COMPULSION AND FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

By Dora Marsden

To the elaboration of the meaning of Rights in our last issue very little needs to be added in order to make clear what connexion "Rights" and the more generalized form of "Right" bear to the "spiritual" institution we call Conscience. Out of this connexion it will be possible to unravel the confused from whence has arisen the controversy about an individual "Right" to a "Free" Conscience. An illuminating instance of the extent to which beliefs are swayed by the preferences of the believer is afforded by the fact that it is precisely that temperament which most doggedly resists all evidence that Rights depend ultimately on Force which, when times become critical, does not hesitate to abandon every trace of the additional meaning which Right certainly has in comparison with Might and without compunction identify the two. The kind of minds which could see no reason why the Rights which they enjoyed and were most zealous in holding up to Honour should be furnished with the Force adequate to safeguard them, is prepared when faced with a crisis to maintain that their own individual power to exercise Force constitutes in itself a Right to exercise it. Because, for instance, they have the power to resist, being compelled personally to assist a fighting service, they are now ready to believe that because they possess it, they also possess a "Right" to exercise it: a quite different thing. What they do possess is not a Right to resist but the Power to resist. Inasmuch as "Right" possesses a meaning in any way more complex than Might (Force), this meaning is that Right is Might which has submitted itself, tacitly or formally, to be regulated in its exercise by terms laid down by yet another sheer Force—the State. As long, therefore, as reliance is placed upon "Right," it is not possible to exercise one's own physical Might save as demanded or allowed by the State in whom its direction has been vested: these being the conditions under which Rights are called into Being. It is in virtue of so vesting them and thus foregoing their personal command and direction the exercise in our favour—for certain specific and limited ends—of all the combined Might so vested is obtained. The expectation, amounting practically to certainty, that they will be so exercised constitutes the substance of our Rights, and to the ready and willing execution of it is attributed the general term "Right." The metamorphosis by which Mights are transmuted into Rights has thus a twofold bearing, either of which is a precondition of the exercise on the individuals' behalf of the combined weight of the amalgamated Force which is the State. The one acts in this respect only when the other has agreed not to act. And the second pre-condition to the process of transmuting Mights into Rights is the readiness and willingness of the individuals concerned to fulfil their part of the transaction in good faith: actually to deposit and place at the State's disposal their powers of defence and aggression. Only so can the State achieve actual Being and Potency. The combined organized force of individuals made possible by the contracting out of their disposal and direction is what constitutes the State, A State is begotten in the first instance by a force which can attract into combination with itself sufficient individual powers as will enable it to assume the responsibilities of acting as the violent Proxy for all: which responsibilities necessitate the continued maintenance of a combative strength sufficient to withstand any combination which can form itself against it.

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The attitude of mind, therefore, which considers itself "Right" in refusing to deliver upon demand its indi-
individual combative force ruptures the arrangement which is the foundation of Right, and, given a modicum of individual combative force, it would be clear there could be no expectation that the protective forces continuing through the community ruled for ages on traditions of "Right." Citizens to whom they can make their existence a necessity, are suddenly placed at a disadvantage by it. Oddly enough the tendency to confuse Rightfulness on the one hand with praiseworthiness and ability on the other goes some way towards explaining the intellectual befoggedness which lays claim to these peculiar species of Rights. And as for praiseworthiness, it is not strange that an ordinary intelligence should consider that what is in good remembrance—of Rights or "Right"—has no more pertinence to such a relation than has, for instance, the observant. Admiration and good repute upon occasion do trickle down in streams of which the channels are not dug out by command of Authority, Bravery, for instance—if it is not exhibited in a total defeat but in the way it is met by another—"Wrong." Almost the entire structure of repue—Public Opinion, Honour—is created by those who also lay down the terms of Right: the Authorities in power. The manufactories of opinion are in their hands—Religion, Society, Education, and Culture generally. While through their channels in many cases Right as to direction and purpose, they do not by that measure as we possess them, are ultimately, though never "Rightfully," our own, and the display of "Passive Resistance" is merely this ultimate Right revealing itself and what it can do. It is a display not of Right, but of Might. So too with other Rights popularly supposed: the "Right to Live," for instance. Slaves at the labour: that they are able, of what they have the power to do, to wrest the means of subsistence from those to whom they can make their existence a necessity. That they are not kept alive out of any consideration for their "right to live" but only on account of their power to make it with some one's while to keep them alive, is made abundantly clear by the fact that when their "competence" is better by some other means which do not necessitate their being kept alive, they are—either promptly or reluctantly—turned adrift to fend for themselves: which means a testing afresh that they have not so much the "Right" to keep alive as the Power.

