THE NATURE OF HONOUR.

By DORA MARSDEN.

THAT an inquiry into the nature of Honour resolves itself, in the main, into a dissertation on the nature of Morals naturally results from the intimate relation which exists between the two. The question of Honour is involved in the question of Morals, of which it is a special case, Honour being the attempt to incorporate within the sphere of the Moral something of the lure and distinction which belongs to the Immoral. Morals are the modes of conduct common to a community at any given period of its history: they are customs pure and simple, changing as customs will from time to time, but only in obedience to impulses operating through the entire community. Every man falls in with the customs of his age the greater part of his active life. Even the least conventional is dominated by them: in what we eat, buy, wear, strive after, praise, blame, reject and welcome, members of a community—distinguished or insignificant—are alike or tending to make themselves so. Therefore, to set claim to being moral is as if one were to lay claim to being a water-consumer; to being immoral; an anti-water-consumer. One consumes water so often and in so many forms, voluntarily and involuntarily, that it is absurd to set store by any cut-and-dried attitude of mind in regard to its use. It is useful, if not exhilarating, and moral conduct is the same. It means a vast saving in mental energy and makes available without the pains of specific acquirement the consolidated experiences of masses of people throughout long periods of time. No one praises moral conduct greatly; and none but a word-intoxicated simpleton plumes himself on acting immorally. When a man hears himself called moral he knows that he is being accorded that minimum of praise which almost suggests blame. Nor would he feel himself made more comfortable by hearing himself called immoral. Quite the contrary. The situation, as presumably it exists, is one which neither moral nor immoral will meet, and it is to answer this subtle requirement that “honour” is born. Honour is a device of the moralists to escape the consequences of morality: from sameness, monotony, mediocrity, being the name given to estimates of actions conducted in the conventional sphere, but conducted with such a degree of intensity as to constitute a distinction which is conferred on the sphere itself. Moral conduct being customary conduct, it is in its very intention destined to be mediocre. It is the “usual thing,” and honour is conferred when the “usual thing” is done with such an intensity of energy as to sublimate its non-distinctiveness into distinction. Such conduct intensifies the degree to such an extent that it appears to create a difference in kind. It embellishes the normal to the height of the exceptional and its reward is “Honour.” One could illustrate by the analogy of fashions in dress. The leader of fashions is one who, by the definition as it were, sets great store by fashion: but in order to be distinguished in the realm of fashion a leader must force intensify every fashion before she is accorded distinctive honours in her line. And as a leader of fashion is to the ordinarily fashionable, so is the “man of honour” to the ordinarily moral. In dress it would involve a good deal of thought and no little inconvenience to avoid being fairly in the fashion. Fashionable clothes must be bought because the wares most easy to come by are just those in fashion. One falls an easy and acquiescing victim to the dead weight of environment—and finds oneself in the fashion. But the superlatively fashionable must do quite differently from that. Much thought, time and comfort must be sacrificed before one can attain the dizzy pinnacle at which one is adjudged a leader and an adornment of fashion. A reputation of fashion is not won without some toil and exercise of pains. Nor is Honour. In both cases the efforts expended by the purchasers are the equivalents they are prepared to offer in exchange for—public repute and applause.
Why the public is ready to negotiate is clear: not only in exchange for its gracious good opinion, is action taken which assists the public interest, but more than all it secures the embellishment of its most useful traditions. It may even manage to establish a new record upon the best traditional model, within the tradition itself. It is not for nothing that in war, for instance, the best quality of human material—the freest, hottest, and ripest are chosen. For these are the likeliest to spend themselves liberally in contributing new decorations to its more ancient example, and so give the old tradition a new lease of life. Tradition renews its youth, if bathed in the fresh blood of the youngest and least restrained. The lives of the honour-intoxicated, is the only food tradition really thrives on: there exists an alternative—its life or theirs. When tradition has dragged its long-grown trail about for any length of time it would begin to decay were it not for the decorative intensifying examples of young spirit, free to be squandered—for Honour. Since then for Honour youth is willing to spend itself fully in the upkeep of tradition and since tradition is the people's choicest spiritual fare, Honour for expenditure, is the people's obviously suitable exchange. So the "Rolls of Honour" swell and national pride expands and national safety appears a more secure thing. When the danger is past, the scrolls fade and grow faint: perhaps they will receive refurbishing now and then "lest we forget"—when really they have forgotten. Honour for the path of the man of honour is, though every other kind of honour which the people put up for sale has a like history behind it: someone has proved he can be useful and is accordingly to be called a good fellow.

It is clear honour is wholly concerned with external verdict: an affair compact entirely of "repute": it is a matter of estimate: its existence is in no definite and permanent way dependent upon the quality of the deed which chances to secure it. The base upon which it rests, and to which all its seeming idiosyncracies must be referred in order to be made plain, is the opinion of the spectators concerning how a deed's consequences will affect them in their interests. Compare, for instance, the epithet "Cossacks" to-day and "Cossacks" a year ago.

Honour is born of the people, who accord it in return for signal favours rendered, not for power and spirit primarily. One may have put into tasks, courage, daring, effort, accuracy, and all the powers of a strong soul, without creating an honourable reputation, or an honoured work. Quite the contrary, in fact; the work must have been dethroned later by his contempt for his neighbours, explorers, discoverers, and conquerors, in every field of activity could prove. The so-called standards of honour; the phrases "sense of honour" and "principles of honour," are part of the invention of the language, by a pseudo-scientific slang. What is called a sense of honour is a fine scent for neighbours' approval and disapproval. The "man of honour" is one who will not allow himself to come short of the maintenance of other peoples' good opinion for himself. He is the man who accorded his neighbour in the foremost place in his estimation of values: they are his first concern. The "sense of honour" is a sentinel, advising a man of the nature of condition outside: it belongs to the armoury of fear and caution rather than that of adventurous exercise of power. Though it will often urge men to deeds of distinguished valour, it is prompted by fear rather than courage. The advocates of honour endeavour to put emphasis on the fact that a "sense of honour" is held to by preference: as undoubtedly and obviously it is; what they will not care to enlarge upon, are the motives which prompt the preference, or the nature of the consequences in relation to what the preference is made. A "sense of honour" counsels a preference for "esteem" rather than for the risks of prosecuting an egoistic interest. That is why "honour" and "self-sacrifice" are always sandwiched together. As a matter of fact honour 1 and self-sacrifice 2 are as self-ingenious expenses of enterprise, but not to a sense of danger; they make evident in contrast to the more obviously egoistic man's activity, differences as to their estimation regarding the whereabouts of the sources of pleasure. Both sorts are in pursuit of self-satisfaction but the "man of honour" apprehends that such satisfactions as he can be happy with, must be the result of the people's approval. Popular opinion is the sieve without which none of line of activity is open to him. Which of course limits his sphere of activities enormously. Nine-tenths of the suggestive modes of action are forbidden him as dishonourable: sacrilegious. He has become the slave of a highly fickle and forgetful master. That he has become so, gives a gauge of his spiritual weight.

As to the "principles" of honour so-called,—these vary as the demands suggested by the varying needs of the people vary. "Principle" 3 of course, is the forgivable bombast of the hard-driven advocates upon whom falls the difficult task of making extremely fickle and unstable requirements appear immutable and sacred.

There are no fixed standards of honour: since honour is esteem, the only stable "principle" upon which honour can be based is this: that the individual shall at all costs make his public service such that he shall be believed, well of at the time, by the majority of those among whom he lives. The one means of arriving at any "standard of honour" is to ask "Does the public approve"? If it does the act is honourable and honoured. Why does it approve? Because its turn has been served, either as regards its safety, its pleasure, or its profit.

The transitoriness of honour: its puff-like qualities which allow the patriot whose early path was "roses, roses all the way" to find himself "going out alone in the rain to die," or Cremenian veterans limping out their last days in the workhouse, furnish the hint of a solution of the truth that a man may not set out to win honour by making himself the servant of the public interest and then expect to find himself in the end, not its servant but its master. Men who desire public honour the public holds at its mercy: and it keeps them in perpetually feeding them with "reputation"—its life or theirs. When they have conquered it, honour—in the humbered garb of respect—comes licking their hands: it has been brought to heel as it never could be by the "man of honour," who sets it up as more than master: as a god. It has been made a property—one's own—by virtue of one's small account of it.

