craig tells us he is pointing, saying gaily that it is also a mountain. Of course many things might be done in or on a mountain, but that is another matter. The young theatre to-day is in fierce opposition to a misconceived and wholly unpoetic principle of stage decoration. Mr. Craig, more perhaps than any man living, might lead and inspirit it in a struggle that means a good many bruises ; or he may quite justly absent himself from the theatre altogether and continue to achieve admirable designs which will feed the imagination but not the stage. If he is to do us the former service he must show us how to work in cloth and wood and limes and electric bulbs, remembering that the people who are willing to have their imaginations stirred and to pay for the adventure will not fill a mountain ; that the theatre, in other words, insists before everything else that the artist shall oppose himself to practical difficulties at every turn and that he prove every dream upon the stage as he goes along. It is not surprising that many artists, realising these severities of the theatre, refuse to bow to a discipline so stern. If Mr. Craig confessed himself to be of these, nobody could blame him, and his art would lose nothing. But it is useless to tell us that he is pointing the way to achievements in the theatre which even he himself, by his own witness, can yet do little more than see dimly in rapt ecstasy, and at the same time ignore the perplexing but inflexible conditions that the theatre imposes on its servants.

“Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.”

IT is hard to keep clear of the critical King Cambyses' vein when one has to write about Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Gitanjali" (Macmillan 4s. 6d. net.). "Thou hast made me endless . . ." Yes, that is the danger. It is, I suppose, one of the paradoxes of æsthetics, that poetry, when it achieves a perfect formality—when form and impulse are inevitably related—has the power of causing a notable sense of complete liberation from all the formality of consciousness: "Thou hast made me endless." Life can get nothing better than these moments; they belong to Dionysus. But they are "unexpressive." The making of great poetry is a transformation of Dionysus into Apollo; but the reading of great poetry is a transformation of Apollo back into Dionysus. And Dionysus untransformed is still less the god of criticism than he is of poetry. He is, however, the god of King Cambyses' vein, which, as a good European, I am bound to detest above everything. As a precaution against him—to give him time for settling down into the everyday formality of thought—I shall speculate a little about the significance of "Gitanjali" outside of art. For Tagore's work belongs to world-politics as well as to poetry. As I read his own exquisite prose translation of his songs, I seem to have jumped right over that formidable clash which is, or ought to be, at the back of everybody's mind—the coming clash of East and West; I seem to have landed magically in its serene and triumphant conclusion. All the great original civilisations of the world (including the one on whose bequests we are still living) have resulted from the East fusing somehow with the West. And always it has been the East that supplied impulse—Dionysus, the West that supplied form—Apollo; for the resulting triumph of vitality, each was as necessary as the other. Now this seems to me exactly what has happened afresh in "Gitanjali." The book is not only noble poetry; it is a new civilisation. This is why it is so incomprehensibly surprising. When one is talking of poetry, Dionysus and Apollo will always come in very conveniently as

The Blue Review

figures of speech ; that is how I was using them just now. But in " Gitanjali " they have become gods once more. A profound impulse from the East and a masterful formality from the West have joined together to create a new perfection of conscious life.

This, at any rate, is how I read the book. And there seems no doubt that it actually is a joint product of East and West. Rabindra Nath Tagore's family has long been conspicuous for its efforts to Europeanise India, or Indianise Europe, whichever you prefer. His father took a great part in establishing the Brahma Samaj, an eclectic theistic religion which appears to have deliberately attempted to compound the formal thought of the West with Indian spiritual intuition. I believe it has had an immense influence. But the real result of the Brahma Samaj is in the songs of Rabindra Nath Tagore, which have penetrated the whole of Indian life. I may be hunting a chimæra ; but really this seems to me extraordinarily significant. Compare these songs with almost any other Eastern poetry, and you will see what I mean. Eastern poetry, however, means for most of us, I suppose, Fitzgerald's Omar ; and the comparison here will not be so striking. For Fitzgerald " tampered," as they say, with his original : in fact, he turned it into a European poem. Read a literal translation of Omar, and you will see that Fitzgerald gave to his original just that which is so noticeably supreme in " Gitanjali " : he gave it form. But Hafiz will show how Tagore differs from typical Oriental lyrics. No one can miss the puissance of impulse in Hafiz ; but I imagine that most Europeans would agree that it is impossible to read Hafiz with any comfort, not even in a reading that so admirably suggests the external form as Walter Leaf's translation. What disturbs us is the complete lack of internal form agreeing with the external. Orientalists, of course, admit this ; they say Persian poetry (and it is evidently true of Eastern poetry in general) gets its unity and only professes to get it, from an extraordinarily strict externality of form : the spirit within the poetry is " free." That is merely to say, the spirit is shapeless ; and as long as Greece

Poetry

lives in Europe, we are not likely to be satisfied with shapeless spirit, however shapely the substance may be. A more familiar instance, doubtless, would be the Canticles ; and their purport is very close to that of " Gitanjali." The inspiration of the Canticles is as sublime as anything in poetry ; but it is utterly shapeless. It is ungoverned ; Dionysus has not contrived to turn into Apollo.

And that is just what he has contrived to do in " Gitanjali." I certainly should not compare the inspiration of this book with the depth and splendour of the inspiration of Hafiz or the Canticles. It does not seem, like theirs, a rage from the very heart of life. It is finer, more delicate, more wistful, decidedly less profound. But all the same, compared with modern European poetry, it amazingly seems to have behind it the pressure of vast reservoirs of vitality. No doubt this comes from the immense force of Indian religion. The thing is, however, that this elemental kind of inspiration has been mastered into complete formality as shapely and exquisite as anything in the whole range of European lyric ; and, I think, considering the facts of the milieu in which " Gitanjali " originated, we may truly call this formality Western. But whether this be so or not, it makes Tagore's poetry of the same nature as the poetry of Sappho or Simonides, Wordsworth or Heine ; and—here is the amazing thing—this without ceasing to be altogether Oriental and Indian. The translation of " Gitanjali " gives us, of course, no notion of the external form of these songs ; but it must certainly be something beautiful. Beauty of external form by no means compels the spirit within to be shapely : it may easily be " free," or shapeless. But " soul is form and doth the body make " : when the soul *is* form—when thought and mood have such superb shapeliness as they have in " Gitanjali "—the body cannot refuse obedience to it.

It is possible that the Brahma Samaj—and by that I mean the " contamination " of East and West—may be responsible for Tagore's noble mingling of mystical aspiration with a profound and delighted acceptance of life. But probably this is simply the

The Blue Review

result of Tagore's genius ; for mysticism in Europe has always been just as inclined to deny life as mysticism in the East. In any case, the quality is one of the chief things in what Mr. Ransome would call the " kinetic " of the book—in what it sets out to say. But I shall not attempt the futility of describing what " Gitanjali " is like. In the bounty and glow and simplicity of its imagery, it is as if it discovers vitality itself. But it is more than a deep flux of vitality ; it is vitality daring to hold itself in a supreme consciousness. The forces of its inspiration have made themselves into lucid formality, like the forces that build crystals ; and therefore it is poetry that can as easily and as equally speak of strange and remote experiences of the spirit as of the divine lusts of the senses. Just because, I believe, it promises a new civilisation, but promises it in the old way, in another fusion of the spiritual energy of the East with the mental formality of the West—just because of this, it is poetry which once more achieves the condition towards which all poetry is for ever straining : it is a perfection of conscious life.