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The foregoing, however, would be regarded as pertinent only to the formal, legal interpretation of "Right." The "Right" which the persons under consideration have in mind is Spiritual Right: the "Rightness to Conscience" alone can give the true affirming "Yea." "Legal Right" is to "Spiritual Right" but as the husk to the kernel. So the issue is diverted to the meaning of "Conscience." Right, far from being amenable to a forthright examination, holds part and parcel with the conventional idea of being swathed about and honeycombed through with—Mystery. Government, Religion, Conscience, Soul, Spirit, upon the slightest provocation, will all hark back to explain themselves by the help of the "mysteries." Necessarily of so persistent and comprehensive a characteristic one must seek an explanation, and that explanation it seems that the tabooed phenomenon of "Flattery" is likely to furnish. Efforts to explain the nature of Government, of Religion, Conscience and the like, cannot succeed until an unprejudiced attention is given to the measuing and import of Flattery. Flattery and Violence are the two axles upon which turn the entire conduct of life, yet it is to be noted, in a World of Words, remarkably few are wasted on either of them. The two most important institutions of life have been well protected from the delusions and disintegrations of Speech. As a result a large part of the spirit of life has been the office of words to invest both with an ill odour: with intent, presumably, to discourage the daily venturesome from penetrating further. It is because of this reluctance to speak of the place and importance of Flattery in human life that psychology has been pulled up on all sides by "Mystery." It will be found that there are but few "mysteries" in human life to which flattery cannot furnish the key.

There seems to be nothing to encourage the notion that the essential spirit of flattery is a human feature. It is not flattery in itself but the misprising of it which is important. Every human spirit is a responsive spirit, made habitable through the facilities offered by Speech. In itself, Flattery represents nothing less than a knowledge how to produce, at will, the sensation of growth: of expansion of spirit: a sensation in itself wholly one of pleasure. By Flattery, there can be experienced, as it were "in the abstract," the sensation resulting from the gradual sense of growth which is absent from more normal growth because of its gradual rate of achievement. The resulting effect is a sense of pleasure intoxicating to a degree with which other so-called "physical" pleasures are too short-lived to compare. Essentially, Flattery is forced growth," and it is in this sense that it is the practical application of a Science of Life, inasmuch as it comprises the knowledge of and application of means, at once to enlarge life and enrich it with pleasurable content.
Such being the potentialities of Flattery to influence men through the pleasure of growth, it would be strange indeed if it were put to no use in those departments of life where men meet together and are in positions favourable to the influencing of one another. We find no such neglect of an admirable means. Flattery alternates and intertwines with Violence as the means of governing and controlling the world of men. Civilization alternates and intertwines with war. Of Flattery—though under another name—it is a headway so steadily that there tends to grow up a forgetfulness of the strength of the other axe—Violence—about which life turns: a forgetfulness which never fails to be made good, however, in the course of time.