The character of one's greatest pleasures is the key to the difference between the two attitudes of mind—the egoistic and the honourable. An inquiry into the nature of pleasure would reveal much that is at present baffling in the ways and woes of men. For the purposes of this present inquiry public pleasure may be defined as the satisfaction of expanding power, and gives satisfaction to desire in direct ratio with the amount of expansion it allows. Into the sphere in which men feel their abilities are, they will direct their energies. The extent to which one can pour oneself into a thing: the amount of its expansion of which one is capable, in degree in which it will take it: the completeness with which one can wrap oneself about a thing in the fullness of one's power; these considerations constitute the basis of pleasure. That "pleasures" are in disrepute is merely the judgment of pleasure on "pleasures." Their disrepute grows out of the fact that the satisfaction they
give is brief and limited. The more one may become in­
volved, the greater is the pleasure: whether in love or
in work it is the same. The disappointment of "realisations"
returns to one of the usual wrong stage of a process for satisfaction, i.e., when it is
finished instead of when it is in progress. Satisfaction is
a process not a state, evolving during the exercising
of the means and not from the "end." Goethe pointed
out the mistake of being so concerned about the end as
to neglect the process. The individual who is a benin-
dent on honour is at this disadvantage as compared with
him whose interest is in the action and not in the
opinions regarding it. Moreover, dissatisfaction in an
interest begins to show when it becomes clear that it
will throw part of one's power back—rejected. Which
exhaustion with what one must first create napopsic incite
i.e., interests in which they are their own masters and
prime-movers.

The statement that a man's honour is in his own keep-
ing is a smooth gloss, it is certainly "up to him" to
keep the favour of the crowd if he wants honour, and
when he does keep it, it is by giving the crowd to under-
stand that he is attempting that. Hence, for strong
people, the honour of the crowd is a thing to be looked
at askance, unless one is paying nothing for it. They
realise that the crowd is exacting: it loves you because
you are able to grade it that your life's energy is being
devoted to its well-being. And it requires you not to be
aware of the fact. And the devotion must be in the
way it desires and not as you desire. The patriot
wishes to "give" himself to his country: of course he
does: it is the completest form of pleasure. But then
the country is not concerned about this giving of a man's
self: the only activity in relation to which one is able to
do that is one over which he exercises exclusive
authority. What the country wants of any man is just
what it wants and not what the "patriot" would best
conceal. To expend his powers. A country does not con-
ceive itself the receptacle to receive anything which one
considers one's best, but only for what it considers best
for it. The sorrows of the disillusioned "patriot" and
the "realisations" of the "man of honour" that his
honour lies in other's keeping constitutes what they are
pleased to conceive as the tragedy of the "noble.", over-
taken by the ingratitude of the "base." Certainly it
represents the differences between fact and the fancies
of the honour-ridden mind. It represents its "just"
returns, for men try to win good opinion by obviously
easy means, and, if successful, are assured of the
praise when they do not thereby lose their advantage.
The expenditure of a man's self—as much as it will allow
him to expend—in the furtherance of a "cause!" (i.e.,
the kind of interest which every man of honour, at the out-
set, thinks he holds the reins over, only to find that it
has run away with him), is itself devoid of effort: only
that it is effort exercised under conditions which ease
all the strain of difficulty. It is effort made to the sound
of applause: a music involving a difference like that
which the strains of a band make to the toilsomeness of
a long march; conversely, acting against public opinion is
like running against a current, striving with an incalculable
machine: he is a thing to be scotched as a dismally
slow in thought, and having no confidence in the
view of things. But in the end the upkeep of the favourable
conditions has to be heavily paid for; they demand a
constant allegiance and the wealth of "sacrifice" must
always be made to appear equal to its equivalent. In
the long run it makes all the difference between one
man's power, whether it be the outside world's or his
own, bears the resisting qualities for the petty immoralist
are on the alert for in all their fellows.

So that there arises an intense and sincere body of
feeling against the immoralist, in all quarters which
generates a common desire to be rid of him. The diffi-
culty of the successfully Unscrupulous in exploiting him
added to the fear which he arouses in less powerful
persons results in a general consensus of opinion which
paves the way for those supernaturals which the
preachers and teachers and authority in general invoke
for his destruction and of which they make such effective
and artistic use. The measure of wrath of the ordinary
person is in all its gradations directed against immoral conduct gives to each indi-
vidual such a salutary notion of consequences that
ordinarily they are adequate to put the immoral well
under the ban. . . . .

Impulses must be strong or intelligence weak before
a stepping aside from the accustomed path is tried. These
digressions occur mainly at the top and bottom of
spiritual competence: with the unusually strong and
usually feeble-minded. Contempt for inability rein-
forced by a sense of outraged convenience mixes the
prejudice against religion with the contempt of
magnanimity, whereas fear which excercises all the more loudly
because it dare not despise is reserved for the egoistically
immoral, while these are still uncrowned by signal
success. When their necessary—if reluctant—in-
morality has exploited the crowd's morality to the
point of being successful it is able to command the
respect of those whose honour it never slopped to woo.

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They can then set a new fashion if they so desire: the founders of religions and empires. Usually they content themselves with a few snips at the moral cloth, on the whole leaving customs very much what they were.

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The attitude of the Unscrupulous becomes clearer by halting to consider the meaning of Scrupulous. To be scrupulous means to be uneasy, doubtful, hesitating: etymologically, a scruple is a sharp jagged stone: a made jagged by considerations innumerable of doubt and fear and concern. The unscrupulous are such as are either so tenacious that their spiritual substance offers no body resistant enough for consideration of consequences to take hold of it, as is the case with the feeble-minded; or so tough and robust that it presents a hard-jaggedness of the path. Now the effect of a strong interest always is so to harden the surface of contact to all considerations alien to itself (compare this war) that one gradually becomes immune to fear as well as to difficulty. Strong interests cancel all, considering all and all fears, but they do not on that account belittle the effect of fears and difficulties on other people whose interests are feeble. To do so would be to deny one's own superiority: accordingly "scruples," fears, are recognised and loudly applauded since it is through their infininess that he who is free from them is fitted to make headway by comparison. As a matter of fact, too much knowledge of motives tends away from success in action: or rather it tends to alter the kind of success striven after.

The play of intelligence creates a comedy which surpasses in interest the more usual game of acquisition of material. A superlatively great philosopher is provided with fun enough for a master-hobby merely in watching the blind-man's buff which the spectacle of things makes. In pressing forward to secure further acquisition of knowledge of motives rather than acquisition of goods he will often let the struggle for power through things slide. Moreover, too much knowledge tends to make one talk too much. Hence, the popularity of "modesty" amongst "worldly" people. To talk too much—to tell too much—is bad for certain kinds of successful action. It gives too much away. Analysing an opponent's case, for instance, throwing the tale of his weakness against him, is really fighting his case for him. It is putting one's intelligence at his service, and of this, in spite of pig-headedness he is likely to profit in some degree. Moreover a man with anything short of unlimited courage is hampered by seeing his own motives spread out too clearly. In short, Napoleons are not created out of their consciously adopted course of immorality: but out of a concentrated strength of interest which enables them to override deep-grained custom in a limited area of activity, while at the same time they are able to rely on a corresponding inability of the majority of their fellows to do aught save tread warily—scrupulously—therein.

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The wide difference in the nature of the "success" which attends the two types—the Honourable and the Napoleonic—might have been expected to save philosophers from the mistake of confusing the two, and attempting to block out a so-called Master-morality especially applicable to both. Its failure to do so is probably due to a hypocrisY substitution which appears to overtake those who philosophise on Morals, and of which the main result is to cause them to slurr over and ignore the meaning of morals, i.e., custom. They are, doubtless, the more inclined to do so on account of the fact that the identifying of morals with custom seems to rob their subject of its portentousness; its observance of its virtue, and its violence of its heinousness. But whatever the cause of their obvious malcomprehension of the nature of morals, one of its primary consequences has been to invest the different kinds of success which accrue to the Honourable and the Egoistic with a bewildering confusion. People are unable to see that this "rewards" apparently all "go wrong," and they incline to attribute it to some inherent perversity in the scheme of things: the tricks of a devil so to speak. Yet comprehend morals and the relation of the Honourable and the Napoleonic to morals and the whole story will smoothly unravel itself. Morals are the steady calculable base of conduct which the Honourable serve in order to maintain this base in all its stability, but which, on the other hand, the Napoleonic contrive to make serve them.

In the old antithesis of Exploited and Exploiter: the Good (for morals), but dull: the Dangerous (for morals), but intelligent. The former are pleased—for a consideration—to constitute the ephemeral pieces in the Spectacle, the devising and engineering of which makes the amusement of the latter. The Honourable are the rockets which fly high—and flicker out—to the thrilled admiration of the crowd. (The flickering out is an important part of the Spectacle: only when they are ready to give their lives for the Cause are the would-be Honourable really it). The Napoleonic find their more prolonged thrill in organising the display letting the fireworks off. The aims and capabilities of the trio—Napoleonic, Honourable and Crowd—work in well together: it is even to be noticed that they are usually on very good terms with each other. Sinister! No! Self-awareness in the two parts and half-awareness in the third.

An inadequacy of intelligence all round, but of which inadequacy the differing degrees make up an impressive light and shade.

VIEW AND COMMENTS.