Well, I hope I have avoided King Cambyses' vein ; I am not quite sure. But I shall have no difficulty in keeping clear of it for the rest of this article. Not that " Gitanjali," as an earnest of future wonders, need make us desperate about the present. We are not doing so badly ourselves ; after Tagore's Indian dream, we need not cry to dream again. Indeed, if we had several books like Mr. D. H. Lawrence's " Love-Poems " (Duckworth 4s. 6d. net), I should certainly have to say that we are doing astonishingly well. But, though Mr. Masfield's " Dauber " (Heinemann 3s. 6d. net) has appeared in book form, Mr. Lawrence's poems stand by themselves, among recent books, for justifiable daring. " Dauber " seems to me the least successful of Mr. Masfield's narratives ; chiefly because only a rattling good story could justify a poem of such length, and the story is a very poor affair ; it is false in psychology and false in sentiment. The hero's death ought to have been significant ; but I cannot help suspecting that Mr.

Poetry

Masefield, having turned his hero at last into a decent sort of chap, killed him because he did not know what to do with him. Even so, however, there are several pages of incomparable description, and continual lightning flashes of splendid phrasing. But I do not like having to praise Mr. Masefield only for the ornament of his poetry. I cannot find much to say either about Mr. Hewlett's "Helen Redeemed" (Macmillan 4s. 6d. net) or Mr. William Watson's "The Muse in Exile." Since Mr. Hewlett published "Artemision," his verse seems to have been trying hard to recapture the qualities which enabled that delightful book to do something considerable towards the poetic re-creation of Greek legend. One cannot but admire the determined Hellenism of this confirmed romantic. Only in one poem in this latest book of his—in "Gnatho"—can I find anything comparable with the keen phrasing and vivid conception of "Artemision." The rest is what you might expect from the industry of a romantic trying to be a Hellenist. Of Mr. Watson's "The Muse in Exile" (Jenkins 3s. 6d. net) I will not say anything at all; I have too much respect for Mr. Watson's past. Miss Emilia Stuart Lorimer's "Songs of Alban" (Constable 3s. 6d. net) is another book I must pass by. Her writing is evidently quite alive; but I find it difficult to enjoy poetry which I cannot understand; and there is very little of Miss Lorimer's which I can understand.

So I am left with Mr. Lawrence's "Love Poems." There is novelty here; but the right sort of novelty. It is poetry realising things afresh. If "realist" were not a word abominably misused, it would be the word for Mr. Lawrence's poems. I do not care very much for his rhythms; their daring seems to be really a fear of being conventional, though sometimes, as when he uses monosyllabic feet, they are obviously effective:

"To ha'e gone an' given his white young flesh
To a woman that coarse."

And the love in his "Love Poems" is rather too monotonously

The Blue Review

the "bitter-sweet impracticable adder." But Mr. Lawrence has an admirable power of liberating the concealed meaning of words, and an equally admirable power of unexpected but truthful association. These lines give an instance of both these qualities :

" a grey pale light like must
That settled upon my face and hands till it seemed
To flourish there, as pale mould blooms on a crust."

The choice of the word "flourish" marks Mr. Lawrence as a poet ; and a sinister dawn is captured with curious assurance by the suggestion, physical as well as emotional, of mould. Such detail as this Mr. Lawrence uses for the patient, elaborate and extraordinarily economical fixation of a sequence of moods which, for all that they are somewhat monotonous, are so concentrated into poetry that they are quite irresistible. But, remarkable as these "love poems" are, Mr. Lawrence works with less effort, and to clearer result, in the sharp psychology and vigorously restrained word-play of the dialect poems at the end of his book.

Imagination

THE use of the imagination has been complicated for the modern novelist by the emphasis laid by the modern critic upon the importance of recorded observation. It was at one time demanded that Mr. Micawber and Becky Sharp should not only have sharply defined dwellings and properties of a very recognisable kind, but that they should also, of themselves, be individual and memorable characters. Now that background is of itself almost sufficient to claim approving attention, and the fact that one can remember the angles of the playground at one's board-school and the exact appearance of the counter at the shop where one was once an eager assistant is enough to catch the critics and readers by the throat.

Mr. Wells and Mr. Arnold Bennett, who have, in their sharp retention of experience, enough material to last them until the end of their days, have nevertheless produced some of their most remarkable work by the fine energy of their imagination ; the deserted London in " The War of the Worlds " and the execution in " The Old Wives' Tale " are as powerful and as true as the experiences of Kipps or the aspirations of young Clayhanger.

The lesser novelist of to-day, however, betrays at every step that his imagination is consciously fettered by the close proximity of his public. Unless he is of the first rank, and artist enough to give this same imagination precedence to this cherished public, one success will kill his spontaneity, strangle his honesty, weaken his individuality ; here in Mr. W. J. Locke's " Stella Maris " (John Lane, 6s.) is pertinent and distressing evidence of this. There are many who admired the books that Mr. Locke gave to the world before " Marcus Ordeyne " as work of the very finest promise and of considerable performance. " The Usurper," " Where Love Is," " The White Dove," these were individual, honest, admirable studies in character. Yvonne in " Derelicts " and the Lanyons in " The White Dove " are etchings of the most brilliant order. With " Marcus Ordeyne " came popular success and, since

The Blue Review

then, so anxious has been Mr. Locke to give his public what they wish him to give them, that spontaneity of imagination has been utterly and recklessly abandoned. In "Stella Maris," the latest and surely the worst of his novels, we can behold this shackled imagination struggling at first, ultimately defeated, imprisoned, abandoned.

The idea of someone, living away from the world, innocent, happy, ignorant, plunged then, suddenly, into experience and beaten to the ground with the shock of it, is, if not absolutely new, packed with possibilities. I believe that, at the beginning, Mr. Locke saw these possibilities, but saw also that an honest development of them would have forbidden both that sentimentality and that crudity that his public now expect from him. His imagination protests. "Come," says Mr. Locke, "you've got to do what I tell you—no more nonsense." We have then a beautiful girl with "a pair of frail arms, a daintily curved neck, a haunting face, and a mass of dark hair encircling it on the pillow like a nimbus." We have a strong rugged hero, a wonderful villainess, thin-lipped and always dressed in black, a charity child, surely related to Little Nell and Little Paul. The psychological interest of the effect upon Stella of the revelation of a wicked (here a purple) world is sunk beneath such sentences as "The cruel, vulgar and hideous things of life were not the appanages of a class apart. They entered into her own narrowed world. Her beautiful world ! Her hateful, horrible terror of a world !" or "Stella rose, and clasping hands to her bosom, went to him—

" 'Belovedest, for Christ's sake, what is the end of all this ?' "

The end of it all is, of course :

" He put his arm around her, and all his love spoke. ' You. The living mystery of beauty that is you.' He whispered into her lips. ' You—Stella Maris—Star of the Sea ! ' "

There is no humour in this book.

