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"I AM."

By DORA MARSDEN.

THE beginning of the New Year will serve as a sufficient apology for stating afresh the ambitions of this journal and detailing what one considers to be its unique and supremely important task: one for the execution of which we can see no evidence of minds other than our own being forthcoming. There are, we very willingly admit, men of almost infinitely greater attainments in "scholarship," and for such a task as ours "scholars" must of necessity be the untiring hodmen: the willing and directed servants. But of minds possessing the cold courage which can go forward and advance up to and through those mirages of flame and rage as they appear on the hither side: but which prove but echoes of a weak thin sound when they are traversed: of such minds the appearance is rare. When they do appear they find their own work, and that work accomplished establishes a new era. After they are gone—these directing minds—minds of a different order—stuffed minds, scholarly minds, begin to disburse their heavy stores upon the lines they have laid down. The stored rubbish then becomes invaluablely useful treasure: what was purposeless will become vibrant with purpose. So it will be, long after "THE EGOIST" has become a thing of the past. Meanwhile it has its unique work to do, ill-equipped in all accessories as it is, and armed only with the one thing essential. Let this, then, be the answer to those friends who have been good enough to say that "THE EGOISTS'S" activities are all derailed and are willing to pray that the journal might die, if by dying the "remarkable abilities" of the writer might have a chance of "coming into their own." "Their own": the only task which matches their powers in a Verbal Age like this is—to break the hypnotic spell, to blast the stupefactions of—The Word.

Our war is with words and in their every aspect: grammar, accidence, syntax: body, blood, and bone. Let none make a mistake: not because men use words

to deceive; not even because words incline by capacity to deception and are the natural basis of Civilisation: the inoculators of men's powers with the debilitating serum of "Culture"; not because they can be used, and are used, as readily for ends of diplomacy as of frankness; for hiding motives as much as for revealing them, for alluring and deceiving as much as for guiding and illuminating. One could not reasonably object to the surface-deceits of words which make possible those ends of deception rulers and masters require in their difficult task of governing a wayward animal. Words are good for those who use them when they subserve according to design: If the design is to deceive well and good: a good instrument is one which performs the operation—whatever it may be—to which it is set. And those who will the end will also the means: those who extol Civilisation and Culture may not decry in words their powers of deception. Nor will those who care nothing for either civilisation or culture. Since deception is the human way of the strong with the weak, the ways of culture and civilisation are the natural human way of the strong with the weak. And long it will continue to be. As long as there is interplay of intelligences of unequal degrees of power, the verbal deception, which in the bulk constitutes civilisation and culture, will continue. Only a dreamer: a dunce: could seriously expect it to be otherwise. To civilise, to break in a recalcitrant animal by words is an exceedingly clever ruse, the way of men having once been intelligent enough to master they will never lightly forego. The deceptive element in sound, which is the basis of civilisation and culture, was "there in the beginning": before the element of truth, in fact. The alluring and deceptive function of living sounds are more fundamental than their expository. Song is older than speech: cant is more venerable than truth, and only a dunce will expect the former to be abandoned because the latter has arrived. The two interact

together and side by side: and it is merely in the "set" of things that the former should have proved itself in the sequel to be the standby of the more intelligent, because the less intelligent are less open to the appeal of the latter. If this were all and the situation were covered by the categories of "deliberate deceivers" and "unwittingly deceived" there would be little to be said: for these we shall have as long as we have dunces and clever men. Not for any of these things is language regarded as a dangerous fungus which has fastened itself around the promising human growth. As long as language is a servant and under control it may be the servant of whomsoever can make it such: deceivers and masters and any. If words occupied the position of servants even in relation only to a few—to "tyrants", the situation might be left with equanimity and satisfaction. It is because words have developed into a "Culture" and grown masters of all and servants of none that the daring and explorative tendency of intelligence overcomes defensive and insists on bringing down the dominating Verbal Architecture. Had not the Holy words become exasperating, domineering, insulting, invested with Authority and claiming eminence above their creators, demanding worship from them as their supreme God and Good they could comfortably be accepted as "good" to deceive and "good" to expound. But they have changed from being instruments capable of being used into awesome magicians, genii, spirits, invested with a potency above anything apparently in the possession of their "users." They have become the Great Unknown whose powers men fear. Their origins have been lost through the great multitude of their begetters: "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little," they have inherited a mountain of accretions so thickly pressed that not even the acutest mind makes headway towards the unravelling of their casual and humble genesis. Words without tallies other than "Sacred Mysteries" make the bulk of the subject-matter of the learned's disputations. By the very virtue of their lost meanings they have attained to the heights and prestige and command: left limitless by the bonds of sense which comprehension sets, they have floated away into the wide blue Empyrean where as "Absolutes" they dwell. Only by laughter—that gurgle of impishness: by the incorrigibly untutored self-assertiveness of the uninoculated have men saved their souls, half alive, from the complete domination of words. Laughter and the spirit of mockery apart, and we should have been flat on our faces before them lost in submission and adoration. Instinctively the human animal has taken on the habit of laughter as a means of defence and set on the Ridiculous to dog the Sublime.

Laughter, like most of the distinguishing human developments, clothes (in women), weapons (against stronger animals), is defensive. And so has speech become in its developed form of "Culture" in the hands of the governors. Thus far these all represent triumphs of intelligence. There is a sense, however, in which words do not represent intelligence at all: they represent limitation and failure of intelligence: they are merely mistakes and perpetuated errors. Speech which is the fount of a "mystery"; speech that is out of hand, which is authoritative, holy and sacred, which it is a blasphemy to impugn; which deceives all and imposes on all; which acute minds debate for thousands of years and find no clue to, this is that creation of human stupidity, failure, and impotence which at its mature growth develops into a monster which ravens on its creators: its victims. It becomes a magic mesh which neither screens nor lights up the mind, but only stupefies. The spectacle of the human intelligence with all that which it has otherwise attained lying helplessly puzzled and perplexed before its own creation is the one irony of human achievement.

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No! The trying of issues with the forms of language is the next great task of human explorative, power-evidencing, enfranchising genius because words in one half of their activities have grown great and climbed high to secure all the heavenly seats. They are to be torn down: high as they stand, high and secure, guarded with the Halo of the Sacred and Holy from the touch of

the profane: the masters of men. And this latter day creation: this waiting-maid of men, has become invested with Authority as Lord Master and Begetter with men's own acquiescence: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God," they will say. To blast the Word, to reduce it to its function of instrument is the enfranchisement of the human kind: the imminent new assertion of its next reach in power.

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Words working by their "Mystery" through men's fears have acquired the power to deflect men from their strongest desires: to divorce them from their most vital instincts. The "coming to oneself": the recognising of the "Why" in men's motives, which is the meaning of the progress from "consciousness" to "self-consciousness," has been made impossible. Men have been enabled to know only as much of themselves as the maintenance of the sanctity of the Sacred Words rendered permissible: not much that is. What is called "self-consciousness" is an addled affair: a bogus version of men's motives which imposes on themselves and which a genuine self-consciousness can replace only after the shattering of the adverse influence which works incessantly against it. Before self-consciousness accurately can make a beginning, the Verbal Age in which the Word is unbridled, rampant, mysterious and so paramount must have felt the beginning of the end.

To dissect the language, to assess the amount of validity in its current forms does not necessarily imply its abolition or even to any overwhelming extent its substitution. It is enough if psychology pronounces a valuation of the existing forms: shows how this is elliptical, that redundant, this unlimited, that unwarranted or inverted. It will then be possible, upon being presented with a "problem" to show at what point in the grammatical form the leakage of sense is located. Philosophical "problems" will transmute automatically into grammatical leakages. In fact, grammatical form reduced to maniable limits by psychology will entail as a first consequence the scrapping of the verbal conundrums which constitute existing philosophy. Philosophers hitherto have been not lovers of words, but humble followers of tradition, fascinated by its labyrinthine errors. The problems of their Metaphysics, their Psychology, their Ethics, their Religions, have been nothing more than the outcrops of faults inherent in the speech they used. The knots have been born of the form of the questions and have been unwittingly placed there by the very species of enquirers who later become so puzzled to find out their significance.

Philosophy is doomed to sterility as long as it is based upon unapprehended words and acknowledged enigmas which keep its activities widely divided from the currents of vital interests.

Out of befuzzling sound not even the finest brain can spin anything save folly: its energies turn to foolishness to match the stuff it works in. The human brain can work to fruitful purpose only when it is set to ply about images which have sprung into vivid form in the human consciousness: it is at home only in that aura of images which is thrown off from the living "I" and to which men have given the title of "The World." Set to tune with Heaven—that conceptual verbal kingdom—the brain petrifies into stupidity.

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We have already inveighed against the conceptual Substantive: often doubtless to the bewilderment of our readers. This particular grammatical form was given pre-eminence in discredit because under its ægis, Verbal Authority had moved furthest towards absolute command. The substantival concepts representing the abstract vices and virtues have secured the main control of conduct: they represented the sum-total of Good and Evil, and could clinch every argument to the favour of the Mysteries. But not merely this ancient foe the conceptual substantive, but grammatical forms in their every variety: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, interjection, preposition and conjunction: the entire scheme of accidence and syntax all alike require to be brought under the psychological scalpel before philo-

sophy can make its first forward step. Only after having accomplished this first preliminary labour can it be rid of its childish problems and get on to its sole business—psychology. When it is done, however, the problems of “Space” and “Time,” of “Cause” and the “Real” and the “True”; of the antithetical twins “Subjective and Objective,” “Sensual and Spiritual,” “Ideal and Real,” “Appearance and Thing-in-itself,” will evaporate into their proper medium of thin sound. And merely preferential favour or disfavour for particular forms are to no purpose: all such are doomed to end in blind alleys. There exists for instance at the present moment a fairly wide-spread dissatisfaction with the grammatical structure in this form or that, but it all ends in desultory repugnances and preferences—having, no doubt, considerable influence in the shaping of particular writers’ styles, but of philosophical influence being absolutely *nil*. Naturally so, since these surface-adjustments being based upon revolt rather than upon comprehension, they represent merely one trend in the course of a pendulum’s swing, which constantly goes forward only to recede. Our friends, the “Imagists,” for instance have taken exception, oddly enough, to the use of the adjective: because they hate generalisation and abstractions. But the substantive—any substantive, abstract or concrete,—represents the generalising process in a far higher degree than the adjective: it approaches much nearer the conceptual: the abstract. Again, M. Marinetti of Futurist fame has balanced his loathing of syntactical form by a marked preference for the Infinitive form of the verb. It is “fluid,” they say. So it is: too fluid for the confines of sense with which it “flows” away. The infinitive is as conceptual in its nature as the abstract form of speech to which the name concept is more commonly given. “TO BE,” for instance, is as much an abstraction torn away from any corresponding forces as is the absolute “BEING.” It is indeed an even more dangerous pitfall for honestly striving philosophers than the concepts ordinarily so-called, because its form being more specious and subtle, they are even less on their guard against it. It is thus even more empowered to expand its verbal wings and float away into the Empyrean of “Absolute” clap-trap: returning only to deposit its brood of meaningless conundrums. Every form of the verb indeed save that which is hitched up to the first person singular is a danger to accuracy and expression. At best they must all be *inferential*, and possess all the possibility of error which is the natural accompaniment of any inference: the difference as to certainty which exists between inference and first-hand impression: between “knowledge” and mere “reasoning” that is. As Browning applied the distinction “The rest may reason and welcome! ’tis we musicians know,” *i.e.*, feel the image keenly and at first-hand. Accurately, every sentence begins with “I.” Every sentence which does not is elliptical: and in proportion as the ellipsis which the customary shortened form condones, is lost sight of in speech, speech loses its bearings.