The examination of the place of Flattery in government is peculiarly interesting because of the almost entirely successful efforts which the Ruling Castes make to effect a corner in it, and to get into their own hands its entire public application. It is to this end that language is used to admirable purpose. By means of language it becomes possible to establish all the semblance of distinction in one and the same thing, according to the needs of a situation. Thus, there is the Flattery which is permitted to filter in the warranted channels and by authority of the Rulers. This Flattery is Holiness. Any man is a Flatterer when he is an apologist, when he applies, or applied by others for the sole end of giving pleasure to the recipient, without regard to the "Honourable" label. This is Plain Flattery; the species held up for contempt and derision. This distinction between Flattery and Honour—according as it is "irresponsibly" or "competently" conferred—is maintained with unrelaxing strictness. In order that irresponsible use may be made as difficult as possible, the first tenet in the Code of Honour is that a man shall not consider himself empowered to flatter himself even after he has been crowned with Honour in the orthodox manner. Hence the steed of Modesty is Mistrust of Flattery. A man of Honour must be modest. The proper thing for him to do under popular acclaim is to blush—which is to give the sign that he discounts the Flattery save as courtesy. Should he fail in Modesty not even the deeds which won him public praise will save him; no excuse sufficient to condone this falling short of the mode which is correct for the honourable man. Accordingly, men have come to shrink with horror from being discovered "enjoying themselves" in any way save that which is conventionally permitted, and ridicule of the Conscience is the most effective bludgeoning instrument of Society and the State. Thus do the Ruling Castes keep control of the stream of "Good Opinion," while the pleasure which emanates from it remains as necessary to most men as bread or air or water.

Of this subtle and insinuating power thus securely in their possession, the most masterly use to which they have put it is the creation of Conscience. If men were stoically content under the apprehension that for the mass of men in most of the activities of life it is necessary to stoically keep under the impression of Conscience would be without a purpose. But becoming a law, and to believe that they are bold, free fellows who if they submit at all it is of their own free will, the spiritual institution of Conscience suggests itself almost as a necessity: particularly so when this interesting foible is the clue to the meaning of the "Spiritual"; for the "Spiritual" read "Verbal." It means the substituting of flattery as organized as Religion has applied its lubricating oil like a physician who is an artist. This is the clue to the meaning of the "Spiritual": for it is the substitute for the Peace of God. A man of Honour must be modest. The "Spiritual" is the special substitute for the Peace of God. The Word as "The Word" shall not be touched, and it thereupon assumes the Veil and Halo of Mystery; it has become Sacred. As a method it means stroking one the pleasant way into Persuasion. The means by which the miraculous has thus become easy and a commonplace, is—Flattery. Just where life is a threat to life is a place where the skin was thinnest and friction likely to wear most, Flattery organized as Religion has applied its lubricating oil like a physician who is an artist. As a method it means stroking one the pleasant way into Persuasion. The means by which the miraculous has thus become easy and a commonplace, is—Flattery. As a method it means stroking one the pleasant way into Persuasion.
Such being the necessary attitude of Conscience towards Liberty, how does there get abroad the notion about "Freedom of Conscience" which asserts the "consciences" spiritual" Rightness of questioning all things and judging all things including The Word itself? To begin with, let us understand that the notion is encouraged as an affair of method rather than as having any intellectual concern. The more a Conscience is employed "freely" discharging its responsibilities the less likelihood there is of loopholes being left for disobliging. Hence the positive value of an ever-growing increase in personal responsibility. Responsibility makes the Conscience more sensitive inasmuch as it becomes still more intimately identified with the verdicts of Honour and Dishonour which are attached to the manner of its discharge. Necessarily, therefore, the more sensitive Conscience becomes the more zealously the verdicts of Honour and Dishonour which are attached to the utmost limits—even to the point of encouraging necessity of an Order of Initiates whose first duty it is one already referred to in the State, of the instinct toments upon The Word itself—is a natural temptation. If in the sequel, the too zealous ones become crazed with a mere manner for the substance of the situation. The Word at least.