If Mr. Locke has chained his Imagination for fear of the things that it might do, Miss Mayer in "The Third Miss Symons"

The Novels

(Sidgwick, 3s. 6d. net) has discarded it altogether. Here I must frankly admit that Mr. Masfield's eulogistic preface aroused too eager an excitement. In this preface he says : " The world is, of course, the comparatively passive feminine world, but few modern books (if any) have treated of that world so happily, with such complete acceptance, unbiassed and unprejudiced, yet with such selective tact and variety of gaiety." Remembering the work of Mrs. Wharton, Anne Douglas Sedgwick, Miss Sinclair, Miss Cholmondeley, Miss Ethel Sidgwick and others, all of whom have had for their stage this " comparatively passive feminine world," I was naturally determined to judge " The Third Miss Symons " by high standards. To these standards Miss Mayer's little book does not begin to attain. Here is an accurate, well-written, grey, narration of a melancholy spinster's passage through the world. The observation is accurate, the atmosphere of heavy chandeliers, mid-day Sunday beef, and grey gloves worn at the finger-tips, most carefully maintained. Here is this material waiting for Imagination to come and start it into flame. Imagination never comes. The facts are there, the observation is accurate, and from it all nothing is to be gathered, nothing carries, in its spontaneous vitality, any relation to the other victories, the other tragedies that life can show. No, observation is not enough.

Here, indeed, in another first novel, published in the same month, is Mr. Masfield's too eager statement immediately contradicted. Miss Ivy Low in " Growing Pains " (Heinemann, 6s.) has, for her study, this same " passive feminine world " and in it she does not entirely disregard the claims of Imagination, does produce something that has life and colour somewhere at its heart. It is in the earlier portion of her book that Miss Low is most successful. Her nervous, self-centred morbid little girl, flying from temper to affection, from bulls'-eyes (stolen out of a shop) to religion, is most admirably described, and Miss Low does use her imagination sufficiently to place this little girl in relation with all the other things in a restless and agitated world. In the book there

The Blue Review

is poetry, too, and a very admirable humour. Miss Low has not, as yet, learnt the lessons of construction and development, but hers is the best first novel that the present year has yet produced.

Imagination, if it has not accompanied Miss Low quite far enough, has yielded to Miss Ethel Sidgwick almost too bountifully. In "Succession" (Sidgwick and Jackson, 6s.), we are given the long-expected sequel to "Promise" and are faced at the book's close by the question as to why this world that Miss Sidgwick has herself seen so vividly and given to us so bountifully, a world full of pathos, humour, and excitement, is ultimately for us so difficult of comprehension.

There is no doubt here of the fulness and vigour of Miss Sidgwick's imagination nor of the freedom and authority that she has given to it, so that she has simply followed and written as it has commanded her. But Miss Sidgwick's book is difficult to read because the author, in the desire to give her imagination its finest freedom, has refused, when the career is run and the adventure is concluded, any final and eliminating revision. There the plunder that her excursion has provided for her is lying; from this plunder there should be selection, discipline, order. The story of the struggle of the soul of a genius against physical weakness is fine, the crowd of persons protecting, assaulting this genius, is admirably described and illuminated. Only from the great mass of dialogue, from the piling of minutiae upon minutiae, from the constant iteration of the Parisian and Munich background, enough does not finally reward the reader. The boy, his grandfather, his uncle, the composers, the other musicians, his philistine father, are there and are truthfully there, but their capture has been difficult and even when the tale is ended, the mists are still about them.

Mr. Beresford's "Goslings" (Heinemann, 6s.) on the other hand, is almost too rigorously pruned, and this only because the invention is so lively, the characters so admirably vital that every reader will wish that the book had been twice as long. Here, truly, is imagination rightly disciplined.

The Novels

Mr. Beresford, in his story of a plague that swept over Europe and left, for the most part, only women behind it, betrays all the philosophical acuteness and original invention that we should expect from the author of "The Hampdenshire Wonder" and also a colour and poetry that have been lacking in his earlier books.

His picture of a deserted London will call to mind Mr. Wells' "War of the Worlds," but even here Mr. Beresford has much that is his own. That vast empty street with the mad "Queen of the Earth" shining with stolen jewels, shouting as she goes, for its only inhabitant, will not be easily forgotten by Mr. Beresford's readers. But it is in his second part that his imagination is most surely and emphatically original. His women—old Mrs. Gosling, the two girls, Eileen, Elsie Durham and the rest—are so sharply defined, and open up, in their relations to one another, so many novel and thrilling developments, that the history of their adventures is all too short.

Poor Mrs. Gosling is most triumphantly distinguished against the bizarrerie and fantastic colour of the background. "No doubt our 'Eavenly Father will make excuses" is her wavering resort to some half-remembered security and, against the garlanded debauchery of the Butcher of High Wycombe and the invasions of Pan into a new relaxing civilisation, such security was badly needed.

"Goslings" is the most vital book that Mr. Beresford has given us; here then is Imagination, not, as with Mr. Locke, discarded, nor, as with Miss Sidgwick, undisciplined, but honestly developed and bravely restrained.

Gretton's Modern History, A Small Boy, Steps to Parnassus, Lore of Proserpine, Dreams.

NO particular descriptive term has in general been for years so commonly misunderstood as the word "detachment." Writers dealing with the kind of fictional art condemned as "realism" have always supposed that "realism" meant something laboriously objective, whereas "realism" (for which I am told writers to the *Westminster Gazette* have been trying to find a more apologetic name) is not necessarily either laborious or objective, once it is properly mastered by the realist and his critics. English realism does not set up a convention of not knowing anything about subjective states : it is, on the contrary, primarily concerned with a revolt against material things, by the extraordinarily simple means of showing how they very evilly dominate the lives of the majority of men. And it is ironic, and genuinely detached. Now the reason it so clearly indicates its true succession to the older school of English writers is that the detachment of English realism is—not objectivity, but a very quiet, typically English, humorous judgment. English realism, then, is intellectual to the extent that it is based upon lucid judgment ; but its detachment is nothing more nor less than the peculiar focussing power of this critical humour, which makes it unheroical and, I hope, unsentimental, but never insensitive. And it is not restricted to fiction, because realism is an attitude of mind, and not simply a technical method.

Mr. Gretton, in his "Modern History of the English People, 1880-1910" (Grant Richards, 2 vols., 7s. 6d. net each), of which the second volume is now published, is witty rather than ironic, because he is a serious and responsible annalist ; but his detachment is entirely admirable. His book is not so much a history as a gloss upon events, and it is sometimes a little difficult in the absence of consecutive narrative to emulate Mr. Gretton's alertness in springing from subject to subject. But, apart from that fact, and the further fact that the extreme conciseness of the book demands

General Literature

the assumption by Mr. Gretton of the reader's familiarity with such things as the financial world and its vocabulary, the "follow-on" rule, and the qualities of Harris tweed, the two volumes have a clearness as well as a critical value and a humour of the highest significance. The writing is wonderfully brief and efficient, avoiding both baldness and overloading : the difficulty of compression and selection has been overcome with immense gusto. The omission of references to the Kinema has been noted elsewhere : I may perhaps mention two other very slight points. "De Rougemont," I believe, was not a real name ; and the *Daily Mirror* was not really started as a halfpenny photographic daily. It was intended as a penny newspaper for "ladies," and adopted its present form after a short run on its first lines.