Thus when I say, “IT moves,” I mean “I have the image of it moving.” I may of course, by means of mechanical contrivances produce for myself the image that it moves while “actually” it does not move. But for this “actually,” I have to credit hearsay—some other persons purported image, that is, or to get other images of my own of such a nature as to counter-balance the effects of this one.

And even the one form of the verb, the first person singular, tends to mislead in proportion as it becomes more independent and detached in form from the enveloping comprehensive entity—the “I”—of which it represents only a passing image.

The confusion out of which “Theories of knowledge” are born arises from grammatical causes. “Knowledge” and “To know” are labels without counterparts: concepts both. The less misleading form which would correspond to “knowledge” is, “I know,” which again corresponds to “I am aware,” which in turn corresponds to “I feel,” and of which the particular image felt is nothing but the “I” affected thus and thus; *i.e.*, “I” exist momentarily in such a state. The theory of knowledge is identical with the theory of existence: idle ques-

tions both: offspring of faulty labelling, and both dissipated into their underlying inaneity by the philosophical unfolding of the “I.” We say in connection with very definite images, “I know,” and then proceed to ask, “What do I mean when I say ‘I know’?” If we consider what we do mean when we say “I know” we realise it is “I feel . . .” but feel it with a particular degree of clearness, definitely and strongly.

The habit of speech which has come to recognise a lesser degree of certainty in “I feel” than in “I know” really tends to invert the connotation of both and merely compounds confusion: as does the modern habit of making antitheses of “heart and head,” “intuition and intellect,” “feeling and knowing,” as though there existed some difference in kind between them other than that of distinctness. “Intellection,” for instance, is being accorded an amount of attention as a definite “faculty” of the mind in a modern philosophy which is extremely misleading. These and similar sterile labours of metaphysicians during nearly three thousand years would have been spared had it been observed at the outset that in the grammatical forms of subject and predicate there existed a constant temptation to see in what was a mere redundant emphasis a distinctness implying separate “entities.” The verb, for instance, does not describe “an” activity: it merely describes the subject as it produces one particular image. The verb’s purpose is to particularise the condition of the “I” under which for the moment it shows itself.

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Consider the term “I,” or equivalent forms which other languages give to it. It is the sign of the living unit—the organism—affirming the presence of its own life. It stands comprehensively for “I am conscious”: for “I feel”: “I live”: “I am.” The “I” includes the full connotation of “I am.” “I am” is an assertion made twice, as is the phrase “I exist” and the further equivalents “I feel” and “I sense.” Anything which we allow “am,” “feel,” “exist” or “sense” to connote the “I” has already asserted by itself. They have no meaning which the “I” has not: in fact, they have no meaning at all apart from the purport of the “I.” “To be,” “to feel,” “to sense,” “to exist,” are properly speaking totally devoid of connotation, but they take on a suggestion of meaning by loose association with the “I.” Abstracted from the “I” as the infinitive is, it is divorced from the only source capable of investing it with meaning. The infinitive, pure and simple, has no tally. Nor, accurately speaking, have other forms of the verb other than the first person singular linked fast to its “subject.” Always it is “I” which feels. You, they, he, she, it, merely “appear to me” to feel.

Thus the “I” is the comprehensive expression of existence as viewed by the only unit competent to view it: the one who exists. It comprehends the whole gallery of images which it can throw out from itself: the “stream of life” and all the images which glow in the stream. The “I” includes the one looking out on a “World” and the entire “World” it looks out on—and this whether “I” be a tree, or a worm, or a reader of “THE EGOIST.” The “I” creates its own world. The world is of it. As the “I” is, so the world is. If the “I” is to be called spirit then the world is spirit too. The myth of two worlds—a sensual and a spiritual—has grown up about the slipshod use—the misleading extension—of the verb “sense.” We have no “senses” substantively: we merely “sense” to the extent of our powers: that, is the “I” gives to itself to the extent of its powers such images as it can strike out from itself. Scenes, sounds, smells, tastes, colour, shape, size, space, time, stress, strain, are merely aspects of the “I.” To be sure, they appear as qualities of the “things” sensed, but then the “things” also are but the product of and exist only in the “I.” So one may pride oneself on being scientific: bent on looking at “things,” and on “measuring things.” But what is that but the pressing of more egoistic power into one particular effort of the scientist’s “ego,” by which means he may hope to call out from himself and for himself a more clear and full image than he had as the result of the smaller effort: from his lesser

exercise of himself. Thus the progress of science is but the expanding of the "I": of the World of images which we call the scientist's soul. And all that which we call the objective world are but so many patterns and chords—auras—thrown out by the "I" itself. The difference between my "World" and this plant's "World" is a difference not in "a" World common to us both, but between me and the plant. Our worlds? We each grow our own!

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So much for the world and spirit—if "I" am spirit. And so much for the Sensual and Spiritual. In proportion as "I" am, as "I" live, I likewise "sense" all and everything possible to me. The flow of images in the "I" is as full and rapid as it may be, *i.e.*, as "I" can produce. That is, the more I am, the more sensual I am. Whether that means more spiritual too, must be left to those who have not yet decided whether or no they mean to make "spiritual" synonymous with "verbal." Should they do so, that would make a difference between Spiritual and Sensual which could forthwith be translated as Vital and Verbal respectively. And so too the antithesis between "Appearance and the Thing-in-itself" between "Appearance and Reality."

When Kant was chasing that "x": that reality beneath experience: which he called "Thing-in-itself," he was like a cat trying to catch the shadow of its own tail. He was deluded by the shadows cast by the light of grammar shining strongly from behind him. His position in regard to it could be easily unravelled by following up the error which secured its chance of slipping in, on account of the redundant verb in "I am," an error which has grown, none the less grown to almost untamable proportions by the time it arrives at the inferential form of the third person: *i.e.*, when "am" has become "is." "I am . . ." means "I—affected so and so." There could be no affection if the "I" were not there to be affected. But by the time the verb form progresses from "am" to "is," it has acquired an independence of its own: become complete without a subject: with an innocent-appearing "there" to fill in the gap. The conundrum of "Thing-in-itself" could be put thus: "What do we feel when we don't?" or, "What is there felt we don't feel?" or, "What is there when there isn't?" Kant replies "Something very deep and profound: something more real than the most real: the Thing-in-itself." The genuine verbal philosopher!

VIEWS AND COMMENTS.

THERE is a limit to all things. The limit of men's capacity for repeated impressions is very soon reached. Already the war, though as yet it has lasted only six months, has become an institution like the weather. As a dominating Christmas theme even with the Music-Halls it has fallen far short—as far as one has opportunity to judge, that is. Which is hard luck for those who had counted on seeing all the world in the light of a baleful reaction to the Kaiser. We are not all having our heads blown off, not all in trenches or barracks. We are snugly at home: just the same sort of individuals we were before the first of August: requiring to be amused and interested just the same. Hence, if anything could arouse one out of the semi-torpor induced by a bad cold, some other things, and the writing of this article, it is the threat to put us all on an intellectual diet of "Thought as thought by the Allies," with pure undiluted English thought as a staple. One might as well become an exile as be compelled to fare off the tepid stewed mush which passes current as thinking to-day in England. The Germans are virile and their virility comes out in their thinking. Incisive, penetrating, there is the memory of an edge felt somewhere left even when they are dull. And when they are not dull! Stirner was a German, born and buried in Berlin. Of course the English can only gather there was a German Nietzsche: something a little more flashy and possessing considerably less "edge."

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All which sounds cross. And a cross comfortable civilian may not now make himself heard! It must be the effect of Mr. Churchill's "Baby-killers of Scarborough" effort. What an effusion! As though this war was a game with rules to it—other than such rules as will win. Even a comfortable civilian will feel none too safe after a few more such fatuous utterances. And the "Times" draws the moral from this East-coast visitation, that the eligible young men who have not yet offered to enlist for service must do so now. Otherwise the responsibility for the devastation of the country, if it be devastated, will rest on them! Such cool impudence as they try on this long-suffering populace! The responsibility will rest and will promptly be attached where it belongs—on the "governors." If the safety of England demands more men, delay in meeting it is a blunder of such magnitude on their part that should it be com-

mitted, Lord Kitchener and the rest would escape the wrath of the people scarcely with their lives.

That of course is prophecy, but it is very safe prophecy. Recruiting of the emotional sort requires so much cant that in a situation obviously serious, the use of it is distressing. One becomes irritated, hearing the Government, who have made a war on their own responsibility, who have been given *carte blanche* by the nation, in order that unhampered, they may be able to prosecute the work successfully, trying to shift their responsibility upon slender shoulders which have already much to bear as things are, but which will be ready to do their part if called upon seriously. If men are wanted let the Government demand them. This obviously is their task and concern and no others.