As a matter of common experience the bicycle, ordinarily, is kept steady and erect: so too is the Conscience. As a religious operation it is a practical operation for Religion to effect. A successful Religious caste will understand that while it is good to impute Freedom to "Conscience," there must be an unconscious under- nature of the operation proves fatal. As regards "Freedom of Conscience," it is a practical operation for Religion to effect. A successful Religious caste will understand that while it is good to impute Freedom to Religion, and begin to rend and tear The Word which it is their spirit to keep intact and holy, it is merely one more illustration of the truth about a thing good in moderation becoming mischievous in excess. * * * * * * * * * *

How just to make the Conscience understand that it would be the height of insensibility to "Free" The Word, and yet lead it implicitly to believe that it is completely so free, is one of those things which are best explained by setting about doing them practically. It is like a person who cannot swim beginning to, or like knowing how to keep an uneasy construction like a bicycle erect and able to carry heavy burdens. As a matter of common experience the bicycle, ordinarily, is kept steady and erect: so too is the Conscience deprived of liberty and yet set at liberty. In both cases success is achieved by a similar means: by keeping them steadily moving. The balance is too delicate to be kept steady moving. The balance is too delicate to keep an uneasy construction like a bicycle: the only way to keep an uneasy construction like a bicycle is to move it steadily moving. The balance is too delicate to keep steady and erect: so too is the Conscience.

A Religious caste which fails to maintain its disciplines in this illusion while yet always steering them wide of putting it to the test, has failed in its most important and delicate function. It is a Religion's business to make its followers anxious to submit to external compulsion and yet remain completely unaware of the existence of any external compulsion. It should know how to keep men so concerned with the incidents of submission that they are blind to the fact that they are genuinely submissive. It should know how to provide all those conundrums which make entertainment about the manner of applying the text, so that questions about the basis of the text remain unthought of. Such popular riddles, for instance, as that one about whether it is "Right" to offer violence to others or not to offer violence upon occasions a lie would be "Right" (i.e. commendable to Conscience), is an excellent sample of the kind: quite entertaining enough to banish to the furthest remoteness any question about the value of "Truth" itself. Thus are the zealots trained into the under standing of The Word and The Word itself is treated with favour and even uniqueness but not proudly to undermine with questions its absolute nature. It is the decadence in the Church which corresponds to a like one already referred to in the State, of the instinct to rule which has failed to understand the imperative necessity of an Order of Initiates whose first duty is to keep in view this supreme function. Otherwise, genuine intellectual humour must become a lost joy.

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THE EGOIST

July 1, 1915

The misapprehension, therefore, of the "Free Conscientist" of to-day who argues with himself as to whether it is "Right" to submit to State-compulsion, is the one common to Christian, and other brands of anarchists everywhere. * * * *

They mistake the insinuating Politenesses of Peace—a mere manner for the substance of the situation. The flowery verbal mounds intended to conceal by adorning the spot where lie buried the harsher instruments which have modelled the frameworks of peace, and which still keeps them in motion, and propelling The Word. They have believed not wisely but too well, that "In the beginning was The Word." This legend, were frankness a wholly unmitigated blessing, should read, "In the end was Affixed The Word": the label to the jar already filled. Were it so to read, however, it would be a tribute paid to "truth" at the cost of a system which seeks to multiply the pleasure of men's lives while endeavouring to suppress to vanishing-point life's less pleasurable features: a system comforting, if not over-safe. These "adapta tions" of truth are conventions laudable enough for the artistry with which the augmenting of the mind's pleasures and the minimization of its dissatisfactions is effected. That so comfortable a system should be devoid of disadvantages is not probable, and it is among the more serious of these that the Saints which it fosters and is its intent to foster should carry sainthood to the lengths of imagining that their refusal to live by violence makes it possible to live apart from means which are violent. What actually happens is that they become inspired with the desire to slip their quota of the detasteful "violence" upon the shoulders of others, who must either carry it or permit to lapse the conditions under which sainthood becomes a feasible proposition. The handling of these Saints—those who "believe" only too well—whether of the Church of Christ or of Humanity is a delicate affair: as is the "problem"—how to accept anarchy—which ultimately is death—as the ideal of civilization while yet upholding all the means necessary to Life.