Very different from Mr. Gretton's work, and from each other, are the two books recently promulgated by distinguished novelists, though both deal autobiographically with the early years of life. Mr. Henry James, beginning with the idea that the public would like to have early recollections of his brother, William James, has been able to re-create with characteristic detachment the world in which they both moved as boys. Not many of these pages deal actually with W. J., but they are nevertheless a perfect delight, as wonderful as pages from Mr. James's most wonderful novels, and throwing off the same fascinating air of the understanding of a unique order of life. It is a delight, especially, to catch in delicious long miraculously-sustained and completed sentences, the very real history of Mr. James's progress to comprehension of his own "subtle" perception of things, which he styles a virtue and then, against himself, admits a vice. How, from the time when an aunt forbade her little girl to "make a scene," his mind began to see everything in scenes and situations, to the time when he realised that "everything should represent something more than what immediately and all too blankly met the eye," his progress to the possession of the true power of observation and retention is here disclosed. As the picture of a novelist in his earliest stages, "A

The Blue Review

Small Boy, and Others " (Macmillan, 12s. net) is fascinating to the lover of that novelist. As a beautiful picture in its own right, which " glimmers at me as out of a thin golden haze, with all the charm, for imagination and memory, of pressing pursuit rewarded, of distinctness in the dimness, of the flush of life in the grey, of the wonder of consciousness in everything "—so impossible it is better to express the impression of the book than in Mr. James's own words—it is a supreme and delightful work of art, based upon truth humorously observed, in the best English tradition. Mr. James's detachment is nowhere illustrated more surely; the inexpressible candour of his primary perceptions, made difficult for us only by the consummate analysis of their interplay, is here once again revealed. Making observation the corner-stone of his art, " pedestrian gaping having been in childhood," Mr. James says, " prevailing my line," embalmed, as it were, " in a sort of fatalism of patience," he presently seems to define art as " dignity and memory and measure," " conscience and proportion and taste, not to mention strong sense too." And if that is the definition of art, then surely Mr. James establishes his right for ever to be regarded as one of the most " artistic " artists who have ever lived. Whatever may be his ultimate position among novelists, his influence upon novelists of the present day is probably greater than that of any other writer of any time. It is impossible, that is to say, not to learn from Mr. James—sometimes the peculiarity of his later style, but inevitably something of the vital sense of truth that pervades his books, however his later conventions may have strayed from the clarity of " Roderick Hudson " and the exquisite " Portrait of a Lady." Mr. James, like all other realists, has never shrunk from the full exercise of his most fastidious perceptions. For that virtue alone he deserves canonisation: he has never preached; but has always found the complexities and simplicities of life his absorbing study. And if we would judge the almost ingenuous manner of his sensitive approach to impressions, we are bound to read " A Small Boy " with gratitude and affectionate delight.

General Literature

Mr. J. C. Squire ("Steps to Parnassus," Latimer, 3s. 6d. net) does not shrink from his perceptions ; but a parodist such as Mr. Squire deserves something to parody. To ridicule the mediocre is one of the most useless occupations in life ; and it is almost intolerable to see a man of Mr. Squire's quite especial talent doing wilfully what his victims fumblingly do in all good faith. So these "Steps to Parnassus" are more by way of being cruelly humorous imitations than parodies : in the case of Mr. Masfield, apart from the sublime lapse into poetry, after Mr. Masfield's own manner, the fun is too boisterous and unlike to be amusing. Elsewhere it is not really very edifying to have one's contempt for the jejune roused by Mr. Squire's malicious pleasure in emulation.

Different indeed from any of the other books notable this month is "Lore of Proserpine" (Macmillan, 5s. net), for it is by no means humorous, or even very entertaining. "You will gather," says Mr. Maurice Hewlett, "that I was a reader." Either that, or the cult of fairies is but a sad one, for this jaded, unhappy, sterile book is otherwise inexplicable. No grace is here, no tender delicate participation in what we might assume to be the exquisiteness of the fairy realm. Instead, we find fairies very prosaic little persons, clad invariably in a single respectable garment (which, however, seems not quite to suffice in cold weather to keep the owner warm); and Mr. Hewlett is not at all moved to any lightness of touch. After twice conducting us through the books which he (in common with nearly every other boy) read in early years, he tells us about the solemn little fairies he has seen, and repeats two long stories—one of a fairy visitant and babe-stealer, the other of a fairy wife—in which his own experience is not concerned. But in all these stories, even in that of the Oreads in Wiltshire, there is a commonplaceness of imagining, no less than a hardness of relation, which is really astonishing. It is as though Mr. Hewlett had determined to put aside all his various mantles—such as those which yielded the beautiful "Earthwork out of Tuscany," the incomparably rich "Forest Lovers," the harsher novels of actual history, and the

The Blue Review

more recent experiments in modern romance—and show to our unwilling gaze the secret reason why these splendidly costumed works, each swaggering in a richly embroidered cloak of brilliant phrases, never seemed, in all their dazzling wonder, to have truly operative hearts. He has essayed realism, the writing of things strongly seen and felt in a style of convincing simplicity ; and the effect is one of a book which is neither lively (as we might surely expect it to be) nor scientific. Mr. Hewlett would not have it scientific : nor would we. But if he is to adopt recognised poetic names, such as Queen Mab, and Oberon, and, presumably, the fairy “ common herd ” (as he seems to do), he should also, I should have supposed, make his accounts less laborious and more spirited, in the manner of the poets from whom he borrows his nomenclature. As it is, the fairies in “ Lore of Proserpine ” are simply unpleasing and substantial creatures such as we may see at any time in daylight without excitement, and if they are as dull as this, there seems no actual virtue in acquaintance with them. Moreover, the book has a horrible number of banalities, such as “ Every one of us lives in a guarded house ; door shut, windows curtained ” ; “ We are bound—all of us—by our natures, bound by them and bounded ” ; and, worst of all, “ *The Forsaken Merman* is a beautiful poem, but not a safe guide to those who would relate the ways of the spirits of the sea.” Surely the book is a subject for Mr. Squire !

Mr. Reginald Hine (“ Dreams and the Way of Dreams,” Dent, 5s. net) has produced a very agreeable miscellany of dreams, and quotations from all sorts of authors, ancient and modern, and exceedingly apt and humorous remarks of his own. The dreams given are in some cases serious, and in others the strange chaotic medleys that cause so much laughter at the breakfast table ; but all are good. Mr. Hine writes from his own experience, and is so far scientific ; and he has a tremendous familiarity with what has been written upon the subject. He is a genuine believer in the value and the truth of dreams and dreaming ; but he is no bigot. That

General Literature

is to say, he is a humourist, and is therefore able to see himself and his enthusiasm with detachment, even while, none the less, believing firmly in what he has to say. Accordingly his book is one to be enjoyed on quite other grounds than the mere discussion of the author's case, which perhaps is less important than his very nice dreams. But Mr. Hine is a good writer as well as a good dreamer, and he has a mighty commonplace-book from which he culls pleasant quotations.