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There were one or two other references to "THE EGOIST" doctrine in the correspondence columns of the last issue, which may be dealt with here. In relation to the substance of the letter headed "Derivations," no comment need be offered save acknowledgments to the writer for an interesting quotation. But the subject of philosophic "derivations" itself is worth lingering on. There is for instance no need for surprise when men's "images"—their experiences—duplicate themselves. Throughout a wide area, men's egoistic potentialities reach broadly to a common level: the image which can be struck off one man's "soul" very probably can be matched by images achieved in another's: or many others. And when men are off their guard—the verbal guard that is—and are observing their own phenomena for themselves, their observations from time to time portray their impression, in spite of the verbal influence, very accurately: usually much to their own delighted astonishment. Almost every man, except the "yapper"—the incurably idealistic—must be guilty of these lapses into accuracy upon occasion: and every philosophy stiffens itself into self-confidence by the possession of one or two. Often very divergent philosophies will be heavily leaning on the same "Truth." In short the apparently most dissimilar people are to be expected to unburden themselves on occasion of the self-same "truth": each equally feeling that it comes straight from himself as "original truth." Which as far as he is concerned it is: and neither is greatly put about by the way it squares or, more commonly, fails to square with his customary mental predilections. Unguarded "truths"

are home-grown like the rest of our "World." They are primary; in spite of their extensive multiplications. They may be "good" and "bad" of their kind as one might say a painter's colours and brushes were good and bad. It is a mistake to speak of them as being derivative at all. Single, detached "truths" bear no stronger evidence of having been "derived" than the dabbing of a particular mixture of paint by a child's hand would argue the influence of a consummate artist who in his work may make a carefully selective use of it. In short selection among "truth" is the key to a thinker's particular power: and only along the lines of a duplicated selection can one get genuine evidence of "derivation."

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I see Mr. Steven Byington has fallen foul of our argument anent the characterisation of possessors of an "Inner Voice." And quite right too. One idly uses this kind of poetic symbolism, partly because it gives a good sound, and partly because it possesses a traditional standing. Actually it is slipshod jargon capable of queering the straightest argument and of which the use has misunderstanding as a natural consequence. However, some alert reader will fortunately be on the watch for slips, and you are tripped up and have to embark on an explanation of what you meant as distinguished from what you said.

An illustration to hand of the tawdry sort of rubbish such poetics as "Inner Voice" really are is Mr. Byington's list of men who he avows were all influenced by an "Inner Voice," men as opposite in their attitude to "what good repute expects" of them, of what they "owe" to men and God, as it is possible to conceive. He has been enabled to draw up such a list without a qualm because of the ambiguous purport of the meaning of "Inner Voice." Thus the Inner Voice may be the voice of God and Authority, i.e., a sense of scruple (fear, consideration of opinion, consideration of consequences); or it may be the prompting of an urgent inner desire which demands its own satisfaction no matter what scruples stand in the way. Such a discrimination between the possible meanings of an "Inner Voice" is essential: once made, it affords a useful line of division. One who desires fiercely (no matter what) finds all his scruples outweighed: he is an egoist, and obviously: before the eyes of his fellows. Whereas the one whose desires are tepid finds that his concern for opinion, other's resentment, and for consequences generally more than outweighs his desire. He is of the material which produces the Man of Honour: while the Luthers, Cromwells, Napoleons, are men with passions strong enough to drown every voice of consequence and every concern for repute. That both sorts are found to possess a similar jargon of Holy Speech, which clings burr-like about them, means nothing at all. That Cromwell talks of his God with reverence and unction is a matter without weight. Naturally he does: his God is himself: and the old phrases are as good as any others—even better, because they cloak the fact the more.

Men are to be known by the courses they follow: the definite lines in which they strike out from the ordinary and by which the world ultimately knows them: not by the odd conventional phrases and attitudes which they merely neglect to abandon—which are mere survivals.

Cromwell rising from his knees after communing with his God is a totally different person from (say) the gentle, ineffectual Falkland who fought for a side against his own will.

Cromwell belongs wholly to the Napoleonic type. He did what he himself wished to do, though it flouted all the sacred authorities and violated both Church and King. As did also Luther and Knox. *Scruples in the mass*, i.e., general respect for authorities, God, King, and Church, do not indicate character to any degree. For mere indifference naturally gives the advantage to scruple. What is the good, for instance, of taking fruitless risks. Sleeping dogs will be allowed to lie, where the particular plunder has no attraction. Whether a person is scrupulous can be put to a test only along the line

of achievement of the thing he cares about. Only when men are seriously engrossed in a purpose do they definitely face the commands and prohibitions which block the way to its achievement. It is how men act then which betrays whether they are under the genuine hypnotism of scruples as such: the traditional Inner Voice. In such a circumstance a Cromwell is untouched by scruple even of the most threatening character. The only voice he hears is that urging him on to his own work: that voice only is the God he confers with. There are obviously two classes of distinguished person: there is he who excels in service and becomes distinguished by conferment: receives Honour from the Repository of Honour: Established Authority. A Bayard for instance. And there is he who tilts against Established Authority and establishes his own. The latter class, let them be kings or peasants, let the idols they tear down be Gods or constitutional precedents, are all of the Napoleonic order. They carve out a new orbit of their own by the sheer expression of their own energy and the scrupulous men—the men of the Inner Voice—are swept into their wake as "Followers": chaff before the wind. The fact that they commune deeply with their God implies much: they are seeking its interests. Not of course the orthodox authoritarian God, but that intimate conception of their own Good which is their one God.

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It is difficult to see how Mr. Harpur has come by the notion that we think Morality totals out as Egoism plus Humbug. We have been at pains to show that "morality" is simply the normal habits of the crowd: that it possesses a clear egoistic basis in its capacity to minister to the Moral Ones' need for the approval of their fellows: to their need of Honour. But "egoism" comprises the moral as completely as it comprises the immoral, and as completely—to spoil this correspondent's classification entirely—it includes Humbug. There may be erratic egoists whose special "kink" is to irritate wasps and worms: their preferences may lie that way: but ordinarily, men endeavour, for their own interests, to come to terms with them. Only when their particular bent lies across the path of wasps and worms do they count the cost of trying issues with either. In proportion as they then account it worth while to stir them up gives the index of the class to which they belong. The attitude they adopt towards the two kinds indicates the relative power which they possess and can exercise. Such as join issue with wasps, realising them for what they are, are removed from the sphere of doubt. They are born to conquer or be conquered, and if they conquer they will make short work of the disapproval of the worms. If, on the other hand, their power is such that the prospect of roused worms is not devoid of terrors; if the retention of their approval becomes a matter of importance in the calculation of the lines of conduct, they are Men of Honour and Good Repute. The claims of "Morality" and "Honour" will have their maximum weight and only with the residuum of what self-imposing energy has been left after these have been calculated for, will they wage the differences they have with those whom their attitude acknowledges as equals or superiors—the worms. Mr. Harpur "wishes everybody to be happy in his own way." I am moral, he says. An egoist would say, "I wish to be happy myself"; and in so far as the happiness or unhappiness of others is involved in his own he would will the happiness or unhappiness of others without preference.

D. M.

NOTICE TO READERS.

During the remainder of the War, THE EGOIST will be issued on the first of the month only. Subscriptions already paid will hold good for a proportionately extended period.—Ed.

THE PLAYS OF JOHN SYNGE.

By RICHARD ALDINGTON.

IT is somewhat chilling to remember that during the year or more in which I have been writing in this paper, reviewing most often carefully selected books, I have had occasion to notice none which were not ephemeral and merely relatively excellent. Of all the literary productions which have passed through my hands during that period only one—a poem called "Heaven"—seems to me now to possess any of the elements of great, of thrilling artistic pleasure. It would be most convenient if, in order to keep the scale properly adjusted, one could head reviews "First-rate Books," "Second-rate Books," "Third-rate Books"—as Balzac did in his paper. It would save a great deal of trouble and forestall some misapprehension as to one's views.

In accordance with that plan one could wholeheartedly and sincerely label Synge's plays "First-rate books." Synge was emphatically a man of whom we may say: "He had genius." Among all the thousand ephemeral talents, among the clever and the cultivated and the refined who make what Whitman calls "the soil of literature," who are forgotten before or as soon as they die, Synge remains. He remains because he was a man who really created something new, who recorded—perhaps locally—the life of a people he understood. The Aran Islands and the book about Wicklow and Connemara and his poems are all delightful enough, and we should all probably have read them; but we should not have thought a great deal of Synge as a creative genius had it not been for his plays. He would have been just one of the Irish group. As it is, he is the Irish group—he so overshadows all the other Irish writers of our own or any time that they will owe the study of their works to him and not he to them. People will be curious to know what the men of Ireland were writing in Synge's time, and many otherwise forgotten authors will receive a reflected glory, because they belonged to a movement, a type in literature of which Synge is the great example.

It is interesting to compare Synge and the Irish movement with Burns and Scott and the Scottish movement of the last century. The discovery of a new dialect literature is always delightful to the people of an over-cultivated capital, where language is worn thin and meagre by constant use, where the vulgarisation of journals and of the common people has abolished the primitive poetry of primitive people. And not only that, for to the country the art of the capital seems all important; to the capital the freshness and sweetness of remote people is incredibly delightful—for a time. In the London of 1820-1840 the romances of Scott, the poems of Burns exercised a charm which is incredible to us when we read Scott's ponderous sentences and Burns' localised and provincial poetry. We smile when we find the editor of the respectable "Edinburgh Review" comparing Walter Scott with Shakespeare, or when we find Burns' lyrics extolled as the greatest productions in the English language. And yet such language has been used of the Irish school, and yet I find myself urged to declare that Synge is the greatest dramatist England has had since Shakespeare.

It would be a great relief to those people who are over-stocked with English "culture" if they could be brought to consider all our less than first-rate authors as merely local. It would be so excellent if we allowed a reasonable amount of English reading to be a matter of "general culture," if we added to that a wide knowledge of Greek, Latin, Italian, French, Spanish and German literatures, and then were permitted to taste our lesser writers locally. Nowadays every little journalist feels that he must at least pretend to have an acquaintance with Pepys' and Evelyn's diaries, with minor Elizabethan dramatists, with minor Victorian novelists and the like, while he is profoundly ignorant of the infinitely more important literatures of more

favoured countries. How admirable it would be if one only read Scott when one went to Abbotsford, Beaumont and Fletcher at Rye, Drayton in Warwickshire, and Lamb on the rare occasions when one visited Edmonton and Islington! It would clear the ground so admirably, it would set all these gentlemen in their proper places, and it might actually prepare the English mind for a re-assimilation of the literature it has neglected since the Renaissance.

Yet though Synge is, in four of his plays at least, specifically local, I do not feel inclined to call him a local poet or dramatist. It may be because I am too near to him, but I cannot conceive of him in any fashion except as an extremely great artist whose work is an essential part of the life of every cultivated man—I do not mean every literary expert or literary maniac—as the works of Shakespeare, of Catullus, and of Theocritus.