NOW that one may hear "freedom" applauded loudly in high places, one may speak a few words in mild reason about it and its friends—those loquacious "wee frees!" The world is composed of these, plus the freedom resisters: The differences by which one may know them is that while both may shout "Freedom" on the ecstatic note, the resister will say "Freedom! And we are it," while the friends of freedom can merely say "Freedom! Ah, would that it were ours." Resisters keep their references to freedom for rare occasions: the Freedom! of yours is vitiated by its meanness, swindle, and at best a cloud of words which vanishes somewhere: a clamour which is the adult equivalent of the infantile howl, requiring no ability beyond lung-power and pertinacity, is not attractive in itself, yet "freedom" attracts, and nothing will suffice to shatter its attraction, until one can stand outside the "Cause" and weigh up its meaning. That alone, damages the veil. Strictly, "I am free to" means "My power is able to," and this meaning, in accuracy, is pertinent to every phase of "free" activity, whether of acquisition, domination, suppression or abandonment. "Being free" pitiful. Their relation to "Freedom" is like that of some humble admirer who adores from afar, endowing the unfamiliar one with all the charms of the unknown, though wholly unconscious of their character: even of the qualities which make their charm for those familiar with their ways.

It would not seem that the foregathering of suppliants would be able to offer many very great attractions: yet, oddly enough, the "cause of freedom" wins much of its appeal from its incapacity. It is capable of illuminating the self-satisfied, though wholly unconscious of its character: even of the qualities which make their charm for those familiar with their ways.

Now, it seems that those who would be "Freedom" are those who have been enabled by comparison to see the qualities which make their charm for those familiar with their ways. They are those who would be "Freedom". They are those who would be "freedom! And we are it!" while the friends of freedom can merely say "Freedom! Ah, would that it were ours."
is a matter of possession of power, therefore: why then has the "cause of freedom" resolved itself into an outside, antagonistic, and ever-progressing battle against the iniquities of the possessors of power? A most wasteful expenditure of energy on fruitless means? For at what do they aim? They want power, and instead of husbanding carefully what they have, while it grows from little to more, they spend their all in a reproachful demand for the favours of those already in power, in making claims for favours which they call "Rights."

Hear one of their most spirited on the subject "All men are entitled to that equality of opportunity, which enables them to be masters of their own lives, and free from rule by others . . . all men are called on to resist invasions of their equal rights . . ." and if duly carried out, we are told, "will kill monopoly." Doubtless! Here then is to be found the basis of reproach. Freedom-lovers—those desiring a power, not theirs, believe they are "entitled" to the same. Probably the five virgins, whose lamps had no oil, thought they were entitled to the oil in their companions. This matter of entitlement is the subtlest delusion ever conceived for the confusion of ineffectuals. What can entitle save power—competence? And what can others do to one's competence save ratify its relative effects by their acquiescence! The reproach of the advocates of power is more powerful do not suffer of their power or use it in their interests. This, they believe themselves entitled to demand, and are injured when they are not gratified—these imaginary rights. Looking about for something to base them on, they have hit upon: Consensus of opinion, the opinion of the mob: that multitude of units with powers similar to their own. Consensus of opinion is a very useful thing: a good budgeon in the hands of the simple, and an easy subject to exploit under the manipulation of the powerful. It frightens the already frightened: the frightful—those whom the freedom-lovers hope to scare off by it—know the idea of sovereignty of its horridness, since they are constantly making use of them for themselves. Consensus of opinion is not going to be of much service to the seekers after grounds of entitlement. On what then do they fall back? They fall back on bluster and the sentimental.

An infant tries to get what it wants by howling vociferously for it. The fuss and inconvenience which it is thus able to make constitute its power. This power is competent, however, only on account of a prior competence: its hold on the affections of its guardians. Howling to make its point short shrift without the powers possessed would very soon be put out of the way. Now the friends of freedom make bold to raise their clamour, almost wholly on the strength of its incompetence, unbacked by a corresponding hold on the affections of those who have to put up with it, and under these circumstances the lot of the emancipators, so-called, speaks volumes for the patience and forbearance of the empowered. Perhaps there is a modicum of coercion in this too—a faint apprehension that in spite of the evidence to the contrary, the clamour may not limit itself merely to the aggravation of sound: the wailer may have a tendency to the adjectives of evolving. Certain it is, however, that the latter have been permitted to clamour for so long, unmolested, that the recognition of their "right" to do so has become one of the main planks of their platform. Any infringement of the "rights" of "free" speech, or free association of the "free" officials of the State against the powers possessed is considered an obstacle to "free" speech. At any attempt to interfere with them there is no end of bluster; yet it is obvious the bluster must be patently empty. A man stands on a stump on a public place, anathematises the State, in so doing possibly rousing the wrath of most of his audience, as well as the suspiciousness of the officials of the State against the powers possessed. But at any attempt for "free" speech is this: the officials of the State against which he is haranguing, shall in the first place protect him from the anger of the populace, and in the second, shall refrain both from preventing him continuing his harangue, and from retaliating with any form of punishment on the count of its own vilification. It is, of course obvious bluster, though, if one carries it off with an air, as one usually can in these word-sodden days, who shall say word against it? Not we at any rate. Merely, to youths who are interesting and earnest, one would point out that to rely on power of this sort is to rely on the fifth-rate variety, which will let them in at one point or another. Based on a clever word-trick it will succeed here and there, and particularly so when nothing of importance depends on it: but when anything really vital hangs on it, the swagger will crumble out and it will shrink to its accurate dimensions. It will then reveal how illusory its former triumphs were.

For instance, when a State does allow the "right" of the various "free," it is for reasons of interest—its own. Perhaps it realises that discontent, like a rash, is better out than in. It reveals its nature all the better. So, moreover, discontent is given the chance to run itself off in talk. And the stronger the State the more "liberty" it can allow: it need not shatter the first little tiny fist that shakes itself against it. To appear generous tactfully veils the fact how "just" it can be: and when a great State is just to its enemies they must be judge that their rights are not protected or that they lose their liberties. It would, therefore, all accord with a body whose power is so overwhelming to be furs sensiti­ve in regard to the indiscretions of its wilder members. Free speech forsooth: allowed speech, and allowed on the balance of considerations which have nothing what­soever to do with the fanciful rights of "free" speech to free. The only speech which could be "free," in the accurate sense, is that of the all-powerful ones: Napoleon might have spoken freely— but he had too much sense. The Kaiser might have accepted a tip in this direction with advantage. All any man who invested his entire interests in the "cause" could be quite "free" in one speech before he died—in his last. In brief speech, press, assembly, love, are all "free" when they have power enough behind them to foot the bill, when the consequences fall due.

Apart, however, from the deluding assumptions based on the word "free" in the popular instance cited in the foregoing, it remains to be pointed out that the word is one of which the actual meaning forbids its being allowed to roam at large. It is meaningless unless limited by a qualification. It is worth while detailing the main features existent in the attitude of mind which is entitled to the word "free," and when it is used spontaneously, it is always in relation to certain specific spheres of activity in which one considers oneself "free." One is not "free" as regards the "universe," but free in relation to this and that: where this and that represent specific circumstances which can be regarded as potenti obstacils. To the notice of an obstacle is a salient feature in the state of mind which makes use of the term "free." In the second place, but constitutes a still more salient feature, is the notion of possession of power in a degree competent to make the obstacle of non-effect. And in the third there is the element of comparison between the condition where power more than equates obstructions and another condition remembered or imagined in which the powers possessed were not adequate to the effective degree. Now it is because of the fact that anyone of these features can be emphasised to the exclusion of the rest which explains the otherwise puzzling phenomenon in which the presence of persons of spirit and intelligence in hopeless entanglement with one or other of the "Freedom" propagandas offers. It explains, moreover, the genesis of these highly differing propagandas. By the features which they chose to ignore or emphasise their relative spiritedness may be gauged. It is, for instance, by the features of the last feature, i.e., the particularity of application requisite to the meaning of "free," that the numerically strongest battalions of freedom-lovers are recruited. For, by ignoring it, they are enabled to make the meaningless abstraction of which the result is the concept "freedom" itself. They have poured out the precise meaning, and are left with...
any empty vessel constructed out of the mere label—Freedom: which, like Mesopotamia is a word of good
sound.

The sentimental, the gushers, the rhetoricians, orators of all sorts, hypocrites, hang-ons, every brand of
human, provided they run easily to slop, rally to augment this goody lost.

By ignoring the second feature—the actual possession of power as the condition of the “free”—those who are
rallied to freedom’s cause by the aggrandisement of the “shine” are roped in. They are won by the prospect of
apostrophising “tally-ho!” by the big sound of Inherent Rights. The democrats, socialists, humani-
tarians, anarchists—embargoists of all sorts—row in this galley.

This ignoring of the second feature leads naturally to a special emphasising of the third: the emphasis on “conditions.” Thus, the particularised club manners of obstacles which the first variety of freedom-
lovers find it attractive to ignore, receives from this last class their entire attention.