Looking back over this chronicle, I hope I have not laboured the word "detachment" too hard. I have found the quality in all the books save one, and in that one I judge it to be absent because humour is absent from the author's essential make-up. Mr. Hewlett's modern comedies are quite obviously based upon an artificial convention rather than a truly ironic conception of life. They make, indeed, hardly any pretence of representing life, and must be judged by their own convention. But when Mr. Hewlett brings his hobby into the open, and rides it with a prim solemnity, it is surely permissible to call his book a dull book? And it is dull because he is too seriously intent upon it: he has the feeling of being a seer. "I take leave to flatter myself," he says, "that my own will be indispensable Prolegomena to any such work [a study of the Præternatural], or to any research tending to its compilation." That sentence offends me precisely because it reveals absorption untempered by either poetic enthusiasm or true detachment. One can't even be sure that it is true.

A Classical Revival

THESE are perhaps two reasons why the younger generation of French writers is given to collective introspection and absorbed in speculation upon tendencies. The first is the economic fact that one of the easiest and least costly methods of procuring copy for a *revue jeune* is to conduct an *enquête*; the second is that for better or worse the French logical mind is prone to develop a mania for literary classification and a disregard for the essential characteristics of the subject matter of the classification—literature. Consequently, it is very difficult to derive any real information from so extensive an inquiry as that of MM. Picard and Muller ("Les Tendances Présentes de la Litterature Française." Basset. 3 fr. 50). Even if the classification into grandiose schools, *Unanimites*, *Paroxystes* and the like, is admitted by the writers themselves, the labels tell us nothing, for they are concerned with the accidents rather than the essentials of literature; much as though we decided to base our own literary criticism upon a division of modern Poets into those who eat bacon and eggs for breakfast and those who do not. Chaotic classification is a delusion and a snare. More satisfactory, because more restricted and definite, is the inquiry conducted by M. Emile Henriot in *Le Temps* ("A Quoi rêvent les Jeunes Gens?" Champion. 2 fr.); yet even here, if we consider the replies as a whole, the result is negative. The young French writers of to-day have completely broken with Symbolism; and if the contributors to M. Henriot's symposium are unanimous in affirming that there is no "new school," they are unanimous no less in denying the gods of the nineties.

The desire for novelty at all costs is no longer characteristic of young French literature; and the generation which expressed this desire in *vers libre* and sought its models in America, in Germany, in Flanders, in any country save France itself, is past. It is true that any evolution from the artistic position taken up by Mallarmé was of itself doomed to sterility; but other causes than

French Books

a mere æsthetic impossibility have been at work. It would be difficult to overestimate the literary importance of the foundation of the political organisation, *L'Action Française*, with its royalist and Catholic programme and its watchword "France for the French." The immediate cause of the *Action Française* was the Dreyfus trial, and though English opinion was practically unanimous in supporting Dreyfus and condemning anti-Semitism, there can be little doubt that on purely nationalist grounds the French agitation against Dreyfus was justified. A French nationalist policy, such as that adopted by the *Action Française* demands that France should remain a Catholic country and that its government should not rest in the hands of naturalised Jews or other aliens. Although it may seem that the growing popularity of such a party has no immediate connection with the literary tendencies of modern France, the connecting link is supplied by two individuals, Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. Catholic in their sympathies, nationalist in their politics, classical in their literary descent, Maurice Barrès as the creative artist, Charles Maurras as the critic, enjoy an influence which becomes every day more widespread. From Charles Maurras descends the most powerful of the younger critical groups to-day, that of the *Revue Critique*. The political programme of the *Action Française* is translated into literary terms. Alien influence must be excluded from French literature; a return to the truest French tradition, to Racine, Pascal, Lafontaine, Stendhal, to Villon and to the Pléiade, must be exacted by the new criticism. We have only to compare Charles Maurras' latest book, "La Politique Religieuse" (Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 3 fr. 50), in which the Catholic anti-alien policy is argued with the author's accustomed purity of style and language, with "Les Disciplines," by M. Henri Clonard (Rivière, 3 fr. 50), the chief critic of the *Revue Critique*, to see how close is the connection between the classical renaissance in politics and in literature. The authority of M. Maurras is quoted again and again in M. Clouard's book; the very sub-title, "La Necessité littéraire et

The Blue Review

sociale d'une renaissance classique " reads like a phrase of the master's. The burden of the argument is pure Maurras. Romanticism must be forgotten, and the German prophets who preached it rejected for the true French tradition. " An imagination," says M. Clouard, " can very well be happy and brilliant, a point of view picturesque, a sentiment beautiful. But if you substitute them for analysis and experience where there are no other possible intermediaries between man and reality, you are mistaken and deceived on every hand." Analysis and experience—they are the old characteristics of French classicism and the ideals of the renaissance in France to-day.

It is symptomatic that a recent number of the *Revue Critique* was entirely devoted to Stendhal, in whom the analytic genius of French literature reached perhaps its highest development ; while soon after *Les Marches de Provence* devoted a whole number to the consideration of *fantaisie et fantaisistes*. The *Fantaisistes* form a new school of French poets, with this striking difference from the generality of schools, that they have no programme or propaganda, no pseudo-philosophical theory of life on which to wreck their poetry. " Fantasy " in the sense in which the *Fantaisistes* use it for their watchword is a quality of temperament and not an æsthetic dogma ; it is the faculty of analysing experience with an irony that verges on cynicism and an introspection that verges on egotism. In short, " fantasy " has always been an eminently French quality, in spite of the fact that its literary expression has been borne down for centuries by foreign influences, Spanish in the seventeenth century, English in the eighteenth, and German in the nineteenth. The terrible irony of Villon, the titanic imagination of Rabelais—these are the purely French products of fantasy. Jules Laforgue was a genius of the same mould. To this essentially French tradition many of the most significant of the younger generation attach themselves, P. J. Toulet, Tristan Derème, Francis Carco, Jean-Marc Bernard, Jean Pellerin, to name the most significant ; and to this tradition belong three

French Books

slender books of poetry, "Le Poème de la Pipe et de l'Escargot," by Tristan Derème, "Chansons Aigres-Douces," by Francis Carco (Collection des Cinq), "Sub Tegmine Fagi," by Jean-Marc Bernard (Editions du Temps Présent, 3 fr. 50). The title of M. Carco's book applies to all three ; they are all bitter-sweet. There is a delicate irony and a wonderful perfection of form in all, and underneath there seems to lurk a profound malaise. I am not here concerned to detach the individuality of these three poets ; but rather to emphasise their common quality. Here is poetry that is sure at least of its own ground, and sure of its essentially French spirit. It is poetry that does not thrust a theory of the universe into a lyric, nor disdain a perfection of form which is the birth-right of French poetry. Though as yet the *Fantaisistes* have no great body of work to their credit, they have at least this recommendation to our serious consideration, that they do not thunder before they have learned to speak, while they have jettisoned the preposterous cargo of "ismes" under which young French poetry has laboured for twenty years. M. Derème has the secret of a real Poetry when he writes :

Ma vie en silence s'écoule
C'est pour peu d'hommes que j'écris
Car si je chantais pour la foule
Je pousserais bien d'autres cris.

Des deux poings défiant les astres
Je clamerais a grand fracas
Et ferais crouler les pilastres
Et les balustres sur mes pas

.

Et peut-être dans mon vieil âge
Pourrais-je voir sur mon perron
Un laurier bercer son feuillage
Mais à quoi bon ? mais à quoi bon ?