I am led into these remarks by receiving from Messrs. Maunsel a re-issue of Synge's plays, complete in one volume.* As I turned over the leaves of those plays that one ought to know by heart I felt bound to add a very slight tribute to Synge's memory, though these notes are intended for "the latest thing" in literature and not for reprints of established works. I am not going to criticise Synge technically, because it would be rather in the nature of an impertinence; I don't think I shall try to analyse his methods and his command over one's emotions. He has indeed put so much of his own extraordinary pathetic, beautiful nature into the people of the Aran Islands that these people move us by the very cadence of their speech. "Deirdre of the Sorrows" may be one of the most beautiful things in literature, as Mr. Yeats says it is. It is not for me to say. But if I want a "great terrifying joy" in words and emotions, it is to this that I turn:

Pegeen. It's queer joys they have, and who knows the thing they'd do, if it'd make the green stones cry itself to think of you swaying and swigging at the butt of a rope, and you with a fine, stout neck, God bless you! the way you'd be a half an hour, in great anguish, getting your death.

Christy (getting his boots and putting them on). If there's that terror of them, it'd be best, maybe, I went on wandering, like Esau or Cain and Abel on the sides of Neifin or the Erris plain.

Pegeen (beginning to play with him). It would, maybe, for I've heard the Circuit Judges this place is a heartless crew.

Christy (bitterly). It's more than judges this place is a heartless crew. (Looking up at her.) And isn't it a poor thing to be starting again, and I a lonesome fellow will be looking out on women and girls the way the needy fallen spirits do be looking on the Lord?

Pegeen. What call have you to be that lonesome when there's poor girls walking Mayo in their thousands now?

Christy (grimly). It's well you know what call I have. It's well you know it's a lonesome thing to be passing small towns with the lights shining sideways when the night is down, or going in strange places with a dog noising before you and a dog noising behind, or drawn to the cities where you'd hear a voice kissing and talking deep love in every shadow of the ditch, and you passing on with an empty, hungry stomach failing from your heart."

That may be local writing. But to me it seems some of the most beautiful prose that has ever been written. I cannot remember reading, anything more beautiful, anything which possessed quite that wistful, quiet sort of beauty remote from us, if you like, but remote as all beautiful things are from us ordinary people who just sit and judge books, just sit and read books, just sit and write books; for John Synge was a great man, a man, one likes to think, whom the immortal gods of another age would have liked to make of their company.

* Dramatic Works of John M. Synge. Maunsel and Co., 7s. 6d.

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN.

By JAMES JOYCE.

CHAPTER IV. (*continued.*)

HE could wait no longer.

From the door of Byron's public-house to the gate of Clontarf Chapel, from the gate of Clontarf Chapel to the door of Byron's public-house, and then back again to the chapel and then back again to the public-house he had paced slowly at first, planting his steps scrupulously in the spaces of the patchwork of the footpath, then timing their fall to the fall of verses. A full hour had passed since his father had gone in with Dan Crosby, the tutor, to find out for him something about the university. For a full hour he had paced up and down, waiting: but he could wait no longer.

He set off abruptly for the Bull, walking rapidly lest his father's shrill whistle might call him back; and in a few moments he had rounded the curve at the police barrack and was safe.

Yes, his mother was hostile to the idea, as he had read from her listless silence. Yet her mistrust pricked him more keenly than his father's pride, and he thought coldly how he had watched the faith which was fading down in his soul, ageing and strengthening in her eyes. A dim antagonism gathered force within him and darkened his mind as a cloud against her disloyalty: and when it passed, cloudlike, leaving his mind serene and dutiful towards her again, he was made aware dimly and without regret of a first noiseless sundering of their lives.

The University! So he had passed beyond the challenge of the sentries who had stood as guardians of his boyhood and had sought to keep him among them that he might be subject to them and serve their ends. Pride after satisfaction uplifted him like long slow waves. The end he had been born to serve yet did not see had led him to escape by an unseen path: and now it beckoned to him once more and a new adventure was about to be opened to him. It seemed to him that he heard notes of fitful music leaping upwards a tone and downwards a diminished fourth, upwards a tone and downwards a major third, like triple-branching flames leaping fitfully, flame after flame, out of a midnight wood. It was an elfin prelude, endless and formless; and, as it grew wilder and faster, the flames leaping out of time, he seemed to hear from under the boughs and grasses wild creatures racing, their feet pattering like rain upon the leaves. Their feet passed in pattering tumult over his mind, the feet of hares and rabbits, the feet of harts and hinds and antelopes, until he heard them no more and remembered only a proud cadence from Newman:—

—Whose feet are as the feet of harts and underneath the everlasting arms.—

The pride of that dim image brought back to his mind the dignity of the office he had refused. All through his boyhood he had mused upon that which he had so often thought to be his destiny, and when the moment had come for him to obey the call he had turned aside, obeying a wayward instinct. Now time lay between: the oils of ordination would never anoint his body. He had refused. Why?

He turned seaward from the road at Dollymount, and as he passed on to the thin wooden bridge he felt the planks shaking with the tramp of heavily shod feet. A squad of Christian Brothers was on its way back from the Bull, and had begun to pass, two by two, across the bridge. Soon the whole bridge was trembling and resounding. The uncouth faces passed him two by two, stained yellow or red or livid by the sea, and as he strove to look at them with ease and indifference, a faint stain of personal shame and commiseration rose to his own face. Angry with himself he tried to hide his face from their eyes by gazing down sideways into the shallow swirling water under the bridge, but he still saw a reflec-

tion therein of their top-heavy silk hats, and humble tapelike collars, and loosely hanging clerical clothes.

—Brother Hickey.

Brother Quaid.

Brother MacArdle.

Brother Keogh.—

Their piety would be like their names, like their faces, like their clothes; and it was idle for him to tell himself that their humble and contrite hearts, it might be, paid a far richer tribute of devotion than his had ever been, a gift tenfold more acceptable than his elaborate adoration. It was idle for him to move himself to be generous towards them, to tell himself that if he ever came to their gates, stripped of his pride, beaten and in beggar's weeds, that they would be generous towards him, loving him as themselves. Idle and embittering, finally, to argue, against his own dispassionate certitude, that the commandment of love bade us not to love our neighbours as ourselves, with the same amount and intensity of love, but to love him as ourselves with the same kind of love.

He drew forth a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:

—A day of dappled sea-borne clouds.—

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the grey-fringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many-coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid, supple, periodic prose.

He passed from the trembling bridge on to firm land again. At that instant, as it seemed to him, the air was chilled; and looking askance towards the water he saw a flying squall darkening and crisping suddenly the tide. A faint click at his heart, a faint throb in his throat told him once more of how his flesh dreaded the cold infra-human odour of the sea: yet he did not strike across the downs on his left, but held straight on along the spine of rocks that pointed against the river's mouth.

A veiled sunlight lit up faintly the grey sheet of water where the river was embayed. In the distance along the course of the slow-flowing Liffey slender masts flecked the sky and, more distant still, the dim fabric of the city lay prone in haze. Like a scene on some vague arras, old as man's weariness, the image of the seventh city of Christendom was visible to him across the timeless air, no older nor more weary nor less patient of subjection than in the days of the Thingmote.

Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slow-drifting clouds, dappled and sea-borne. They were voyaging across the deserts of the sky, a host of nomads on the march, voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The Europe they had come from lay out there beyond the Irish Sea, Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and wood-begirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshalled races. He heard a confused music within him as of memories and names which he was almost conscious of but could not capture even for an instant; then the music seemed to recede, to recede, to recede: and from each receding trail of nebulous music there fell always one long-drawn calling note, piercing like a star the dusk of silence. Again! Again! Again! A voice from beyond the world was calling.

—Hello, Stephanos!—

—Here comes The Dedalus!—

—Ao! . . . Eh, give it over, Dwyer, I'm telling you, or I'll give you a stuff in the kisser for yourself. . . . Ao!—

—Good man, Towser! Duck him!—

—Come along, Dedalus! Bous Stephanonmenos! Bous Stephaneforos!—

—Duck him! Guzzle him now, Towser!—

—Help! Help! . . . Ao!—

He recognised their speech collectively before he distinguished their faces. The mere sight of that medley of wet nakedness chilled him to the bone. Their bodies, corpse-white or suffused with a pallid golden light or rawly tanned by the suns, gleamed with the wet of the sea. Their diving-stone, poised on its rude supports and rocking under their plunges, and the rough-hewn stones of the sloping breakwater over which they scrambled in their horseplay, gleamed with cold wet lustre. The towels with which they smacked their bodies were heavy with cold sea-water: and drenched with cold brine was their matted hair.

He stood still in deference to their calls and parried their banter with easy words. How characterless they looked: Shuley without his deep unbuttoned collar, Ennis without his scarlet belt with the snaky clasp, and Connolly without his Norfolk coat with the flapless side-pockets! Perhaps they had taken refuge in number and noise from the secret dread in their souls. But he, apart from them and in silence, remembered in what dread he stood of the mystery of his own body.

—Stephanos Dedalos! Bous Stephanomnenos! Bous Stephaneforos!—

Their banter was not new to him, and now it flattered his mild, proud sovereignty. Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. So timeless seemed the grey, warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. A moment before the ghost of the ancient Kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the haze-wrapped city. Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some mediæval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawk-like man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring, impalpable, imperishable being?

His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world, and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude, and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes; and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his wind-swept limbs.

—One! Two! . . . Look out!—

—O, Cripes, I'm drowned!—

—One! Two! Three and away!—

—The next! The next!—

—One! . . . Uk!—

—Stephaneforos!—

His throat ached with a desire to cry aloud, the cry of a hawk or eagle on high, to cry piercingly of his deliverance to the winds. This was the call of life to his soul, not the dull, gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar. An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain.

—Stephaneforos!—

What were they now but the cerements shaken from the body of death—the fear he had walked in night and day, the incertitude that had ringed him round, the shame that had abased him within and without—cerements, the linens of the grave?

His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her grave-clothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable.

He started up nervously from the stone-block, for he could no longer quench the flame in his blood. He felt his cheeks aflame and his throat throbbing with song.

There was a lust of wandering in his feet that burned to set out for the ends of the earth. On! On! his heart seemed to cry. Evening would deepen above the sea, night fall upon the plains, dawn glimmer before the wanderer and show him strange fields and hills and faces. Where?

He looked northward towards Howth. The sea had fallen below the line of sea-rock on the shallow side of the breakwater, and already the tide was running out fast along the foreshore. Already one long oval bank of sand lay warm and dry amid the wavelets. Here and there warm isles of sand gleamed above the shallow tide: and about the isles and around the long bank and amid the shallow currents of the beach were light-clad figures wading and delving.