A parentally-anxious removal of obstacles the ideal of the modern savours of society: in fact, the
only articulate theory of modern social and political activity works in this way. This removal of “democratic”
leaders, the “emancipators,” concerned with but with their lists of “obstacles to be removed,” and the suc-
cessful invoking of the assistance and assent of the more powerful in the job, for which the power of the races is inadequate! The essential thing—power in oneself—is waved aside, assenting with the amoral harshness of feelingless drivers. These indulgent, freedom-loving,
social grandmothers have not been satisfied with a mere
sparring of the rod: they have persuaded the children that it is inhuman to use rods or harbour them. When, for
instance, an effective rod appears—as now—in powerful hands, a mellow-tongued friend of freedom—
that popular leader of popular causes, emancipator of the people, what not: Mr. Lloyd George tells the people
how he has military authority for it that such a rod could only appear on the lists of one possessing the
“Soul of the Devil” is related to which is, of course, “Mind of a Midge!”—argument of kind with kind.
D. M.

TWO POETS.
By Richard Aldington.

For the past two weeks I have been vainly endeavour-
ing to compose some sort of review of two books of
poetry which have recently come into my hands.

War and reading histories of Prussia has damaged my
mind to such an extent that I hardly hoped to be able to write intelligibly again; and I was afraid Mr. Rodker’s
“Poems” and Miss Amy Lowell’s “Sword-Blades and
Poppy Seed” would never receive my comments.

Prussian artillery—we are told—is extremely dan-
gerous, but its effects are comparatively slight beside
to those of Prussian history and biography; and I should
like to warn all other innocents from the dangers of
paths I have been pursuing. Not only is the history of
Germany an inextricable confusion—being the history of
fourteen kingdoms, thirty-seven princes and about
five million duchies—but the effect of reading ignorant
(stylistically speaking) translations of grotesque German
historians is, as they say in the Brigade, “most
again.” Which of the politicians who govern the coun-
tries of Europe really understands the history of his
country? But, oh, why has no English politician really
understood what is called in the Press “The Prussian
Menance”? Was not the knowledge that the Hohen-
zer Family had the brass to drive what they pleased
of Brandenburg, were brigands and condottieri; that in
the days of the “Great Elector,” Prussia’s standing
army was second only to that of France; that the policy of
Prussia has been always brutal, militarist and singularly
mendacious (as witness Frederic, ironically called the
“Great”); that Prussia bullied the other German States
polity put it, “whored” France, all by a system of
medieval militarism—was not this knowledge, which can
be obtained, or rather divined (for all history books
are mostly written in the interests of Prussia) from his-
story books, not got this knowledge sufficient to prepare
our politicians and authors, whose plain duty it was to
prepare for eventualities, not in a “Daily Mail”-Blatch-
ford-Harrison way, but calmly and efficiently? But there
is no use spouting; we have all been reading French and
Italian, when we ought to have kept an eye on Prussian
philosophy—it would have been a bore, but some of us
would have been better prepared for what has hap-
pened . . .

When one’s mind is filled with that sort of stuff, when
the most bloody battles of the world are taking place
a few miles away, it needs a certain amount of phlegm—
which I frankly don’t possess—to be able to write pre-
paratory to things and men and the effects of their
literary productions. But I have kept two French tags in
my head—one from Taine and the other from a private
 correspondent—which seem to me to make excellent
epigraphs for these two books, and to make a sort of peg
for a criticism. The first (Taine’s) is “Le laid est beau
le rien n’est clair,” and it was this which first struck me
as “Ne laisseons pas mourir la tradition des libres
esprits.” Miss Lowell’s book of poems, I think, deserves
to have the first on its title-page, because she obviously
has not been content to observe merely the rusty tin-
cans and corner-lots of life, but has tried to put down
what she found in life with the same emphasis upon
character of obstacles which the first variety of freedom-
lovers find it attractive to ignore, receives from this last
class their entire attention.

A parentally-anxious removal of obstacles becomes
the ideal of the modern savours of society: in fact, the
only articulate theory of modern social and political
activity works in this way. This removal of “democratic”
leaders, the “emancipators,” concerned with but with
their lists of “obstacles to be removed,” and the suc-
cessful invoking of the assistance and assent of the more
powerful in the job, for which the power of the races is inadequate! The essential thing—power in oneself—is
waved aside, assenting with the amoral harshness of feelingless drivers. These indulgent, freedom-loving,
social grandmothers have not been satisfied with a mere
sparring of the rod: they have persuaded the children
that it is inhuman to use rods or harbour them. When, for
instance, an effective rod appears—as now—in
powerful hands, a mellow-tongued friend of freedom—
that popular leader of popular causes, emancipator of
the people, what not: Mr. Lloyd George tells the people
how he has military authority for it that such a rod
could only appear on the lists of one possessing the
“Soul of the Devil” is related to which is, of course, “Mind of a Midge!”—argument of kind with kind.

For the past two weeks I have been vainly endeavour-
ing to compose some sort of review of two books of
poetry which have recently come into my hands.

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mendacious (as witness Frederic, ironically called the
“Great”); that Prussia bullied the other German States
But he is all vagueness and useless reaction to primitivism, all woody edges, and, lastly, he is careless of aesthetic effect. Like all beginners in vers libre, he tends to write hard and his work is unable to bear close technical scrutiny; we must give him at least the praise due to his merits. He has attempted—in the rather prevailing and certainly commendable fashion—to give some sort of poetic form to his impressions of modern life. He does this by all sorts of half-instantaneous and sometimes puerile dodges—vague sentences, suggestions, violent contrasts, rows of dots, single words printed in columns thus—but, thank Heaven, he avoids the American newspaper headline type and the "ideograph," both inexpressible puerilities of discontented mediocrity.

Now, I think everyone who has read my articles here, will know of my sympathies with the tradition of Greek poetry, and I must say that Miss Lowell's work is extremely slight and her tradition is French, which is Latin, which is Greek (with a difference). I have no doubt that—so uncritical are the times—if her work and Mr. Rodker's fall into the hands of the same reviewer they will be treated as belonging to the same school. As I have indicated, they are at the antipodes. Miss Lowell's work has at best a strong tendency towards the "hard edges" and precision, which are so dear to the Hellenic tradition. She is logical and common-sensical, where Mr. Rodker is illogical and nonsensical. (For, be it spoken humbly, I hold it to be both illusional and non-sensible to speak of "white perfection, black and immobile." It is a primary notice for both logic and common-sense that what is black is not, and cannot be, white. I know Mr. Rodker didn't mean to suggest that it was, but his words easily bear that interpretation.)

Miss Lowell's creative tradition is, then, Latin; but, unhappily, her critical tradition—in that most difficult branch known as self-criticism—is not Latin at all. Both she and Mr. Rodker permit themselves to publish poems over which they will presently gnash their teeth at the thought of there being published. I have said so many nasty things about Mr. Rodker's work that I find it interesting to point out that I did so with no ill-will, I did so with no apparent offensive, I would beg Miss Lowell to take any of these three poems and write it in simple prose. And—granted the emotion—I believe she could make them all three beautiful poems, if she wrote them either in rhymed prose (like "Ina Castle") or in rhymed vers libre, rather like Mr. Hefner's "Heaven" and his poem one has reference to Miss Lowell's short vers libre poems are sometimes extremely good. She has—besides her Gallic training—a natural gift of eloquence, a sense of rhythm, a sensitive appreciation of beauty, irony, and a facility in coining new images. She is very fertile, and I firmly believe that no one can be a good poet whose brain is not teeming with new ideas and new forms. It is impossible for a person so gifted not to write very excellently sometimes, and always readably. Not to waste space in quotations, I would mention these short poems as especially beautiful, "Miscast I.," "Miscast II.," "Music in a Garden," "The Taxi," "The Tree of Scarlet Berries," and for irony: "The Epitaph of a Young Poet."

At this point I am rather sorry not to be coming back to Mr. Rodker to give some quotations of his work, I find that I have left his book in the train, and it is now too late to get another copy. However, The Egoist has had the great pleasure of printing some of his work, and I hope most of the readers of this will recollect his poetry sufficiently to be able to substantiate my remarks from their memory of his work. This is particularly unfortunate, as I wanted to quote one poem in full—the second poem of the book—which struck me as extremely good though a little in the style of the late nineties:

"And down go the dead things ever Down to the sea."

I am afraid that my discursiveness on the subject of Prussia and the Prussian-Hellenic tradition has rather cut me down for space, but before ending this cursory survey, I want to call attention to Miss Lowell's essays, in the form of poetry which has been employed by Paul Fort. Her poem, "In a Castle," though perhaps inspired by Fort's "Henri III.," is an admirable piece of work. Its peculiar atmosphere impresses me more than that of any modern poem I have read for a long time. And no one need worry about Paul Fort's having been first; Miss Lowell has made the form her own. Of the other two poems in this manner, "The Forsaken," is good, but slightly uninteresting in matter, while "The Basket" is as good or better than "In a Castle." I would recommend all young poets to study these poems attentively; I think they open up considerable chances for development in English. I am not a bit ashamed to confess that I have myself imitated Miss Lowell in this, and produced a couple of works in the same style.