The Blue Review

There has lately been too much conscious " shaking fists at the stars " in French poetry, and the time has come for a classical revival after the anarchy and cosmopolitanism of recent years. A classical revival does not involve denying the last century and a half. Romanticism is in the French blood now as it is in ours. A classical revival means putting things in their place. In the pregnant phrase of M. J.-M. Bernard, Romanticism is but an element of literature ; classicism is a principle.

RECENT FRENCH NOVELS By X. MARCEL BOULESTIN

IF it is true that the French Drama is at present in a state of decadence or, at least, of stagnation, it is none the less true that many French novels are now written that show not only remarkable cleverness and wonderful display of technique, but also a broader view of Life and a passionate interest in things of vital importance.

During the last decade most French writers wrote books dealing only with love and *adultère* (or even *adultère* without love) and their consequences, pleasant or unpleasant; but it seems now as if a reaction had really begun. And it is a sign of the times that the present year has seen the birth of such books as *L'Ordination*, *Cauët*, *Vieille Histoire* and *La Colline inspirée*. Moreover these are not exceptional instances, for three of the works with which I am now concerned present the same characteristics : human interest, observation of real life and emotional appeal outside the relation of the sexes.

Mme. Colette Willy's new book, *L'Envers du Music-Hall* (Flammàrion, 3 fr. 50), for instance, shows us the *monde* of the lower French music-halls, from the hard-working, honest acrobat to the chorus-girl of the up-to-date Revue, *monde* of which we had already a glimpse in *La Vagabonde*. Only this time no psychological plot and delicate *sentimentalités* are there to distract our attention from the sometimes depressing realities of that special kind of stage life. Colette Willy can see and she can describe, and

Recent French Novels

through the medium of her talent, we can see them too, those artists of the music-halls, "off" without their make-up, their graceful gestures and their fine clothes—as they really are. These sketches are sometimes very amusing, often very pathetic, and always admirably done. For Colette Willy has a sharp and fresh vision and that wonderful gift which is typical of great French writers, for describing a thing in a few decisive lines, for discovering the right and sometimes unexpected adjective, for pointing out the one essential and exceptional detail in a character—where lesser writers would write pages of dull, obvious and almost meaningless disquisitions.

But *L'Envers du Music-Hall* does not only possess literary qualities : perfection of form and a sympathetic understanding of certain conditions of life contrive to make this book a most valuable contribution to the literature of the stage.

It is also of theatrical life that M. Charles Henry Hirsch writes in his last novel, and we also find in *Saint-Vallier* (Fasquelle, 3 fr. 50) the same qualities of emotion and pity. *Saint-Vallier* is the lamentable story of a starving old actor who has probably never known better days than those minutely described in these three hundred and fifty pages. He certainly never had talent, but illusions and self-confidence helped him to believe in his genius which, thought he, only bad luck and jealousy have prevented from astonishing Paris. He sees the world through the veil of dramatic literature and to him (until the very end of his miserable days) life is only a pretext for splendid theatrical effects ; yet that is because he is so much in earnest and so full of enthusiasm for his art and his would-be glory.

It is in one of these small provincial towns in which Saint-Vallier once played small parts that is laid the scene of M. Henry Bordeaux's novel. *La Maison* (Plon-Nourrit, 3 fr. 50) belongs to that class of grey, rather dull and indifferently written books which, for some mysterious reason, always seem to reach twenty or thirty editions. Of course, it is clever, but oh ! so aggressively

The Blue Review

catholic, patriotic (in the narrowest sense of the word) and *bien pensant*. Such people as the heroes of *La Maison* no doubt exist in large quantities, but their story is the rather uninteresting story of many French families, and the *banalités* of life are apt to become tedious unless treated by a Balzac, a Flaubert or an Anatole France. The characters of M. Henry Bordeaux's ambitious book ought to be satisfied with being readers—not heroes—of novels.

Les Noces Folles (Bernard Grasset, 3fr. 50) is a love story pure and simple, in which M. Eugène Montfort shows us first the wonderful love affair, then the conflict between an Italian woman and her Parisian husband. All that seemed in her divinely beautiful against a background of romantic Napolitan scenery soon becomes out of place in modern Paris. He falls in love with another woman only to discover later—too late—when after a similar incident his wife leaves him, that his love for her is as passionate as before.

As for *Paroles devant la Vie* (E. Figuière, 3fr. 50) it is a remarkable collection of strange comparisons, far-fetched adjectives, invented words, lyrical sentences and second-hand metaphysical ideas. I take it that M. Alexandre Mercereau is hailed as a genius by many of his friends. It seems to me that he is specially clever at discovering the obvious : he wonders at everything and everybody, Life, Death, Maternity, The Poet, Pantheism, Himself and His New Flat. *Paroles*, indeed, and not much else. His *Paroles devant la nouvelle demeure* afford a typical example of his talent (including a “*sombre étoffe londonienne*” unknown to English decorators, which shows his mania for using at any cost an unexpected epithet). Miss Victoria Monks used to sing a song called “Moving Day” which was, I think, much more to the point.

Wolf-Ferrari, Henschel, Fanelli

ONE of our habits in England is to produce foreign works with a flourish of trumpets a dozen years or so after their first appearance abroad ; by which time their vitality is generally exhausted and their novelty gone. It was really hardly worth Mr. Fagge's while to disinter the " Vita Nuova " for the sake of saying " first performance in England." Wolf-Ferrari is not a great composer, and never will be : he tries to graft German methods on to an Italian temperament, and the result is confusion of style. The " Vita Nuova " is really nothing more than a student work. Regarded as a setting of a poem that is as familiar to most Italians as the Lord's Prayer is to us, it naturally loses much of its effect when sung to a translation : and as it was done the other day all the intimacy of the original vanished. Chorus and orchestra ploughed through it in strict time without any of the rubato that the composer goes out of his way to demand in a note at the beginning of the score. The tendency of the music is naturally towards frequent accelerandos and crescendos ; he has accordingly contented himself with purely negative indications of diminuendo and ritenuto. Mr. Fagge's Procrustean beat however never once allowed the music to play itself, and the naive melodies and simple orchestration, which, treated gently, would have been quite effective, sounded simply stiff and affected.

Another semi-new arrival was Dr. Henschel's Requiem. It was very well performed by the Handel Society. The soloists were admirable and the chorus and orchestra—mainly amateur—quite excellent. I mention the soloists first, because it is of them that Dr. Henschel seems to have thought most when he was writing it. The four solo parts melt into one another with delicious intricacy ; if anything is to be said against the work, perhaps the writing is a little too elaborate and consciously beautiful. The blending is not so noticeable in the chorus-writing ; the joins here are sometimes

The Blue Review

perceptible and there are gaps just in the places where continuity is most needed. There are besides far too many climaxes of sound : they average about one to a page. But there is a great deal of beauty everywhere, and sincerity too. Dr. Henschel writes strong and musical counterpoint ; he has a vivid sense of tonality and that power that Schubert had of momentarily disturbing harmonies without shifting the key-centre ; above all he has the gift of writing long tunes. He could not, of course, help being influenced by other writers of requiems, but he has kept his own individuality in spite of them. Mozart and Brahms can be traced in his mental attitude towards the text, and Wagner in his musical treatment of it ; but not one of them really obscures his personality in a single bar.