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Yet government—Civil or Religious—advisedly suffers fools even with gladness. A sensitive Conscience combined with an unscrupulous political staff of police: and even though unintelligence is provoking and has dangers greater than reconciliatory even, it remains doubtful whether the "nature of things" would be made the clearer by any brusque rending of the veil of Sacredness. Knowledge, to be effective, has to be accepted with gratitude. These admirable "Rights" to a "Free" Conscience, are to be recognized for what they are—the obverse side of that one about whether it is "Right" to submit to State-compulsion. On the other hand, unfortunately, is the case—their industrious zeal along the paths of peace results in raising them into positions of affluence and as those of "Rights" to a "Free" Conscience, are to be recognized for what they are—the obverse side of zeal in the prescribed virtues, and preferably to be countered by a benevolent forbearance than by a too great insistence upon "fact." At any rate, for a government not to endeavour to accommodate their "Obedient" ridgeonsaries would be a singular injustice, since they are essentially the "good subjects." They obey the law not merely perfunctorily but with good will. Times of peace will come again and the vogue of the "good subject" and the usefulness of these admirable types of the "Obedient" will return with them. This type of subject is the ornament: the bright particular Star: of the system which has to compel by persuasion, and as long as the numbers of those who imagine seriously that they submit to compulsion only because they love to is limited to no more than a handful a show of suffer­ by another system, The Word. Only when—unfortunately, is the case—their industrious zeal along the paths of peace results in raising them into positions of affluence from whence they can—by "controlling" important sections of the Press—give to the dissemination of their doctrines an audience inordinately great in proportion to their number does their influence become a serious menace and danger to the community in which they have waxed great.
PUSHKIN AND THE RUSSIAN OPERA

By M. Montagu-Nathan

II

DARGOMJSKY, Glinka's successor, is also a composer whose influence can easily be traced in the work of the later school. He was a pioneer in the same sense as Gluck, Wagner and Ibsen. He was quite as deeply imbued with the spirit of nationalism as was his forerunner and he is moreover to be regarded as the initiate of those dramatic reforms that became the "programme" of the five younger composers, Balakiref, Cui, Borodin, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakof, forming the little brotherhood known as "The Invincible Band." Dargomijsky went three times to Pushkin. The rejection of an opera-ballet "The Triumph of Bacchus" (the first instance) by the directorate of the Petrograd Imperial Theatre so discouraged the composer that for some years his work upon "Russalka" was put aside. The ultimate success of this setting of Pushkin's poetic story of a jilted maiden turned water-nymph is traced to a modification of the attitude hitherto prevailing regarding works whose aim—the public was now quite prepared to accept a mere miller's wench as heroine. But Dargomijsky's most important essay upon a Pushkin text is the "Stone Guest." This—a version of "Don Juan"—was one of three little "dramatic fancies" written about 1830. They were not intended for publication. The "Covetous Knight," which has been given an operatic guise by Rakhmaninoff—also responsible for "Aleko," based on Pushkin's "Gypsies"—was described by the poet as being "after" Shenstone; the original has never transpired. The third of these is "Mozart and Salieri." In the writing of which Pushkin chose as his model the fanciful story that Salieri poisoned his rival. The operatic settings of the "Stone Guest" and "Mozart and Salieri" together form one of the most curious pages in musical history. Dargomijsky, ever anxious to disseminate anything in the nature of a menace to the dignity of music-drama, resolved not only to dispense with the usual divisions—arias, scenas and suchlike—but to banish the conventional librettist. The "Stone Guest" is therefore written from beginning to end in recitative and its composer has employed the original text of the poet unaltered. This extraordinary feat is all the more remarkable and quite noteworthy. Pushkin acknowledges for a profound love of folklore to his nurse, Arina Rodionovna, of whom there is a portrait in "Boris Godounof." Moussorgsky made a similar confession and gladly availed himself of this opportunity of introducing folk-songs and nursery games into his score. It needs only the appearance of a man who—at least externally—stands out from the commonplace surroundings in which she lives, and at once she imagines her ideal has come, and in her passion becomes oblivious of self. If the fire of inspiration really burned within me when I composed the "Letter Scene" it was Pushkin who kindled it.* The subject of "Mazeppa" was suggested to Tchaikovsky by a friend. Bourenin's dramatised version of "Poltava" (Pushkin had changed the name of his poem to avoid confusion) did not at first inspire the musician as he had expected, but on resuming work after an intermin of a year he read Pushkin's poem once again and felt more drawn towards it. He records, however, that his enthusiasm was not aroused by "Poltava" as it had been by "Eugenie Onegin."