In a few moments he was barefoot, his stockings folded in his pockets, and his canvas shoes dangling by their knotted laces over his shoulders: and picking a pointed salt-eaten stick out of the jetsam among the rocks, he clambered down the slope of the breakwater.

There was a long rivulet in the strand: and, as he waded slowly up its course, he wondered at the endless drift of seaweed. Emerald and black and russet and olive, it moved beneath the current, swaying and turning. The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the high-drifting clouds. The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the sea-tangle was drifting below him; and the grey, warm air was still: and a new wild life was singing in his veins.

Where was his boyhood now? Where was the soul that had hung back from her destiny, to brood alone upon the shame of her wounds and in her house of squalor and subterfuge to queen it in faded cerements and in wreaths that withered at the touch? Or, where was he.

He was alone. He was unheeded, happy, and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and wilful and wild-hearted, alone amid a waste of wild air and brackish waters and the sea-harvest of shells and tangle and veiled grey sunlight, and gay-clad, light-clad figures of children and girls and voices childish and girlish in the air.

A girl stood before him in midstream: alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful sea-bird. Her long, slender, bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dove-tailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long, fair hair was girlish: and girlish and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty of her face.

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze, and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither: and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.

—Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy.—

He turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on!

He halted suddenly and heard his heart in the silence. How far had he walked? What hour was it?

There was no human figure near him, nor any sound borne to him over the air. But the tide was near the turn, and already the day was on the wane. He turned landward and ran towards the shore, and running up the sloping beach, reckless of the sharp shingle, found a sandy nook amid a ring of tufted sand knolls, and lay down there that the peace and silence of the evening might still the riot of his blood.

He felt above him the vast indifferent dome and the calm processes of the heavenly bodies: and the earth beneath him, the earth that had borne him, had taken him to her breast.

He closed his eyes in the languor of sleep. His eyelids trembled as if they felt the vast cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers, trembled as if they felt the strange light of some new world. His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer, or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other.

Evening had fallen when he woke, and the sand and arid grasses of his bed glowed no longer. He rose slowly, and recalling the rapture of his sleep sighed at its joy.

He climbed to the crest of the sandhill and gazed about him. Evening had fallen. A rim of the young moon cleft the pale waste of sky line, the rim of a silver hoop embedded in grey sand: and the tide was flowing in fast to the land with a low whisper of her waves, islanding a few last figures in distant pools.

(To be continued.)

CHINESE EGOISM.

III.—CRITICISM FROM A MODERN VIEW POINT.

(1.) THE RELATION OF EGOISM TO PHILOSOPHY GENERALLY.

I OBSERVE a general law relating to the appearance of egoist philosophies in the world, a law under which Yang-Chu's doctrine naturally falls. It may be stated briefly in the following terms: (1) The Nature Will supplies to every creature egoist impulses towards self-preservation and gratification. (2) Upon these impulses is based an incipient scheme of purely egoist values. (3) Necessity reveals to the individual its dependence, partial or complete, on others, and from this perception are derived social impulses. (4) As the sensibility of individuals intensifies, impulses of another kind are liberated, namely, altruistic impulses towards securing the welfare of other creatures. (5) As social and altruistic impulses combine and strengthen, the earlier egoistic values are gradually modified. (6) This modification of egoistic values at length becomes *articulate*, conscious and powerful at the hands, say, of such men as the Buddha, Kung-fu-tse, Socrates, or Christ. They attempt a transvaluation of existing egoistic values on a comprehensive scale. They are the initiators of *new values*, in the proper sense of the word. They aim at organising life on the basis of now clearly perceived principles. But their transvaluation seems to go beyond the faith of men in altruism; it is, therefore, challenged by (7) an *articulate* revival of egoistic values, formerly held without question. It leads, I think, to the formulation of egoist philosophies such as that of Yang-chu.

We must remember, however, that these stages of development arise successively in order of evolution, but simultaneously in the evolved individual; in other words, a man is a *complex* of egoistic, social, and altruistic impulses, and all the values founded on them. Nor need we think of them as necessarily in conflict.

We conceive that a man, endowed with egoistic impulses, will value and preserve his life; also, perceiving his dependence on others, he will exhibit social impulses accordingly; to a certain degree, also, this man will be impelled towards the welfare of others; and in a special degree he may become so altruistic as to sacrifice the life which, primarily, he valued above all. In this way, one sees that, though the various impulses normally form a co-ordinate system, the later ones necessarily lead away from the extension of the primitive impulse, and occasionally to its complete abandonment. But consider another case. Allow the egoist impulses to carry one so far as to invade (practically) or deny (formally) the right to life in others; immediately, as I see it, social and altruistic impulses cannot proceed normally, as supposed. The individual becomes an ego-centric, who radiates himself to the injury of others. The social order in which he lives cannot be integral like that which surrounds the person of more social sensitiveness.

In order to correct an impression that may possibly be made by this method of discussion, it is only needful to say that societies comprise a very large number of people displaying impulses of infinite degree and combination from the most primitive egoism to the highest self-sacrifice. My aim has been to express the matter in its simple form.

(2.) PHILOSOPHIC BACKGROUND FOR YANG.

If the reader will now refer to my historical table on p. 440 of THE EGOIST (December 1, 1914) he will be able to form an idea of the existing philosophic background against which Yang-Chu appears.

For thousands of years the primitive animism of the Chinese had held the field. Spirits good and bad (*Shen* and *Kwei*) played with man according as his deeds deserved. Kung-fu-tse met this position with the strong ethical fervour of "Righteousness and Propriety." The former was man's respect and worship for departed ancestors and spirits ("Heaven"), the latter was his duty to his superiors and elders on earth. I have shown how Mo-tse carried the ethics of Kung-fu-tse to extreme degrees of altruism with his doctrine of "Universal Love" and "Not making distinction between man and man." Meng-tse seriously declared that the doctrines of Mo-tse "fill the kingdom" while Chawag-tse wished to have him "gagged"; in following Kung-fu-tse, Mo had, during a hundred years, made "the transvaluation of existing egoist values" as complete and dramatic as possible.

So much as to ethics. As for metaphysics there was the venerable doctrine of the Tao, with its peculiar quietist tendency, leading already during Lao-tse's day towards a kind of asceticism. Starting away from the Taoist "Back to Nature" thought (as I have argued), Yang-chu turns upon Mo, Kung and Lao with a powerful attack. He challenges their transvaluations; he "revives" the egoist values of "the ancients," and points to the egoist impulses upon which they are founded. For this reason I call him an Egoist Philosopher.

(3.) ETHICAL DOCTRINES TESTED.*

Yang wants to get rid of any "obstruction" to the natural processes. "To cherish life it suffices to give it its free course, neither checking nor obstructing it:" (viii). This seems innocent enough until we learn what it leads to.

I will ask the reader to notice the cases of The Happy Voluptuaries, the Joyous Tuan, and the villains Ch'ieh and Chow:—

1. Kung-Sun-Chow had a thousand barrels of wine and yeast piled up in heaps; the liquor scented the air for a hundred paces "offending people's noses." He was always tipsy and quite unconscious of the dangers he risked. (III., ix.)

* In the following criticism the reader is referred to THE EGOIST of December 1st; the large Roman numerals refer to the section of the article, the small to the chapter quoted from Yang.

2. Kung-Sun-Mu had a harem of thirty or forty houses filled with women. He seldom came out "and yet he did not feel contented"; every attractive girl he would try to entice to his place.

Taken together, what alone they feared was, that the day might come when their bodies would no longer respond to their desires. They declare their æsthetic experience, and upon it proceed, Yang wise, to base an ethic—"our method of regulating internals"—which is simply to continue to follow impulse to the end. It is of course no logical ethic at all, though expressed in quasi-logical form.

3. Tuan-mu-Shu was left rich and "followed his own inclinations" over mountain and valley to find what he wanted at all costs; this he squandered, and dying, left his offspring so destitute that they had to be supported by his one time companions. This was "in accord with right doctrine" says Yang (III., x.).

4. Ch'ieh inherited the wealth of many generations; he restrained his subjects and shook the land with his power; he followed his impulses to the end—"most reckless and dissipated." (III., xiii.)

5. Chow also was rich, and everything yielded to his will; "Of all mortals the most licentious and extravagant," he admitted no duty to Heaven or his fellow men. (III., xiii.)

These five heroes of Yang's philosophy are ego-maniacs; they are aware of their own existence and they make all else their slaves. The drunken Chow must have a hundred attendants to keep him in liquor, while other *People's* noses are offended. Similarly, the amorous Mu also has a houseful of slaves serving his inclinations, but not their own. Tuan, Ch'ieh and Chow set the whole of their subjects under their feet, millions of people serving but three tyrants. Clearly, this game of Yang's is one that few can play at. The dependence on crowds of slaves can hardly be called "regulating things by internals, so that things go on all right, and the mind obtains peace and rest." Again we detect a quasi-logical sophism used to justify conduct that on Yang's hypothesis, being natural, needs no justification.

Someone wishing to defend Yang may accuse me of making too much of his "villains," of taking them too seriously. It is not because I am shocked by them; I treat them according to the philosophical significance with which Yang surrounds them. They are an elaboration of his answer to his own question: "What, then, is the object of human life? What makes it pleasant; comfort and elegance, music and beauty."

But let me not forget the old farmer of Sung, of a nature so attractive that I think he brings more fish to the net of Yang than all his villains together (VI., xviii.). He, too, sought for pleasure like the others, in his own simple way. He loved to feel the warm sun on the back as he worked in the fields at spring time! But is he not just a little bit too naïve—and too rare? One such rustic among five influential "villains" can scarcely save the system of Yang from ridicule or restore the equilibrium to a social order that contains too many Chows and Ch'iehs.

(4.) YANG'S CRITIQUE OF ALTRUISM.

Having examined Yang's exposition of his fundamental principle I now turn to his critique of altruism. He is perfectly clear as to what the principle is; he realises that it is at the root of the systems of Kung and Mo, systems which are in categorical opposition to his own. Altruism is, to him, the ruling vice! He falls back on Po-cheng, who would not part with a single hair of his body for the benefit of others (IV., xii.). A hair is a part of the body like a piece of skin or a limb. No one would consent to lose a limb for the sake of a kingdom, why, then, lose a hair for the benefit of others? The argument is invalid in several ways; men do risk their lives and limbs for kingdoms, and for less; they also give their lives for others without reckoning the cost. In both cases they regulate their life by truly inward things, either egoistic or altruistic impulses. Of Po-cheng it can be said that he was regulating his con-

duct by an arbitrary idea of consistency, which of all things is least inward, and most artificial; whereas the most inward thing, next to self-love—and sometimes deeper—is compassion or feeling for another's pain. If the altruists of Yang's time had been more profound in their psychological analysis, instead of being largely traditionalists, they could have adopted his formula and beaten him with it. All altruistic ethic is ultimately based on one's inner feeling of another's need. It is an extension of the imagination until it becomes a kind of sensibility, and a consequent spur to action. "As *ye would that men should do unto you*—" can only be addressed to creatures capable of imagination.