To illustrate these remarks, I will quote part of "In a Castle":—

"Over the yawning chimney hangs the fog. Drip—hiss—hiss—fall the raindrops on the oaken log which burns and steams and smokes the ceiling beams. Drip—hiss—the rain never stops.

"The wide state bed shivers beneath its velvet coverlet. Above, dim, in the smoke, a tarnished coronet gleams dully. Overhead, hammers and chinks the rain. Fearfully whispers the wind down distant corridors, and there comes the swish and sigh of rushes lifted off the floors. The arras blows sideways out from the wall, and then falls back again.

"It is my lady's key, confided with much cunning, whisperingly. He enters on a sob of wind, which gutters the candles almost to swirling. The fire flutters and drops. Drip—hiss—the rain never stops. He shuts the door. The rushes fall again to stillness along the floor. Outside, the wind goes wailing.

"Well, in spite of the "swailing" and the little touch of Prussia, it is a Chilean poem. I am not sure that the slight bit of Fort I still consider that a most admirable induction to a most admirable poem, and if I had written it I should have felt certain of a place in the anthologies, at least, and I should have continued writing with considerably more than I do now.

THE SONGS OF MALDOROR.

BY THE COMTE DE LAUTREMAONT.

1. (continued)

"I HAVE not finished my chapter. Let us make use of the last flickerings of the lamp; there is hardly any more of it. Let each of us finish his work.

The child cried out:

"O, if God would only let us live."

"Fair angel, come to me; you shall wander in the fields from morning until evening; you shall do no work.

""The wide state bed shivers beneath its velvet coverlet. Above, dim, in the smoke, a tarnished coronet gleams dully. Overhead, hammers and chinks the rain. Fearfully whispers the wind down distant corridors, and there comes the swish and sigh of rushes lifted off the floors. The arras blows sideways out from the wall, and then falls back again.

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THE SONGS OF MALDOROR.
My magnificent palace is built with walls of silver, with columns of gold and with portals of diamonds. You shall go to sleep when you wish to the sound of heavenly music. And when the sun climbs high with blinding light, and when the dark comes down, and when the light comes up, you shall go to the far and far out of sight into the sky, you shall still linger on your couch. And when you tire of that you shall walk upon the most sumptuous carpets, and you shall constantly be bathed in an atmosphere of fragrant flowers. 

"It is time that body and spirit sleep. Stand, mother, upon your strong ankles. Let your tired fingers drop the needle from your heavy work."

"Oh, how happy your life will be! I will give you a magic ring; when you turn the ruby, you will become invisible like the princes in the fairy tales."

"Put your needle and thread away in the cupboard, and I will arrange my papers."

"When you turn it back again you will reappear once more, as nature meant you to be, O young magician, beautiful, happy and long to make you happy."

"Go away, whoever you are; do not grasp me by the shoulders."

"My son, do not go to sleep yet cradled in the dreams of childhood; you have not said your prayers, and your clothes are not carefully folded on the chair... kneel down."

"Eternal Creator of the worlds, you show your inexhaustible goodness even in the smallest things."

"Do you not love clear streams where thousands of little fishes glide away—red, blue and silver? You shall catch them with a net, so beautiful, that they shall swim in the air of their own will. You shall see brilliant pebbles from the surface, more polished than marble."

"Mother, see these claws; I am frightened; but my conscience is calm for I have nothing with which to reproach myself."

"You see us, prostrate at your feet, crushed by the thought of your greatness. If any proud fancies creep into our imagination, we will cast them out with the saliva of disdain, and make you the irremissible sacrifice."

"You shall bathe there with little girls, who will clap you in their arms. When you come from your bath, they will twine wreaths about you—roses and carnations. They have transparent butterfly wings, and long waving hair, which floats about their lovely foreheads."

"Even though your palace is more beautiful than crystal, I shall not leave this house until I believe that you are an impostor. It is not good to desert ones parents. I am not an ungrateful son. And your little girls are not as beautiful as my mother's eyes."

"All our life is spent in songs to your glory. It has been so until now; it will always be so, even until the moment when we receive the command from you to leave this earth."

"They will obey your least sign and will think of nothing but your pleasure. If you want a bird which never alights, they will bring it to you. If you should wish to have a river, which carries you to the sun in the twinkling of an eye, they would bring it to you. What would they not bring you? They would even bring you the winged stag who is as tall as a tower. He is hidden in the moon, and from his tail little birds of all kinds hang from ribbons of silk. Listen to me...

"Do what you will, but I do not want to interrupt my prayer to summon help. Although your body vanish, when I try to drive it away, be sure of this—I am not afraid of you."

"Nothing is wonderful to me, if it be not as a flame, breathed from a pure heart."

"Think of what I have said or you will repent of it later."

"Father in heaven, avert the evil which may fall upon our house."

"Will you not go, evil spirit?"

"Save this dear wife who has comforted me in my sorrows..."

"Since you reject me, I shall make you weep and grind your teeth, like a hanged man."

"And this dear boy whose lips scarcely part to the kisses of the dawn of life."

"Mother, he is stran ging me... father, help me... I cannot breathe... your blessing: A great ironical cry rises in the air. See how the eagles, stunned, drop from the high clouds, turning upon themselves, literally thunder-struck by the columns of air."

"His heart has stopped beating... and she, too, is dead along with the fruit of her body... my wife... my son... I remember a long time ago I was a husband and father."

MORE WAR POETRY.

I

"The Trampwoman's Tragedy." This is how he lets it be known that the "will to Power" need not cavil. Two lion-headed tobacco canisters, or, perhaps, tea canisters, support the glorious apparition. Are we disheartened at the outset! The answer is, emphatically in the negative. Most of the reviewers seem to have been so awed by this, by the firm (not to say, haughty) demeanour of the Introduction, which proclaims the poet as "prophet, champion and consoler," and by the unashamed "Introduction To The Alphabetic List Of Authors," that they sought no further. Let me not follow their example. I open these pages at random (how can one tackle such a vast and heaving sea of poetry?), and I find the following:

"TO FRANCE.

"Those who have stood for thy cause when the dark was around thee. Those who have pierced through the shadows and shining have found thee, those who have held to their faith in thy courage and power, Thy spirit, thy honour, thy strength of a terrible hour."

"The sirs who have held to their faith in thy courage and power, Thy spirit, thy honour, thy strength of a terrible hour."

"There are fourteen lines of this, and the "Westminster Gazette" printed it! Doubtless France ought to feel grateful. On the next page my eye is caught idly by the name of Stephen Phillips. We have all heard of Stephen Phillips. Mr. Phillips is evidently a foreigner who is trying desperately to write English, and not succeeding."

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Pause for emotion. Poor devils—think of soldiers marching to such a tune as this!

"Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye
That a man may try
And write such inane drivelry?"

I abandon Mr. Hardy without regrets, and resume my weary skirmish through these pages. Now and then certain fragments assail me:

"Lived in days of old a nation:
Stark and sturdy, valiant hearted,
Rich in honest, kindly manhood,
Rich in tender womanhood."

Twelve stanzas elapse.

"Hierarchies of priests before him
Moved through ponderous William Archer,
Headed by the Archimandrite
Of the far-famed 'Daily News.'"

Two more pages and we emerge to the triumphant conclusion:

"Can we crush this Idol? Never
Doubt it! for a mightier Godhead,
Ancient, awful, fights on our side,
And its name is Nemesis!"

Q.E.D.

Truly it is said:

"Deep beneath the fallen years,
Slain by glittering foemen's spears,
With empty hands and a brow uncrowned
Toward the native land our hearts we turn
By snares encompassed round."

Some of these snares, however, are scarcely of German contriving. And although England may cry—

"I summon to battle from plain and hill
From woodland and fen and dale,
From my reeking towns and my greyhound downs,
My men to be cast in the scale."

Some will never answer that call until they discover why every town must be "reeking" and what are really "greyhound downs." Also, though England may go—

"Forth, then, to front the peril of the deep
With smiling lips and in your eyes the light,
Steadfast and confident, of those who keep
Their storied scutcheon bright."

A few unrepentant and unennobled individuals may wonder how long it will be before verse writers cease calling the German Ocean "the deep," and whether a "storied scutcheon" is an adequate description of a nation that has ever been a "brave and beauteous race, a nations of heroes and heroines, a nation of which they write)['."

"If tumpty tumpty tumty tumty tumty tum,
Etc. Etc. Etc.
We are lifted from this by the dithyrambic "Farm Hand" (not by Mr. Frost)."

Besides the books I have already dealt with, there are other volumes of war poetry on the market. There is, for example, "Remember Louvain!" which is published by Messrs. Methuen. In this yellow-hued concoction, Milton is made to write on the Sack of Louvain, and Wordsworth on General Leman. The titles are changed, that is all. Why the text should have been kept sacrosanct I cannot explain. I respectfully suggest to E. V. Lucas, who is editor of this compilation, that he introduce in the next edition a few skilfully interpolated references to "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" in the text of the "Happy Warrior," and make John of Giant exclaim:

"We do not seek the fight, but if it happens,
We have, by jingo, ships and men and money.
Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them."