The composer of the "Pathetic" symphony has certainly made the most successful setting of the prose "Tales of Belklin. The "Queen of Spades" began as a popular ballad and is now a favourite subject of opera in the style of Hoffmann and punishment is visited on Hermann, its villain-hero, through the medium of the supernatural. Other tales from this series have been brought into the musica-dramatic literature. "Doubrovsky," the story of a young landowner driven by the ravages of a treacherous neighbour to adopt brigandage as a means of livelihood, was chosen as the subject of an opera by Napravnik, the Bohemian orchestral conductor long enough resident in Russia to earn flippant mention by Karamzof père. "The Captain's Daughter"—an episode of Pugachoff's rebellion—forms the material of an opera by Cui, who, in the light of a setting of the "Prisoner of the Caucauses," a poem in which, to quote Mr. Baring, Pushkin annexed the Caucasus to Russian poetry. A further feat of "Russification" was his annexation of the Crimea. In the Palace of the Khans at Baghchiserai is the "Golden Cockerel," in the writing of which Puskhin gave credence to the subject of one of Rimsky-Korsakof's finest operas—"The Golden Cockerel." This—a version of "Don Juan"—was one of three little "dramatic fancies" written about 1830. They were not intended for publication. The "Covetous Knight," which has been given an operatic guise by Rakhmaninoff—also responsible for "Aleko," based on Pushkin's "Gypsies"—was described by the poet as being "after" Shenstone; the original has never transpired. The third of these is "Mozart and Salieri." In the writing of which Pushkin chose as his model the fanciful story that Salieri poisoned his rival. The operatic settings of the "Stone Guest" and "Mozart and Salieri" together form one of the most curious pages in musical history. Dargomijsky, ever anxious to disseminate anything in the nature of a menace to the dignity of music-drama, resolved not only to dispense with the usual divisions—arias, scenas and suchlike—but to banish the conventional librettist. The "Stone Guest" is therefore written from beginning to end in recitative and its composer has employed the original text of the poet unaltered. This extraordinary feat is all the more remarkable and quite noteworthy. Pushkin acknowledges for a profound love of folklore to his nurse, Arina Rodionovna, of whom there is a portrait in "Boris Godounof." Moussorgsky made a similar confession and gladly availed himself of this welcome opportunity of introducing folk-songs and nursery games into his score.

Pushkin, as we have recorded, began with a folk-subject but failed to reproduce the true folk-style. When, however, he returned to the region of fantasy with the "Legend of Tsar Saltan," he succeeded in creating a splendid epic of Russian fairyland—a vast and thickly populated realm. "Tsar Saltan" is the subject of one of Rimsky-Korsakof's finest operas and it is interesting to be able to have it seeing it for ourselves will not much longer be denied us. Bilbin's pictures have already whetted the appetite of many, and so has the "Golden Cockerel," in which the same artistic trinity have been associated. Alexander Pushkin is as yet little known in these isles. His work will no doubt eventually become popularised. Our acquaintance with Pushkin and his contemporaries during the present season of Russian Opera would appear to be an admirable method of securing for us an acquaintance with some of the best works of one who is reckoned among those who know him as one of the world's greatest poets. There would at any rate be no difficulty in drawing up the programme of such a scheme unless it were that of exclusion!