(5.) THE ATTACK ON RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PROPRIETY."

Other topics might be critically examined, such as the false antitheses of Reality versus Reputation and Yang's doctrine of Government, but I am conscious that even though I have exposed his illogic, his historical inaccuracy and his self-contradiction, there is still something important left which is not weakened thereby. This is his fundamental opposition to "Righteousness and Propriety," an opposition which he shares with the Taoists. Here I must beg my readers to return to sections I. and II. of the present article. The Confucians and the Mohists may be classed together in one group in that they set up a canon of action which invaded the sphere of free egoism. I explain this by a device of Yang's; he says: "If men could do without clothes and food there would be no more kings and governments;" which proves that he understands that kings and governments arise because of the struggle for the things upon which life depends. I assent to this, and say in reply: if men were not egoistic there would be no need for Righteousness and Propriety. These are the necessary correctives, in my conception, of the too free play of egoistic impulses. I put the case thus: (1) All men are *egoists* in the sense that they desire their own welfare; this does not preclude the welfare of others. I think Yang himself, with his "three acres and a cow" desired all others to be as happy as he was. (2) But many men are *ego-centrics*; the world revolves round them and they care nothing for others except as they minister to their needs; they talk of "the herd," "the mob," as of an order to which they have no regard. (3) Some men are *ego-maniacs*; they press their impulses to the very periphery of life; they invade a host of others, and cause suffering by the exercise of this dominating Will-to-Power. Kings and governments (in this ideal aspect and their rare "better moments") can only justify their existence in so far as they put down the ego-maniacs, restrain the ego-centrics and give free scope to the gratification of the normal egoists. In this way all men might become *alter-egoists*. What more could be desired?

But the record of kings and governments, with a few bright exceptions, is one of universal failure; the ego-centrics become kings, or the governments become ego-maniacs. Now this has been perceived by the wise and good-willing at all times and in all lands. Something higher than the restraint of the kingly hand has been sought for and found in "Righteousness and Propriety." But where? Keeping close to Chinese thought, I will remind my readers that the immemorial conception of this dual instrument was that it produced "Equilibrium and Harmony." It made Earth like Heaven. Heaven was the abode, primarily, of all the departed spirits of ancestors, of the great controlling spirits of Nature, of Shang-ti the Supreme. It was the source of all inspiration and wisdom above the merely worldly. Towards it therefore there must be a duty from man here below, in order to secure the good which there resides. "Righteousness" was that duty.

But when Yang asserts, "According to the law of Nature there is no such thing as immortality," he cuts away the ground from Righteousness. If, therefore, I do not refute him now I, too, must let go Righteousness. But I will not let go Propriety. Though I cannot see the Gods, men I know, and their relative claims upon each other. I know and feel these in myself; and upon that knowledge Propriety rests.

While Yang is right in believing that Righteousness and Propriety are a curtailment of ego-maniac and ego-centric expression, he is wrong in identifying them with mere "Reputation." He is wrong in teaching that they deprive men of the enrichment of their lives.

WILLIAM L. HARE.

POEMS.

By CLARA SHANAFELT

FANTASTIC.

I am a little weary of the moon
And all the stars.
I would have newer gems
To weave in beloved hair.
Leaning down from this hill I will gather up
Lights of cities that throb far away in the night.
Pale elfin dancers leaping
Over the heads of the sick and sleeping,
Over passionate lovers, withering women,
The dead—
I will give you the mad lights of cities
To crown you.
Needy poets may have the moon if they like
Cast off, and the tarnished stars—
We are a little too old for these trinkets.

TREES.

Tall and splendid women
Inclined voluptuously,
Veiled in their marvellous hair.
The poplars are goddesses, green dancers,
Young virgins with delicate nerves:
They tremble constantly
From excessive sensibility.
The apples stretch out matronly arms—
They are kind and calm.

But at night all the trees are different—
I am a little afraid,
Not of them but of what they say,
The stars listen—one cannot tell
What they may do about it.
The trees are whispering so very strangely
I half expect to see them
Start up and walk toward me,—I—
I shiver like a young virgin
Taken by her own fantasy.

EGO.

I have written stalely, echoing others,
But all this is not myself,
This imitative, pleasing chatter
Of a débutante in a drawing-room
Aware of her mother's ear.
This is no more me than an awkward dress,
But it mars, it binds me
And the voices pent within clamour to be born.
Somewhere are those who if they could see
Would desire me—
I feel them not far away,
Coming and going with the wind
Like fragrance in the night of flowers hidden:
Shall I call out softly—
Sit near a candle, my earrings swaying?
Surely I shall be desired if I can be seen.
It no longer amuses me
To go about the world secretly like a ghost,
Intelligent, unavailing:
I will embody myself—
O Mother, let me be born!

WEBSTER FORD.

By EZRA POUND.

AT LAST! At last America has discovered a poet. Do not mistake me, America that great land of hypothetical futures has had various poets born within her borders, but since Whitman they have invariably had to come abroad for their recognition. "Walt" seems to have set the fashion. Of course America has literary traditions. Crawfordsville, Indiana, has a literary tradition: Lew Wallace died there. American magazines go on "discovering" society curates, castrated hobby-horses, writers of epos in comparison with whom the later maunderings of Tennyson and of Alfred Austin sound like the surge and thunder of the Odyssey, etc. And a castrated government of school teachers goes on making 'em into Ambassadors, whenever the stock of ex-publishers' clerks and secretaries of the local Y.M.C.A.'s run out:—

O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne . . . et cetera.

America has also proclaimed to the "world" a race of red bloods, i.e., young men hiding their incapacity or their psychopathia sexualis with the grand bravura, with a hurricane of adjectives and with talk of "the male." Also America has printed optimists who express all, or nearly all the ideas contained in McClure's magazine for the month before last. And they have also another breed, diluted fabians. O patria mia, etc.

Still, it comes to me as no surprise that a poet can be born in America; several rather good American poets have drifted into my room from time to time, going East, going to "jaded Europe" in search of publishers and good company. And what they have said about their fatherland makes my occasional constructive criticism seem like watered optimism. They consider me a purblind enthusiast. O patria degna di trionfal fama.

At last the American West has produced a poet strong enough to weather the climate, capable of dealing with life directly, without circumlocution, without resonant meaningless phrases. Ready to say what he has to say, and to shut up when he has said it. Able to treat Spoon River as Villon treated Paris of 1460. The essence of this treatment consists in looking at things unaffectedly. Villon did not pretend that fifteenth-century Paris was Rome of the first century B.C. Webster Ford does not pretend that Spoon River of 1914 is Paris of 1460.

The quality of this treatment is that it can treat actual details without being interested in them, without in the least depending upon them. The bore, the demnition bore of pseudo-modernity, is that the avowed modernist thinks he can make a poem out of a steam shovel more easily and more effectively than out of the traditional sow's ear. The accidents and detail are made to stand for the core.

Good poetry is always the same; the changes are superficial. We have the real poem in nature. The real poet thinking the real poem absorbs the *decor* almost unconsciously. In the fourth century B.C. he writes:—

"quivers ornamented with fish-skin";

in the twentieth of our era, he writes:—

"khaki, with a leather strap for his map-case."

But the real poem is the same. Of course there are very few poems. You have to go back to Rihoku to find a man telling the truth about warfare:—

"Lice swarm like ants over our accoutrements,
Our mind is on getting forward the feather-silk
banners.
Hard fighting gets no reward.
Loyalty is hard to explain.
Who will be sorry for General Rishogu, the swift-
moving,
Whose white head is lost for this province!"

That's the eighth century A.D. and China. I have before me an early book by Webster Ford, printed

in 1912, and much more old fashioned than Rihoku. Nineteen-twelve was a bad year, we all ran about like puppies with ten tin cans tied to our tails. The tin cans of Swinburnian rhyming, of Browningisms, even, in Mr. Ford's case, of Kiplingisms, a resonant pendant, magniloquent, Miltonic, sonorous.

The fine thing about Mr. Ford's "Songs and sonnets, second series," is that in spite of the trappings one gets the conviction of a real author, determined to speak the truth despite the sectionised state of his medium. And despite clichés of phrase and of rhythm one receives emotions, of various strength, some tragic and violent. There is moral reflection, etc., but what is the use discussing faults which a man has already discarded.

In the Spoon River Anthology we find the straight writing, language unaffected. No longer the murmurous derivative, but:—

"My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs."

That is to say the speech of a man in process of getting something said, not merely in quest of polysyllabic decoration.

It is a great and significant thing that America should contain an editor (of the St. Louis Mirror) with sense enough to print such straight writing, and a critic sane enough to find such work in a "common newspaper" and quote it in an American review (*i.e.* "Poetry").

The silly will tell you that: "It isn't poetry." The decrepit will tell you it isn't poetry. There are even loathsome atavisms, creatures of my own generation who are so steeped in the abysmal ignorance of generations, now, thank heaven, fading from the world, who will tell you: "It isn't poetry." By which they mean: "It isn't ornament. It is an integral part of an emotion. It is a statement, a bare statement of something which is part of the mood, something which contributes to the mood, not merely a bit of chiffon attached."

I give here two poems in Mr. Ford's later manner, though they do not, perhaps, convey as much of the personality as some of his earlier work.

DOC HILL.

I went up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who
were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love to
them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the
day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railing of the new life,
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

THE HILL.

Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the
boozier, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud,
the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love.
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One, after life in far away London and Paris,
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and
Mag—

All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying.
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

I have read a reasonable amount of bad American magazine verse, pseudo-Masefieldian false pastoral and so on. Not one of the writers had had the sense, which Mr. Ford shows here, in calling up the reality of the Middle West by the very simple device of names, in this case the names Sevigne and Kincaid, which remind one of the mixed origins of the old Louisiana country and the early French settlement.

THE SONGS OF MALDOROR.

By THE COMTE DE LAUTREAMONT.

I.—(continued.)