The performance of Fanelli's " *Tableaux Symphoniques* " by the Colonne Orchestra of Paris was unsuccessful for much the same reason as the " *Vita Nuova*," except that Fanelli was much more in advance of his period (the eighties) than Wolf-Ferrari is or ever could be in advance of his. M. Pierné's discovery has come too late to do either us or Fanelli any good. There are a number of curious anticipations of modern colour in the three pieces, but they are too shapeless to be effective. There is undeniable atmosphere in them all, particularly in the third piece, the insistence of which becomes almost maddening after a time. Fanelli might have been a great genius if he could have heard his compositions played when he was younger : but years of privation and neglect have let his ideas run to seed and left his technique sprawling.

Among the excitement of all these " discoveries " an unostentatious revival has been quietly going on elsewhere. The Carl Rosa Company have been performing Mozart's " *Magic Flute* " in English at the Coronet Theatre. It was a modest performance, but none the less interesting for that ; and is likely to do the cause of opera far more real good than sixty Covent Gardens. But I suppose the latter institution will go on thrusting Ricordi operas and rubbish like " *Oberst Chabert* " down our throats until the Day of Judgment.

THE GALLERIES

Mr. Max Beerbohm's Exhibition

By EDWARD MARSH

MR. BEERBOHM continues to keep us amused. His "Garland" was the principal boon and blessing of last Christmas ; and now people are four deep round his little roomful of caricatures, and to see them at all one must take one's place in a queue like a first-nighter at the mouth of the pit.

No one in England, except Rossetti, has reached such mastery in the two arts of pen and pencil ; (and even this compliment must be strengthened if we are to believe Mr. Chesterton, who has just told us surprisingly that Rossetti was only successful in both because he was not very good at either). This is the more remarkable because his method of parody and his method of caricature are so distinct. His parodies are written from within. He seems to possess his victims like the imp of some severely logical nightmare, guiding them into strangely familiar surroundings, in which they remain themselves, only more so. He gets into their skins like a refined Sally Beauchamp, and jerks them into odd characteristic attitudes. He is a hypnotist, who shows us his subjects politely and cheerfully drinking methylated spirit in the belief that it is ice-cream-soda. Roughly speaking, no "Max" disengages himself : we have only Messrs. —, —, and —, in their habits as we know them, but a little off the rails. In his caricatures, on the other hand, he is entirely the outside observer and critic. There is far more exaggeration and distortion ; and though there is equal subtlety, it is shown rather in choosing a point of departure than in keeping up a perfidiously faithful companionship. And everywhere we are conscious of Max—a grave, ironic, penetrating, Olympian sprite.

The exaggeration and distortion are now less pronounced than they were in much of his earlier work. His figures might still be described in the words of Mr. Rupert Brooke :

“ Straggling, irregular, perplexed, embossed,
Grotesquely twined, extravagantly lost

The Blue Review

By crescive paths and strange protuberant ways
From sanity and from wholeness and from grace."

But he seems to be gradually abandoning the almost purely "constructive designs" of which the "Lord Burnham" and the "Mr. Teixeira de Mattos" are the chief examples here. Perhaps he is leaving them to the Futurists; but, for whatever reason, his personages are steadily becoming more human. This is of advantage to his work in one of its aspects. There can be no doubt that he will be among the chief sources for the intellectual and political history of our time. Perhaps, by the way, he is also one of its makers; it is difficult to suppose that No. 16 will not be "another nail in the coffin of Tariff Reform," or that after seeing No. 3 Mr. Arnold Bennett will not be shamed into finishing the *Clay-hanger* series. But be that as it may, it is to be hoped that when Mr. Beerbohm's work is completed, it will be made the foundation of an "Illustrated History of England" for his period, which then—thanks to his unfailing eye for the centre of a situation, and his gift for fixing it in a memorably comic form—will live with incomparable vividness in the minds of a delighted posterity.

From this point of view it is a misfortune that among so many brilliant successes he has a certain number of notable failures in likeness. Lord Curzon, for instance, Lord Milner, Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. Albert Rothenstein, and Sir Edgar Speyer, are surely almost unrecognisable. A plea may be put in for the Prime Minister's nose; Mr. Lloyd George seems to have got mixed up with Mr. Keir Hardie; and, worst of all, Sir Edward Grey, in the embrace of the Russian bear, suggests rather Mr. Donald Tovey struggling to escape from the influence of Stravinsky.

But what are these among so many? and even if there were fewer successes with individuals to set against them, there would remain the types. Here are three groups which are miracles of various invention at work on the results of observation: the Colonels at the Cavalry Club, the Dons at Magdalen, and the Labour Members fascinated by Lord Alexander Thynne; and

The Galleries

the group of great ladies listening to Mr. Percy Grainger, though less individualised, is an equally wonderful *ensemble*. Mr. Beerbohm's vision of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a more transcendental example of his fine historic sense.

He has among his invaluable qualifications for this *rôle* of historian a sense of proportion and an instinct for greatness. He may be occasionally unkind to mediocrities ; but never in his wildest farce does he fail to pay some tribute, however mixed, to a big quality in a man. Take the sublime absurdity of his Mr. Balfour, clasping the "curves of his gradual violin" while he elegantly applauds Mr. Bonar Law dinning on the big drum. Take the tortuous, warped power of his "Lord Hugh Cecil." Take the "Gabriele d'Annunzio," with the fire of genius and poetry smouldering through the sensual vulgarity of the *rasta-quouère*. Perhaps the finest example is the "Mr. John Masefield," towering like Gulliver, in his fastidious melancholy sympathy, over the roofs of the slum, from the lips of whose denizens he is so gravely noting down swear-words for future use. This is Mr. Beerbohm's strength as an apologist (conscious or unconscious), that in the act of giving his man away with both hands, making every point against him, and surrendering all his weak places to the Comic Spirit, he yet leaves him a great creature.

His technical equipment is a curious mixture. There is, of course, a negligible sense in which he is no draughtsman. He does not, perhaps cannot, and probably does not care to make his figures stand on their feet or sit in their chairs ; yet he is a master of expressive line. Sometimes his composition seems haphazard : sometimes every touch falls into its place in a monumental design. Sometimes his colour is neither here nor there ; but occasionally, as in the buffs and crimsons of the "Count Boni de Castellane" it flowers into such a harmony that one almost overlooks the comic quality of the drawing.

A word must be said of the perfect style of his titles and legends—the little imperishable niggles at the bottom of the pictures.

The Blue Review

“ Amurath and Amurazzle,” for Mr. Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law, is perhaps the wittiest where all are witty. But wherever there is a tone to be caught, Mr. Beerbohm catches it and fixes it in a sentence ; as in the words from a Nobleman’s Memoirs, which the Industrious Anonyma, a gaunt bespectacled spinster, is dictating, in the most purely and deliciously ludicrous of the drawings, to a slightly bewildered typist : “ *I saw a good lot of the Prince of Wales—afterwards Edward VII.—in those days, and I must say that a better sportsman—and, I may add, a better pal—never stepped in shoe-leather. I remember once after I had been having rather a rotten day at Newmarket he came up to me and, slapping me on the back, said, etc., etc.*”

Indépendants and the Cubist Muddle By O. RAYMOND DREY

THIS year’s Salon des Indépendants, in so far as it counts at all, is a “ Cubist ” Salon. In an exhibition which stretches nearly to the horizon, where anyone may send his pictures without fear of rejection, for there is no jury, and where apparently everyone does, the critic may reasonably hope to meet with adventures. Somewhere amid the jostle of fashionable, glossy efficiency and crude or glossy incompetence he may light haphazard on a lure beckoning to unknown delights. Somewhere in the ruck may be the choice encounter of a lifetime.