"Lord God of Battles" (Cope and Fenwick, 1/- net) is in every way the antithesis of this. The cover is sober brown, and the title is due to Mr. Horatio Bottomley. The paper is good. There is a judicious mingling of new and old.

Among the moderns, I pause to cull the following:

"Husbands and brothers draw your swords to fight
Beneath this banner to defend your right;
Think of the hearts that for your glory sigh,
Think of the angel leaning from the sky."

"The Angel" is doubtless a euphemism for the Taube aeroplane, irreverently styled by Thomas Atkins, "The Bird."

Here is something—what shall I say?—more Parliamentary, more impressive in its delivery:

"Has ever weakness won esteem,
Or counts it as a prized ally?
They who have read in history deem
It ranks among the slavish fry,
Whose claim to live justiciary fates deny."

Mark the periwigged manner, the debating club adjective. German culture, look to your laurels! Where is Bernhardi now?

"The grandeur of her deeds recall;
Look on her face so kindly fair;
This Britain! and were she to fall,
Mankind would breathe a rarer air,
(Whoo! Stop, Pegasus!)
The nations miss a light of leading rare."

"Mr. Meredith, K.C., was observed to display strong
Sentimentary, more impressive in its delivery:

"Courage and fear; dread array; grave and wise; judg-
We are lifted from this by the dithyrambic "Farm Hand" (not by Mr. Frost).

In Athens, China, or France, the poet, having no sleeping soul of Empire to rouse, devotes himself to mere poetry.
"Time’s mists! From hearts like this where the Divine
Inviolable fire has dumbly burned,
Their honour soared! Finding no kindred spark
To leap from heart to heart—a running fire,
Their had been but a torch in the lonely night—
The flaming war-cry of a great desire—
A moment lifted—swiftly overturned."

Shade of Philemonus!
We are hurried straightway from this to the awe-inspiring:

"Smite England, to the tramp of marching men—
The rhythmic heart-beat of a world in pain—
Smite, hip and thigh, with flashing steel, and then
Useful those peaceful banners once again.
The Lord of Iron and blood no more
Shall shroud God’s sky with diabolic gloom."

And to the even more awe-inspiring:

"Where is the field I must play the man on?—
O welcome there, their steel or cannon.
Immortal beauty is death with duty,
If under her banner I fall for her honor."

And to the most awe-inspiring of all:

"You spied for the Day, you lied for the Day,
And woke the Day’s red spleen.
Master who asked God’s aid divine,
Then strewed His seas with the ghastly mine.
Not all the waters of the Rhine
Can wash thy foul hands clean."

As Coleridge said long ago: "The Rhine washes
Cologne; but who washes the Rhine?" "Waking the
Day’s red spleen" must indeed be a difficult operation.
I should like to see the Kaiser attempting it.

We have come a long way past popular novelists.

"highbrow" novelists, modernist clerics, Jesuit priests,
and the rest. But the Bath railway porter makes up for
all. "Poem? Yessir. One penny. Thank ye, sir."

To turn to the ancients:

"If you be fearful, then must we be bold,
Our Britain cannot save a tyrant o’er."

Neither can I salve a bad poet o’er.

"First pledge our Queen this solemn night,
Then drink to England, every guest;
That man’s the best Cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best."

Hark to the great trumpet tongue of the Victorian Era!

"Truth-teller was our England’s Alfred named."

With what charming modesty you refer to yourself,
your lord. But someone else wrote:

"The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are in imagination all compact."

The next is a mere echo:

"Not care to live while English homes
Nestle in English trees,
And England’s trident sceptre roams
Her territorial seas."

Oh, scented soap, chocolate boxes, the village smithy
(under the spreading chestnut tree), and all the rest: The last is awful:

"O Peace! and dost thou (dost thou) with thy presence bless
The dwellings of this war-tummidile Isle
Soothing with tunty brow our tum distress
Making the tunty kingdom brightly (yes, brightly) smile?"

Complete my joy—let not my first wish fail,
Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be."

Rose-coloured lamp shades, bit of providential gauze
That drifts across a naked lady’s thighs, naughty anec-
dote whispered under the breath, cockney posing in
Shakespeare and finding him "awfully spicy: nice bit of
O.T."

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

CHINA.

By F. T. S.

MY rapid sketch of China would not be complete if
I did not have you glance for a moment at her
religions. We are the oldest civilised nation of
history, and we have preserved ourselves as a nation
these hundreds of years. No other ancient nation has
done that. Yet we have made no progress in our reli-
gious thought; indeed, we have retrograded in many respects.

Confucianism, with its unsurpassed ethics and intellec-
tual grandeur, has undoubtedly done much to preserve
China. These Sacred Books of Confucius are free from
everything indecent, and when you consider how our
nation reverences these works and how little the morality
of the land exhibits the same, you cannot help but
wonder. One reason why these works are so firmly
grafted to the people is because all examinations for the
civil service are based upon these books. The employ-
ment of the same examinations through the successive
ages has unified the Chinese mind to a marvellous degree.

But in the excellence of the efficiency of Confucianism
has sprung up a bewildering variety of religions and
superstitions. It is impossible to describe them all.
There exist strange contradictions, which would appear
to you as very amusing, but which seem to us as very
natural. This eccentricity may be partly explained by
considering the Chinese attitude in general toward the
gods. He believes that it is better to believe that gods
exist than not to, because if you do not you may be
subjected to the wrath of the gods, if, perchance, there
be any; but if there are no gods, then there is no harm
done.

It will give you a headache when you try to relate the
gods of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Buddhism swallowed Taoism, Taoism swal-
lowed Confucianism, but at last Confucianism swallowed
both Taoism and Buddhism. Now these three religions
are one, as we say. A Chinese can belong to all three
if he can afford it, otherwise he must be content with
two, or even one, of these spiritual life insurances.
Furthermore, since we are not sure that we have a soul,
and care little whether we have or not, you perhaps
wonder why we take the trouble to adhere to any religion
at all. I myself can only explain it on the ground that a
little religion is a good thing to have around.

This union of beliefs in China has so mixed up the
gods that no one seems to know just what and how many
each god’s authority really affects. So Confucianism
allowed all kinds of superstition to creep in contrary to
the truly great teaching of Confucius. It is claimed that
China exceeds every civilised nation in existence in
respect to the varieties of her superstition. Wealthy
men, scholars, and learned folk, are not ashamed to
be seen, on days set apart for that service, worshipping
the fox, the hedgehog, the snake, and I must not fail to add
for the benefit of my American audience, the common,
every-day, good-for-soup rat. Sometimes purely
imaginary animals are asked for some blessing, just as if
the imaginer being poor he had it in his power to bestow
gifts.

Our gods may even be reviled without evil effects.
We can curse them when they fail us. A god was once
tried in court, found guilty, and was punished by being
struck 600 blows. The poor old divinity could not with-
stand this attack; he cracked and broke, and finally sank
into a pile of dust. Another time the people begged for
rain. No rain came. Then the people dragged the rain-
god out of the temple and placed him in the hottest
place they could find, in order to prove to him that it
was really quite warm and that rain was needed. A god
can be deceived. A common method is to sacrifice one’s
own head, by thrusting it through a hole in the table
provided for that purpose. The sedate old god from his
perch above can look down upon this head sticking
through the table, and is beautifully fooled. Then the
man withdraws his head, and enjoys the blessing which
he sought.

The worship of the Grand Prophet is an interesting
custom. This divinity is a spirit who is at home in his

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

THE EGOIST

November 16, 1914
temples once a year. This god's official business is to inform and advise all who come unto him with the regulation and prayers. After the worshipper is through, he interprets the first three words he hears within or outside of the temple as the reply of the prophet. Supposing the chance words, "My clock is out of order," comes to his ears. If he were asking advice on his marriage, he would probably interpret it this way: "My prospective wife will be a bad housekeeper. If this should happen there could be no widow, because she has lived to the end of her life—and that is all which any of us can expect. Of course, there may be a widower in this instance, but there can be no widow, since she, the former wife, is dead. The other half of the prophecy is, 'The wife lives, the husband dies.' We will reason as we did before. The husband dies, hence there is no widower, as you can readily see. There may be a widow, but we are not considering that now, as it was satisfactorily settled by the other half of the prophecy. We have proved that there can be no widow since she is dead, and no widow since he is dead; so we conclude that these two will lead long and happy lives and die together—an end to be desired." You Americans do not, perhaps, approve of such reasoning. To a Chinese, however, the whole thing is quite logical; and since the product of such fallacious reasoning satisfies him and adds to his happiness, why should you point out the errors in his thinking processes!