HE who cannot weep (for he has always hidden his sufferings within himself) perceived that he was in Norway. In the Faroe Islands he helped to look for the nests of sea-birds, in steep ravines, and was amazed to see that the 300 yards long rope, which holds the egg-seeker in mid-air, was so solid. He saw in this a striking example of human goodness, and he could not believe his eyes. If he had prepared this rope, he would have frayed it in several places so that it would break and cast the hunter into the sea! One night he went to a graveyard, and the ghouls who prey upon the dead might have heard the following conversation:—

"O grave-digger, do you not want to talk to me? A whale rises little by little from the bottom of the sea, and shows its head above the waters, to see the ship passing on its solitary way. Curiosity was born with the universe."

"My friend, it is impossible for me to exchange ideas with you. For a long time the gentle rays of the moon have glittered on these marble tombs. This is the silent hour when more than one human being dreams that he sees chained women, trailing their shrouds, which are covered with spots of blood, like a black sky spotted with stars. The sleeper moans, like a man condemned to death, until he wakes and finds the reality worse than his dream. I must finish digging this grave; it must be ready by to-morrow morning. You cannot do two things at once when you have important work to finish."

"He thinks that digging a grave is important work! Do you really think that the digging of a grave is important?"

"When the wild pelican determines to give her own breast for food to her young—having as witness only Him who could create such a love, so as to shame men—

although the sacrifice is great, it is comprehensible. When a young man sees the woman he loves in the arms of his friend, he lights a cigar; he stays indoors and contracts an indissoluble friendship with grief: this is comprehensible. When a boy at a boarding-school is harassed from morning till night for years, which seem centuries, by a pariah of civilization whose eyes are constantly upon him, he feels the tumultuous waves of fierce hatred rising like thick smoke to his almost bursting brain. From the moment he was cast into this prison till the moment he leaves, an intense fever yellows his face, contracts his brows and hollows his eyes. At night he thinks, because he will not sleep. In the daytime his thoughts continually pass beyond the walls of this house of brutishness, until the day when he escapes, or is cast out like a leper, from this eternal prison; this is comprehensible. To dig a grave often exceeds the powers of nature. How can this pick turn up the earth which first feeds us and then gives us a comfortable bed to shelter us from the furious wind of these cold lands, when he whose trembling hands holds the pick—after having handled all day the cheeks of the dead—sees before him at night, written in letters of flame on every wooden cross the enunciation of the terrible problem which humanity has never solved: the mortality or the immortality of the soul. I have always kept my love for the creator of the universe: but if we do not exist after death, why is it that, nearly every night, I see the tombs open and their inhabitants lift up the leaden covers and come out to breathe the fresh air?"

"Stop your work for a moment. Your excitement has weakened you; you seem to me as feeble as a reed; it would be madness for you to go on. I am strong; let me take your place. Stand beside me and correct me if I make mistakes."

"How strong his arms are, and how pleasant it is to watch him digging so easily!"

"You must not let useless doubt torment you. All the tombs, scattered over the graveyard like flowers in a meadow—a false comparison—deserved to be measured by the serene compass of philosophy. Dangerous hallucinations may come to one in the daytime, but they come most frequently at night. You must not feel astonished at the fantastic visions which you think you see. In the daytime, when your mind is calm, question your conscience. Your conscience will tell you that the God, who has given man a part of his own intelligence, possesses an immeasurable goodness; and after death he will receive his masterpiece into his bosom. Grave-digger, why do you weep? Think of the good in the world. We are put on this mastless vessel to suffer. It is a virtue in man that God has thought him capable of overcoming his worst suffering. Tell me in what does virtue consist, the ideal which each strives to attain?"

(To be continued.)

FIGHTING PARIS.

DECEMBER 7.—M. G. C. left to be trained this morning, having received his notification only yesterday. M. G. C. has never held a gun, has had no liking for sports and is thrust at the age of forty into this entirely new life.

M. Paul Fort is writing (and publishing) poems about Reims, his native town.

DECEMBER 8.—The pretty little Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, where was achieved what had been expected of other ventures in modern stagecraft, is used for distributing benefits to refugees from Belgium and the invaded departments of France.

DECEMBER 11.—Writers and artists helping to do their country's work: Edmond Pilon; Louis Pergaud, who writes fables for which he has obtained a name and rewards; Felicien Fagus, André Salmon, both poets; Maurice Denis, painter of Madonnas and Psyches, decorator of the Théâtre des Champs Élysées; Eugene Marsan, of the "Revue Critique des Idées et des Livres"; Claude Farrère, who, like Pierre Loti, combines a literary with a naval career. The French translator of

Swinburne, Mme. Hélène du Pasquier, is a nurse. M. M. George Crès and Figuière, the publishers, are also "serving."

DECEMBER 14.—Dr. M. has been enrolled, but will not be called out till January, which is strange considering that surgeons are wanted in the ambulance services at the front and especially on the hospital trains. Dr. P. has returned from imprisonment in Germany. He was not too badly off in the camp at which he was quartered, but cards were his only occupation.

Mr. C. writes he was expected to sleep on straw on arriving at the depot and suffers keenly from the cold. He has, in consequence, hired a room—but what of those who have not the means?

DECEMBER 16.—Paris is almost as animated as it ever has been. The shops are crowded, the trains and underground line as congested as at the worst (or best?) of times. The hawker crying, "Ask for the only complete list of our prisoners of war in Germany," is the only reminder of tragic events. Still no direction is given to fashions—that all-engrossing topic in the average Frenchwoman's life. Each woman is, for the first time for years, willy-nilly, left to the resources of her own imagination. A new form of head-dress, imitating the French soldier's forage cap, has obtained wide popularity both among *Parisiennes* and street boys. Among the former, of course, those whom it becomes least wear it most. Patriotism, the army and its attributes agree as ill with women and their dress as with art and literature. But the absolute suppression of whatever may be reminiscent of national feeling and national duty is another matter. Thus, deputies who may be acting in military capacities are requested not to attend the coming sessions in uniform, which extraordinary order means that the rest of the Chamber wishes to avoid attention being drawn to that particular body without whom the nation would simply not exist to-day. The occasion is ill-chosen for the expression of such pettiness.

DECEMBER 17.—News of the attack on West Hartlepool, Scarborough, etc.

It appears, from a letter addressed by a professor at a Swedish University to M. Paul Bourget, that the "liberal-minded Scandinavians" (as he calls his compatriots), while withholding their sympathies from German Imperialism, cannot give their wholehearted support to the allied countries for the reason that these have called troops from Africa and India, i.e., according to him, "inferior races," to help them "butt" the enemy back into its own realm, to use Joan of Arc's expression. Putting aside the debatable applicability of the epithet "inferior" to Arabs and Indians—especially from one who calls himself liberal—in reference to fighters who, as such, are, at least, superior; and in connection with this struggle wherein the same term has been applied without reserve to the aggressor—white though he be—notably here in France; putting aside the retort it obviously invites to the effect that the Germans have chosen a non-Christian and "brownish" (for so the Swedish professor describes some of our Colonial troops) nation, not only to help them in their work at so much a day, but as their allies; putting aside the argument used by the Germans themselves—that in warfare everything is legitimate provided it further the purpose of war; putting aside these and other replies to the Swedish gentleman's protest, some of which have been intelligently and politely reviewed by M. Paul Bourget in his commentary and explanation in justification of the Allies' appeal to their armies "overseas," there remains the pre-eminent, namely, the practical argument, overlooked by M. Paul Bourget. It is the common-sense argument impelled by necessity, the one resorted to by the man at bay when the end absolutely justifies the means. For in self-defence the one who is in an inferior position is right when he employs whatever resources suggest themselves. The Germans are in France: they must be turned out of it if there is any possibility of so doing, whether by white, brown or black men, by gunpowder, poison, knives, dynamite, melinite, turpinit, boiling oil, arrows sent from aeroplanes or otherwise, stones or any other implements. If the "brownish"

men already at our service could be usefully seconded by Kaffirs, Hottentots, lions, tigers, wild cats, or any of the beasts, there is no sentimental reason why these should not also be called to our assistance.

In self-defence, no humanitarian pleas, no loyalty, no rules of sport or civilisation hold. *The same agents employed in attack may be as wrong as when employed in defence they are right.* If humanitarians and other well-meaning people do not understand this simple and natural axiom then they prove once again that all their reasoning is windbag reasoning in the emergency of war. Those who undertake the responsibility of attack and conquest are prepared—or should be—for the consequences. So long as the attacked one is not reduced to absolute impotence he is dangerous, and has a right to be.

The above refutations do not imply that there is any justification in putting out the eyes of wounded (or even drunken) soldiers lying defenceless in bed or on the battlefield; or in finishing off the wounded; or in throwing petrol indiscriminately over corpses and maimed alike and setting fire to them so as to have more quickly done with them in this way than by the usual operations; in sending bombs from aeroplanes over open cities which kill or disable old men and little children out for a Sunday stroll; in torturing prisoners; or in inflicting vindictive punishment for petty larcenies or insubordination,—for these devices of cruelty, while making innocent victims, do not further the purpose. Being insufficiently effectual they are of use neither in attack nor in defence. They are harmful without reason, therefore unjustifiable—briefly, cruel. But there is no cruelty in calling together all our forces—whatever they be—in defence of ourselves. And it is absurd to pity the conqueror as long as he is the conqueror. When he has been overcome, when he in his turn is in an inferior position, then humanitarian principles may be applied.

DECEMBER 18.—In reference to the cruelties inflicted on English soldiers by the Germans I may quote from a letter from a French prisoner of my acquaintance: "We are not so badly off, but I cannot say as much for the English and Russians." This, strangely enough, passed the censorship. Does it not eloquently corroborate the reports in the newspapers? What right have the Scandinavians to throw the native troops into our teeth?

The parents of a young soldier friend advertise daily for him, all news having ceased since August 30th. No one left for the war with more enthusiasm than he.

Dress materials are giving out. One has to take what one can find. The stocks have not been renewed since the spring.

The men now leaving to be trained will be very badly off, as the depôts are crowded. The youths of the 1915 *classe*, aged about 19, will have to sleep in tents. Others suffer from inactivity, having been for weeks—in many cases since the beginning of the war—more or less unoccupied in lonely villages, at their depôts, or guarding railway lines and bridges. For men of middle-age, used to activity and brainwork, the task is hard to bear. Is not life truly "a tale told by an idiot?"

DECEMBER 20.—Frozen feet is the latest ill brought from the front.

Little flags in the Belgian colours are being sold to-day in the streets for the benefit of Belgian refugees.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA.

ON THERSITES.