For lack of such rare stimulus (perhaps my persistence in the teeming rooms was not equal to my opportunity) I am forced to the consideration of the word “ Cubism.” It is a slushy term enough as it is used to-day. Probably it was never very finely intentioned. The public clamours for a name, and painters or writers think they have to find one. This labelling is always the price that artists have to pay for recognition, whether they seek it or not. The public likes a school because it finds certainty in numbers ; there is no comfort in the lonely man who paints without a name.

Indépendants and the Cubist Muddle

It is all very well to call certain painters " Cubists " if you are content not to think any more about them after you have agreed on the title. Of course the majority of cultivated people who walk out of picture galleries to talk about art *are* quite content. Simpler people, on the other hand, who walk into picture galleries to enjoy the sight of pictures are either driven away abashed by the name they know they cannot understand, worried into hostility to the artists, or set humbly to the solving of insoluble riddles.

When a number of painters were labelled " Impressionists " less harm was done. " Impressionism " is an abstract term : it is tolerably elastic. The " Glasgow School " had some connection with Glasgow. " Pre-Raphaelitism," silly term though it was, certainly implied reaction. And " Post-Impressionism," with a little licence, is a matter of dates ; whoever chooses may think so, at any rate.

But what does this title " Cubism " mean, which we hear applied so indiscriminately alike to Picasso or Braque and Le Fauconnier ; to Metzinger or Gleizes and to Delaunay (" Orphist " will not stick to him long) ; to Marchand or de la Fresnaye and to L'Hote ; to Picart-LeDoux and to Herbin ? I might add more contrasting names to my list, but there is no need.

Are we to say that a " Cubist " is a man who paints in cubes ? A technical similarity in the means used by all these men at one time or another to express the volume of objects by outlining their planes is a poor excuse for a frivolously superficial definition. When the question is asked what these painters are expressing or trying to express it will be found that no general designation will fit them all ; that if definitions or titles are wanted the painters will have to be taken separately or in groups of twos and threes, with a title for each individual or little group. Such refinement of definition would only make confusion worse confounded.

But rigid definition apart, some sort of philosophic division is necessary if " Cubist " work is to be understood at all. I would consider all the " Cubist " exhibitors in the Indépendants in

The Blue Review

relation to Picasso, who has no pictures in the Salon, but who is, to my mind, the one man who, sacrificing all thought of representation, of actuality, has achieved a real intensity of expression and found a new way to our emotions, to our capacity for response. One's personal relation to a picture is, after all, the only standard of criticism that has any value. In other words, there are as many standards of criticism as there are critics.

Picasso, then, has come from contemplation of form and substance to an abstract rhythmic statement that is new in paint but old in music. Rhythmic statement is not new in paint. Rhythmic statement independent of concrete representation, abstract rhythmic statement, is. The difficulty that most people find with Picasso is due to this : that never before has painting appealed directly to the emotions without enlisting the aid of the intellect. People complain when music becomes representative, realistic. It is no longer music, we are told. Yet who can say what music is, or what is painting ? It is a poor game to try to confine the human spirit, to temper creation, to put our own blinkers on the visionary.

The " Cubists " in the Salon des Indépendants are all, by various means, concerned with seizing and interpreting actuality : space, the play of light on surfaces, the interplay of colour, significant movement. Their failure or success depends both on the measure of intensity with which they are able to invest the new and arbitrary life on their canvasses, and on the quality of that intensity. In the work of M. Gleizes and M. Metzinger, well patterned though it is, I cannot perceive that life has become a fuller thing through paint. M. Delaunay's big picture " L'Equipe de Cardiff F.C." embodies everything which I have credited these " Cubists " with seeking. It is intense, but the intensity is that of Severini's " Café Monico." It is perfectly realistic, flooded with light and air and dancing with movement. The photograph is the lowest denominator of human vision. M. Delaunay seems to have perfected the camera. Well, it takes a clever man to do that !

LA NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE

*Revue mensuelle de littérature et
de critique publiée chaque mois*

Un article de critique générale—des vers—un essai ou une nouvelle—un article de discussion—un roman—des chroniques régulières—des "Notes," courts articles de critique, rédigés par les collaborateurs de la revue, sur les manifestations littéraires ou artistiques qui leur paraissent les plus essentielles.

Fondée par un groupe d'écrivains que rapprochement de communes tendances, la *Nouvelle Revue Française* a vu venir à elle, dans le cours de ses trois premières années, des esprits de plus en plus divers, mais également soucieux d'une discipline.

35-37 Rue Madame, Paris (VI^e)

Le numéro 1 fr. 50.

Abonnement annuel 18 fr.

London Agent:

D. NUTT, 212 Shaftesbury Avenue,
W.C.

The Parma Rooms

LESLEY MOORE AND
REBECCA RINSBERRY

Specialists

Scientific Hair-Brushing
and Face Treatment

Hours: 10 to 7

59 SOUTH MOLTON
STREET, W.

David Barham

Specializes in Gowns
of Beautiful Lines &
Subtlety of Colour de-
signed & thought out in
detail for each wearer.

Inspection invited; or sketches,
etc., sent on application.

Prices from £4-4-0.

186 REGENT ST., W.

C U R I O S A

¶ If you are interested in *Old, Scarce and Curious Books*, Messrs. Bligh & Co. will be glad to send you their catalogues regularly.

¶ A feature is made of *Old Scientific and Medical Works*, but their stock contains many volumes which will appeal to the general collector.

¶ *Out-of-the-way Books* and pamphlets which sometimes are apt to get overlooked elsewhere are specially collected.

¶ A choice selection of *Antique Pewter* is always on view.

BLIGH & CO., 79 Great Queen
St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

MARTIN SECKER'S SERIES OF MODERN MONOGRAPHS

J. M. SYNGE

By P. P. Howe

HENRIK IBSEN

By R. Ellis Roberts

THOMAS HARDY By Lascelles Abercrombie

GEORGE GISSING By Frank Swinnerton

WILLIAM MORRIS By John Drinkwater

A. C. SWINBURNE By Edward Thomas

Each volume Demy Octavo, Cloth Gilt, with a
Frontispiece in Photogravure. Price 7/6 net.

The Athenæum says: "We congratulate the publisher."

The Spectator says: "Mr. Secker's excellent series of critical studies."

The Yorkshire Observer says: "Mr. Secker's admirable series."

The Manchester Courier says: "This excellent series."

The Illustrated London News says: "Mr. Martin Secker's series of critical studies does justice to the publisher's sense of pleasant format. The volumes are a delight to eye and hand, and make a welcome addition to the bookshelf."

MARTIN SECKER PUBLISHER

NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET ADELPHI LONDON