There are many other interesting superstitions which I cannot dwell upon. This incoherent mass of religions and superstitions is hindering China's progress, and I hope that new religion, Christianity, which is persistently forcing itself upon us, will in a few years cover our whole empire. With the death of the old and worthless, with the coming of the new and powerful, China may some day become a rival of your great nation.

Confucianism has produced the present China, and this religion will identify it through the coming centuries unless some outside influence makes itself felt. There must be reformation. A great many high officials of our nation think that reform is unnecessary. Some of us entertain different notions. After hearing what I have said you, too, are convinced that a new order of things should be shed in China. By what means can we solve our problems? What would be the result of your modern industrial aids in China while her national character remains the same? Would the ballot box be effective in reducing China's internal suffering and correcting the mismanagement of her government? No, these institutions developed by your Western civilisation will not raise China to a place among you. To reform my nation you must reach and purify the springs of character. What China needs is righteousness: it is absolutely necessary that she have a knowledge of God and a new conception of man, as well as the relation of man to God. She needs a new life in the relation of man to God. She needs a new life in the family, in society. The religion of Jesus preserves the identity through the coming generations. He who does not live in the spirit of this religion will be effectual in reducing China's internal suffering and correcting the mismanagement of her government.

Example seems to be equally fruitless. A governor of a province attempted to prohibit the use of opium. He pushed his work most vigorously, yet he failed because his subordinates would not honestly discharge their duties. And so it is all through China: they have one method of procedure in respect to reform, and no more. Our proverb, "Rotten wood cannot be carved," applies to our nation. It must be wholly cut away, and new material grafted upon the old stock. China can never be reformed within itself.

Some imagine that China can be reformed by diplomacy, that is, by taking her into the "sisterhood of nations." The leading nations have had representatives in our national capital, Peking, for thirty years, and what good have they done! Others say that China needs unrestricted trade, and the brotherhood of man. Yet you cannot blame us for not throwing our doors wide open when you yourselves have established your Chinese immigration laws to restrict our intermingling with you. Commerce means money gain, and the desire for money leads to making nations hostile. The great trading nations of antiquity were not the best nations but the worst.

You say, too, that we need culture and Western science. We Chinese have had culture for hundreds, nay thousands, of years. It cannot reform us. Science we are undoubtedly in need of. But will it exert an advantageous moral influence over my nation, Chinese character being what it is? Residence in your land for years has made me see these things, but I want to say that I remain still a devoted subject to my fatherland. Railroads, telegraph, and a strong currency system will regenerate China. I hear on all sides. It is not so. These institutions would give rise to new abuses. You Americans have your railroad scandals, your postal scandals, all kinds of scandals. What would be the result of your modern industrial aids in China while her national character remains the same? Would the ballot box be effective in reducing China's internal suffering and correcting the mismanagement of her government? No, these institutions developed by your Western civilisation will not raise China to a place among you. To reform my nation you must reach and purify the springs of character. What China needs is righteousness: it is absolutely necessary that she have a knowledge of God and a new conception of man, as well as the relation of man to God. She needs a new life in every individual soul, in the family, in society. The many needs of China are reduced to a single need. It will be met permanently, completely, only by Christian civilisation.

EDITORIAL.

Letters, etc., intended for the Editor should be addressed to Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.

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All business communications relative to the publication of The Egoist should be addressed to Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C., and all cheques, postal and money orders, &c., made payable to The New Freewoman, Ltd., Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C., and should be crossed "Parr's Bank, Bloomsbury Branch."

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ADVERTISEMENTS.

All orders, letters, &c., concerning advertisements should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The Egoist, Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.
FIGHTING PARIS.

OCTOBER 15.—This morning out early on some errands. Then to the Avenue de la Motte Picquet and the Cirque de Paris where the Belgian refugees are being looked after, to take some clothes. On the way I met with several wounded soldiers. I noticed especially three lying together, two of them tall, handsome Turcos, and all three lame and looking painfully ill. The bandaged toes of one stuck through his slit boot, the second wore a slipper on one foot, and the third hobbled on a stick. Here an arm or hand was additionally damaged. Soldier-driven motors passed, filled with woolen clothing. In the railway station at the latter of these was Union Jack Napoleons tomb seemed to attract numerous visitors bent on seeing the flags that had been taken from the Germans. The neighbourhood had become a centre of some animation, and the last invalides, centenarians both, had emerged into the open after a seclusion dating back at least to the 1902 Exhibition. The approach to the Cirque was crowded with refugees, old police, soldiers, nurses, and the curious. The S. V.'s, who have returned from Vichy, where they had taken refuge during the recent scare, told me the wounded under treatment there amounted to thousands. I heard another, Alexandre Mercereau, has been through several battles and has emerged therefrom unscathed. Our friend, Mr. R., who was at the retreat from Charleroi, writes, he has not slept on a bed for two months.

OCTOBER 17.—To B. At the Gare Montparnasse there was an arrival of waggons bringing wounded, which attracted the usual attention from idle crowds. The first to arrive were military ambulances, horse-drawn and springless, and containing stretchers. These were followed by a heterogeneous collection of commandeered delivery waggons, bearing the names of drapery stores, pianoforte manufacturers, funeral directors, florists, etc. They were so piled up with poor, damaged human flesh that the horses had some difficulty in pulling them up the hill, and the carts had to be pushed up by police and such able military who happened to be about. Oldians not being allowed within a certain zone. The somewhat restive horses backed one of the carts in the crowd and the poor wounded were nearly all turned out on to the pavement. At the corner a market was being held, and a woman in the crowd took advantage of the delay to buy fruit, which she thrust into a pair of bandaged hands. Most of these pitiful victims were maimed.—The things one hears! One does not know whether they are worse than those one sees: "Haven't the German commanders any pity? Yet they, too, are husbands, fathers." Answer: "It wouldn't be any good if they had, for they fear the Kaiser's boot. Ah, he is an awful brute, a terror, a tyrant." Referring to an accident to a train conveying wounded, which ran off the track, and the carts had to be pushed up by police and two of them tall, handsome Turcos, and one of the wounded had a stick. Sometimes those whose duty it is to make a search are apt to stray, too, and then they also have to be sought for! The men assigned for this supervision have their quarters in his barracks. They belong to Scottish regiments, go about in couples, and speak good French, as he found of offering to interpret for them!

OCTOBER 21.—I am told the war has not made the change in the usual conduct of the people to the extent that it has in France. Thus, the comic papers are published as before. One of these contained a drawing, showing one of our kilted heroes taken prisoner by German soldiers, who exclaimed, "Hullo! a suffragette." And here is a true story about an English soldier who happened to be captured by a trench; a trench, which one day a letter was brought to one of the French soldiers telling him he had become a father. Thereupon congratulations and festivities and distribution of dainties in honour of the event. Some German shells came to disturb the gaieties. When the little shower was over, the usual count was made of the survivors, and the Englishman popped out, in a beautiful insular accent, "Et le père de Monsieur bébé?" Ever since the phrase has become a catch in that particular section, and every now and again, and especially after an accident, trouble, someone anxiously inquires, "Et le père de Monsieur bébé?"

I suppose England has heard about the German intellectuals' manifesto in reply to accusations of atrocities. In reply to this there has been a great hue and cry after all German art, intellect, science and art at large. No Wagner, French composers instead, etc., etc. (What of Röntgen? Is it quite patriotic of English and French surgeons to make use of his rays? But we have already had occasion to say that these campaigns sadden many people.) The fact that an announced Wagner season at Milan will be replaced by a Saint Saëns season is commented upon with relish, and M. Saint Saëns himself, not content with this triumph over his German competitor, writes articles against German music and on the possibilities of teaching a child the piano without allowing it to soil its fingers on German notes. What miserable perversions patriotism is subjected to! (M. Saint Saëns forgets the number of times his works and those of other French musicians have been executed in Germany.)

This evening I asked a good woman after her presumably missing brother. "He has been found," she replied, "and is in hospital, but he does not say whether he is ill or wounded, for he is so stupid, he thinks it is dis honourable to be wounded."
believe it is a faked picture—for it has every symptom of authenticity, of course, that the indiscretion of the illustrated papers. Another shows a door at Senlis on which a German soldier has written in his Gothic lettering in white chalk: "Gute Leute; bitte achten; 3/15 Hessen." This has been translated into French and English (the two languages follow each other about everywhere—the Petit Parisien publishes a few columns of news in English each day): "Good people, to be well treated" (instead of treated).