Your last distempered works are such

As you, too, shall deplore—

I'd not despise you quite so much

If you would write no more.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

ALL BACK NUMBERS of "THE EGOIST" and "THE NEW FREEWOMAN" can be obtained from the publishing office: Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. Price 6d. each. By post, 6½d.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

* * *

STILLBORN PROGRESS.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

First let me say, in answer to Miss Florence Bradford's pertinent question, that I dislike the term "progress." Its present-day application is misleading if not meaningless, unless moving in a vicious circle is progress. However, I am not for a philosophical debate with anyone, and will continue to use the term—under protest. According to the scientific conception of human life, human beings undergo a process known as organic evolution. Implicit in this evolution is a law of progress said to proceed on three lines, each a generalisation higher than the other. The three lines are physical or economic, biological or vital, and nature or the miscalled spiritual level. Science professes to express progress in these three ways. But common sense tells us that there is only one way of progress (*i.e.*, advance), namely, the spiritual. All below the spiritual level is a precipitate. As soon as we change the quality of the precipitate it tends to rise to the surface where it merges in the spiritual flow. However, let me examine the scientific hypotheses. The question of economic progress is soon disposed of. If we examine the history of the attempt of men to govern themselves by economic laws we find it is one long story of man evolving (used in the sense of maintaining) the economic man at the expense of the vital and spiritual man. And as the economic man has no real existence, but is a figment of the human brain, it means that the sum total of economic progress is a figment also. All that man has done, economically speaking, is to transfer his idea of value from himself to gold. In order to advance he must re-transfer his idea of value from gold to himself again. This will place him in the pre-civilisation or vital region. As a golden image he is no more advanced than a Kickapoo Indian of the Stone Age.

Biological progress is also a myth. Biologically considered, progress is said to take place through the natural selection of favourable inheritable variations. This is the whole principle of biological evolution. It is supported by Darwin, Dr. Archdall Reid and most of the leading biologists of to-day. Opposed to this view was the theory of Lamarck that acquired characters are inheritable. To Lamarck the long neck of the giraffe and the webbed foot of the duck assumed heritable acquired characters. Spencer believed in Lamarckism. To him, conscience evolved through the continuous inculcation of morality throughout generations. But there is reason to believe that Spencer was wrong. It may be that the kind of progress the human race has made or is likely to make, is that expressed in Dr. Archdall Reid's theory of immunity. The theory roughly stated is that we English have drunk ourselves drunk, and, in order to become sober, we must drink ourselves sober. Favourable spontaneous variations are to be worked to the utmost by natural selection. Very pretty. I say, "it may be" advisedly, because a glance at the literature on the subject of hereditary transmissions shows that the views on it are still in the crucible. Biological science is, like Nietzsche in England, mostly in the aphoristic and apophthegmic stage. Each is trying to bud in extremely terse and limited sayings. In fact, in the matter of telling us whether we are progressing or not, biological science has done nothing for us beyond showing us that very early landmark of organic life, the germ plasm. And the value of its services in this direction is not striking when we remember that it does not show us the path that leads up to the landmark, and what is to be the logical completion of that to which it points. The first cause of protoplasm is still as deep a mystery to biologists as the first cause of life has been and is even to the rarest minds. Indeed, many of the latter appear to be so overwhelmed by the immensity of the problem that they seek refuge in mere bits of word-juggling, hoping thereby, no doubt, to satisfy their friends that they are presenting the world with the newest, the most perfect, the most up-to-date form of solution. But Aristotle's "Divine Mind," Plato's "Soul of the Universe," "Creator," "Father," "Almighty," "Natura Naturano," and the rest of the queer attempts to fix the generative elements of life in words would not deceive even a pot-bellied Hottentot. Such words do not yield the Thing itself. Simply, they fog the issue. Now if we pin the biologist to a fundamental something, the germ-plasm, of which he does not know the nature, the beginning or end, then naturally we transfer him to a very bog-like region of assumption. Thence he may proclaim at his loudest that the destiny of man is inseparably connected with obedience to the doctrine of biological law (whatever the law may be). Being as little enlightened as he is on the mystery of protoplasmic origin and mechanism we admit his logic is irresistible. And we are indebted to him for one telling truth, at least, namely that Twentieth-Century man has not got beyond Adam in one particular. He is only a protoplasmic potentiality.

The nature theory of progress is also a myth. It was invented alike by naturalist and natural-selectionist, and by them exalted as the real thing. Under its guidance man has filched the prin-

ciples of nature and put them to the basest uses. Slavery, Destruction, War-cycles, the bloody strife of parties, the general gratification of malignity, all these have found in the said principles a first cause and justification. And we know that when civilised man has not been occupied misapplying natural laws of evolution, adaptation, variation to guns and wholesale murder machines of all sorts, he has been engaged thwarting them. In this way he has so manipulated social conditions that to-day they are really against the survival of any persons but advanced sicklings and idiots. Our benevolent institutions literally hum with the choicest examples.

Coming to the real spiritual level, here again we find there has been no progress. And it is here we find Science at its old game, clubbing itself with its own conclusions. According to the evidence of the comparative study of anthropology there has been no intellectual progress since the dawn of civilisation. Anthropology has, in fact, settled this fact, that the average pre-civilisation savage was on a level with the modern unskilled worker. Further, there is nothing to prove that individual savages did not possess the same brain capacity as individual members of the middle-middle and upper-middle classes, that is, the classes that in modern times have produced the greatest number of the best public men in all departments of thought and action—the Carlyles, Asquiths, George Bernard Shaws. Neither is there anything to prove that here and there a savage did not possess great psychic powers. And there is a great deal to prove that individual savages did possess the highest form of human expression. Paleolithic man did manifest great ability as an artist and has left evidence of his power to express art, that makes one believe that the present-day artist is, generally speaking, a species of debased Pithecanthropus erectus upside down with his spiritual eyes out of his head. One conclusion of anthropology is that before the dawn of civilisation man had to use not only his arms and legs but his brains and wits as well. Another is, that in pre-civilisation times what we call evolution proceeded on a straight line, but with the coming of civilisation there was a change. The straight-line evolution gave place to the pyramidal. In other words, civilisation has been busy creating classes, one superimposed upon the other—the lower working class upon the submerged tenth, or broad base, the upper working class upon the lower, the lower-middle class upon the upper working, and so on till the ruling class, or apex, is reached.

From the foregoing the conclusion is that no matter in what direction civilised human beings have turned there has been no progress. It would seem, indeed, that progress is independent of the whole circle of sciences, anthropology, psychology, ethics, history, sociology and the rest. We may perhaps drag in biometaphysics to tell us how really independent it is. If we consult this scientific mixture we are led to assume that progress is for us something that precedes the protoplasmic mechanism and lies at the foundation of life. It is bound up with a spiritual quality which protoplasm supposes—a quality which, once stimulated, may (or may not, I do not know) continue to respond to favourable stimulations. And, under a long continued stimulation, it may even refine the protoplasm away. My theory is that protoplasm contains two qualities, material and spiritual, and the material is merely a devitalised form of the spiritual. Thus man as we know him is the mechanical response of the material quality to a material stimulus. This response is continued generation after generation, the only result being a dull repetition of human forms. Materially the germ-plasm provides a common surface upon which convention and culture erect artificial forms called human beings. In truth they are human clichés. Each generation sees the birth, growth, development, decay and death of a stereotyped set of these forms. In all this, there is no progress. Progress will not come till the spiritual quality in the germ-plasm is set free to respond and expand under the excitation of a spiritual stimulus. This means it will not come till every man and woman is set free to employ their faculties in their own way and for their own advantages. Each must build his own structure upon the protoplasmic basis. In progress resides the secret of refining one's material self away. The key to progress is pure individualism. Perhaps pure individualism is as unattainable as pure socialism nowadays.

HUNTLY CARTER.

WHY ARE WE HONEST?

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

The typist was unkind to put *suddenly* and *expensive* into the letter on Honour and Freedom instead of *sadly* and *extensive*. Can your readers be so good as to read it again with these corrections.

Philosophical moralists are hardly likely to agree with Miss Marsden's position as to the causes for virtuous conduct.

Honesty, for instance, when exhaustively analysed resolves itself into self-control of such a character as to tolerate the appropriation of private property by other animals of the human species. This, like every other branch of true ethics, is valid only in so far as it is useful to the species. Human beings are distinguished from other animals by powers of reason which render possible the invention and recognition of morals. Miss Marsden and her readers might consider whether it would be better for humanity to revert to animality.

Leeds.

GREEVZ FYSHER.

EXIT MR. HUNTLY CARTER.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

I have made a note of Mr. Huntly Carter's "small helping of truth" intended for me, and I must say that it is a *very* small helping, indeed.

Mr. Carter confesses to being "somewhere aloft," which is a rather original way of putting it. Now, in America when a man is worsted in an argument and is unduly wroth about it, he is spoken of as being "up in the air," or as having "gone up in a balloon." His own admission that I am at least on solid ground—not standing merely, but "sprawling" at full length, of my own will—pleases me in a way that would displease Mr. Carter if he knew. Looking at "that gear box" I am asking not only "What is it?" but also "Why did it blow him up?"

Mr. Carter says that my method of argument bores him. I find his extremely entertaining.

He complains that I have neglected to answer his questions. This is sheer perversion. I was the questioner. He was content to assume the attitude of one who was not arguing with me, but telling me—and doing it very badly.

He takes me to task for attributing sympathy to the Russians. I said nothing of the sort. If Mr. Carter will look at my letter again, he will see that "pity" is the word I used. Now sympathy and pity are two different things. The distinction becomes quite clear when I say that I have no sympathy whatsoever for Mr. Carter, but that I pity him from the bottom of my heart.

It is very generous of Mr. Carter to offer to send me three bulky volumes of press cuttings and his 50,000-word Russian "thriller." The press cuttings I must decline with thanks, my own growing collection on the bountiful German *Kultur* occupying more space than I wish. The Russian "thriller" I shall expect by the next post. What other literary treasures has the omniscient Mr. Carter in store for me? We have already heard him on Educationalism, on Sexualism, on Anthropologism, on the Illusions of War, on the Cosmos, on Civics, on Mass-Rhythm, etc. He may have other treatises on the Hottentots, on the Huns, on the Huguenots, on Heaven, on Hell, and on what not—all of which, no doubt, would add no little light to the original discussion on the art of Gordon Craig.

Mr. Carter will have none of my "pale-faced nonsense." Let us have the Carter brand—red-cheeked, robust and bursting with health.

JOHN CURNOS.

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