OCTOBER 25.—Talking about atrocities (though they ought not to be talked about): C. G. was telling me that a writer (H. S.) who has just returned from the fighting ranks there is a vast selection of reasons for his guides would have spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon, perhaps, seen Paris for the first and last time. And here we have the plain truth, probably. With the French and the English it may be easily a case of retaliation—let us hope so. But to justify charges against the Germans I will add that I have heard (on good authority—not through newspapers) that there are two hospitals at L . . . n full of lads who have been emasculated.—A kindly post brings us "Swollen-Headed William." Nothing as good as has appeared here yet. Jean Weber has been drawing scenes of monstrous torture, but all the best wit seems to have been commandeered. Last evening we heard the first notes of music since the mobilisation (except for patriotic songs hawkers sing in the courtyards to sell their wares): we might have appealed to the usual friendless and patriots to prevent our enjoying that Hun, Schumann. If these melodies could have reached them they would have been successful in disarming the armed at the front, yonder! A story is told of some German soldiers in a trench who, at the close of a day's fight, softly started playing on their band. But the sound irritated the enemy on the other side, and though tired, they took their rifles up again and shot until they had silenced the too humane melody.

OCTOBER 26.—Paris just now is like a world's show. In a ten minutes' walk you can see uniforms from Belgium, France, Austria, England, America—and, take it from me, the French uniforms. There were two handsome Arabs just out from hospital in a tram we took. They were on their way to Lyon, their regimental quarters. One of them limped badly from a wound in the knee, the other had been hurt in the face. One had been wounded in the last battle of the Massif. The others were far away from each other, and they had met in hospital at Cherbourg. They had a few hours to spend in Paris, and had asked a man and his wife—Sunday bourgeois—to be so kind as to show them the Eiffel Tower. To do this they would have to ride back to the station having, perhaps, seen Paris for the first and last time. And their guides would have spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon.—The latest saying: when a French and an English soldier meet in hospital at Cherbourg, the concierge has no news from her sons—the one in hospital, the other fighting; your maid is preoccupied because she has had no letter from her husband for a week or so; out of doors you hear the same refrain of ten thousand, of единства, amputations, hemorrhages—the whole scale of physical suffering is run over. This one died of a wounded finger, this other will be lamed for life, not because the shrapnel wounded him seriously but because the shot sent him stumbling into a ditch. To whoever has one dear in the fighting ranks there is a vast selection of reasons for apprehension: he may be killed, he may die in atrocious suffering, alone, neglected, overlooked, or among strangers; he may contract some chronic complaint—every instant, of those who are not already in hospital, is tormented by a recapitulation of the dangers incurred on the field of battle. There are those who are in perpetual anxiety for special individuals; there are those who suffer collectively, so to speak, I know a couple who, without having suffered personally, have had to go through the whole scene of eating, wearing their shabbiest clothes, replacing their watch-chains by leather straps, and generally assuming an attitude of the profoundest melancholy. On the other hand, there are those whom existing circumstances no more disturb than wind sweeping over the water disturbing, is tormented by a recapitulation of all its consequences seeming to pierce their sensibilities like arrows in the body of the martyr.

OCTOBER 28.—Our first really wintry day: grey and London-like. The "Petit Parisien" (which translates the official bulletins for its "English friends") contains 293 advertisements for missing relatives. As the majority of these are collective the number of anxious individuals may be safely multiplied twice or even three times. One advertisement is significant of the difficulty for combatants to reach their families through the post. It reads: "The captain of the 8th Company of the 40th Territorials, informs relatives, that all his men are well." The Commander-in-Chief has been obliged to issue a notice, forbidding officers' wives from accompanying their husbands to the front, under penalty of severe punishment to the incriminated officers. Here is a pretty story: A soldier's letter strayed, addressed to a lady in Paris, it reached a lady of the same name in Lyon. The soldier asked his sister not to send him any more money, but chocolate, instead, "to share among his comrades." When the forwarded letter eventually reached her it bore the words, "Opened by mistake; the chocolate has been sent."—Spent the afternoon at B.—Among the pretty trees, weeping tears of gold, still bloomed many flowers. "Oh, did you bring back a bunch?" said H. S. C. "A bouquet, now?" Who can pick flowers and carry bouquets at present? I cannot. For whom are the blossoms they sell in the streets?

M. Fernand Divoire is compiling a bulletin specially devised to supply news to authors in the fighting ranks.
opened as an hotel. Outside stood a motor containing
invalued Highlanders about to be taken for a drive. Another
lamed man was limping through the hall leanning
on attendants. The whole establishment is admirably
comfortable, nevertheless, it is not by any means full,
and I am told no further patients are expected for some
time, the military government of Paris not wishing
wounded to be sent to the capital, with the consequence
that the far inferior provincial hospitals are over-
crowded.—"There's nobody so courageous on the battle-
field as the priests," said a little wounded soldier who
had been passed by: "Tell it to one of them."

"Have you a rendez-vous that you stand there like
this?"

Dominique Bounand, the pianiste; Dominique
Chansonnier, the montmartrois.

November 1.—That unlucky word melancholy, the power of
which explosive the French army owes much of its
success, the French shells containing considerably larger
quantities of it than the German—has again come out
in a confusion in my last letter (p. 403). The fact the
existing postal services do not allow me to go over
some of the details of the war, nearly three months ago. Another told
me on the track of a transforming law. If this unity is
fundamentally in the motions of a fluid world, and put
about us we are able to apply the law of similarity to extract
the final idea, just as the sight of Wagner, Craig, Rein-
hardt and others, all alike, busy in an emotional world,
and the inspiring thing should be the unity of interest
among all those who have made or participated in, the
science of the theatre may be deduced, and establish a sound basis for theory and
experiment. In fact, he will offer more than one person
a guide to the construction of a fine instrument, whose
strings are so adapted to the varied requirements of the
creative hand as to have many individualised ways of
vibrating.

The time is ripe for this mathematical explanation.
Quite a number of reformers in the theatre are seeking to
utilize some common spirit underlying external forms,
without connecting it with any theoretical ideas or for-
matting upon a transforming law. If this unity is
fundamentally in the motions of a fluid world, and put
about us we are able to apply the law of similarity to extract
the final idea, just as the sight of Wagner, Craig, Rein-
hardt and others, all alike, busy in an emotional world,
and the inspiring thing should be the unity of interest
among all those who have made or participated in, the
discovery itself, not the identity of the men who made it;
and the inspiring thing should be the unity of interest
among all those who have made or participated in, the
discovery. It is only by perceiving a number of men
working independently at the foundation of ideas that
we are able to apply the law of similarity to extract
the final idea, just as the sight of Wagner, Craig, Rein-
hardt and others, all alike, busy in an emotional world,
and to utilize some common spirit underlying external forms,
without connecting it with any theoretical ideas or for-
matting upon a transforming law.
King Hal "made it weep," "The Great Adventure" fills it with gas, and the sugary "Little Minister," with some wooden soldiers thrown in, leaves it icy cold. It wants it with gas, and the sugary "Little Minister," with some the title and a real machine gun in the last act, it would have written two years ago, at a time when he 'was feeling connection with his Reinhardt book I said: "To do Mr. Carter 588 he is paying 25 per cent of the benefit of any doubt as to whether it is an apology or an ex-

First, Mr. Carter objects to my partial quotation. It is true that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.—Ed.

Mr. Huntly Carter seems to be correctly informed of my identity. By all means, "the young Russian gentleman."

very well, then. Being young, I shall be considerate toward the aged and the infirm. Being Russian, I shall take pity on all.

One day they may come to regard themselves truly as high priests and custodians of a spiritual power as great as that in the hands of the Church. Then they will demand to be set as free to follow their great ideal as the servants of the Church. I think one effect of the war will be to hasten this enlightenment. Another effect will be the killing of domestic and discussion plays and the creating of a demand for movement and colour. First will come a glut of glorified Kinemacolour, then the right sort of motion play. I have lately read two of the newest things: Mr. Rodker, the other A. D. Defries—which raise my hope very high indeed. Mr. Rodker's qualifications for a motion-playwright may be found in his book of poems. Anyone who reads the 'Descent into Hell' must admit that it reveals a remarkable sense of the dramatic value of time and silence. A few words rise from the abyss. They sink again as eternal happenings become too deep for words. This way lies the exclusion of words, altogether.

THE EGOIST

HUNTLY CARTER.

MORE LIGHT FOR MR. CARTER.

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Very well, then. Being young, I shall be considerate toward the aged and the infirm. Being Russian, I shall take pity on all. One day they may come to regard themselves truly as high priests and custodians of a spiritual power as great as that in the hands of the Church. Then they will demand to be set as free to follow their great ideal as the servants of the Church. I think one effect of the war will be to hasten this enlightenment. Another effect will be the killing of domestic and discussion plays and the creating of a demand for movement and colour. First will come a glut of glorified Kinemacolour, then the right sort of motion play. I have lately read two of the newest things: Mr. Rodker, the other A. D. Defries—which raise my hope very high indeed. Mr. Rodker's qualifications for a motion-playwright may be found in his book of poems. Anyone who reads the 'Descent into Hell' must admit that it reveals a remarkable sense of the dramatic value of time and silence. A few words rise from the abyss. They sink again as eternal happenings become too deep for words. This way lies the exclusion of words, altogether.

HUNTLY CARTER.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—While quite willing to publish letters under nosse de plume, we make it a condition of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.—Ed.

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HUNTLY CARTER.
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