* "Life and Letters of Tchaikovsky," translated by Rosa Newmarch (John Lane).
FRENCH POEMS

[We hope to print a column of recent French poetry in each number of the Egoist. The following poems are taken, by permission of the author, from P. J. Jouve’s “Parler,” Georges Crès, 1913.]

INSTANTS

IV

LE crépuscule a les murs bruns, les livres,
Trois fauteuils, un prie-Dieu,
Et la cire du sol nu.
Une lueur qui s’évapore aux jardins
Et fait encore la blancheur
Des rideaux crus et funèbres,
N’est plus rien auprès du son,
Quand la chair éprouve le double bourdon
De la cathédrale voisine.
Et dès que reprend à travers la nuit
Une toux à demi morte,
Je comprends ma petitesse,
Malgré que la porte ouverte
Laisse entrer jusqu’à mon souvenir
Le passage d’une trompe
Orageuse comme la ville.

JEUX

V

SON rire absolument pur
Eclaire le fond de la cour
Immobile et sans soleil.
Cela tremble au fond de la cour.
La cour est plus noire encore.
Passe une trompe d’auto.

IX

Entre quatre murs,
Ton silence est affreux.
Voyons, nous sommes seuls.
Voyons, tu peux rire.
Ce sont les quatre murs
Qui font ombre le soir
A nos jeux.
Je te dis cela, mon Dieu !
Ne te méprends pas sur moi.
C’est une imprudente parole,
Ce n’est rien de plus,
Ne vas-tu pas rire,
Un peu, sous tes yeux
Pris par quatre murs ?
Le soir viendra vite.
Un enfant bourdonne
Entre les deux cours.

XII

Plongeons la rame.
Un reflet mort s’en va de nous,
Où les arbres profonds
Sombrent longuement,
Où nos faces bleues
Sont mêlées de ciel noir.
Ah, tes mains sur le bord
Fraisément peint !
Le peuplier jaune
Grince d’un oiseau.
L’eau me tient humide.
Le ciel est tout grand.
Appuyons sur la rame
Et regardons-nous.
Sommes-nous si purs ?

NOTES ON MODERN GERMAN POETRY

By A. W. G. RANDALL

III. The “Jung-Wien” and Prague Groups.

O f other members of the so-called “Jung-Wien” group it is not necessary to say very much. Schnitzler, although a literary artist of the first rank, is not a poet according to the standard assumed in these notes; Hermann Bahr and Beer-Hofmann are dramatists rather than poets. There remain then the two lyrical poets, Paul Wertheimer and Felix Braun. The first is a Jew, like Schnitzler. He has published a good deal of verse, very little of which, however, is of high quality. It is too artificial, too ouvragé; it carries to an extreme, in fact, the tendencies present in Hugo von Hofmannsth. Felix Braun is a far sincerer artist. His speciality is what the critics have labelled Kamerlyrik —chamber lyrical verse—a name which might equally well be given to most of Hofmannsthal’s work. Still Felix Braun is even more limited; he never in his poems reaches even the length of a Puppenspiel and he has no dramatic faculty. Some one—I think it was Ernst Liessauer, the all-too-famous writer of the “Hymn of Hate”—once compared Braun’s poems with Schubert’s Sonatas. The comparison is apt, for in neither the one nor the other is there any passion, any great emotion. Felix Braun treats of such subjects as parental love and the pain of separation with a tenderness and often with a melancholy which are not without charm, but are almost always too subjective. The poem that entirely represents him begins thus:

The world for me is covered with snow
And my house has darkened windows;
In my solitude
I write perforce my letters and my songs...

The difference between the “Jung-Wien” and the Prague groups is not one of style; it is, so to speak, a political difference. The members of the first group happened to meet in Vienna; they had, of course, certain aims in common, but no definite principles of art; what purely literary ideals, for example, can be said to have held Hermann Bahr and Hugo von Hofmannsthal together? General aims, one of which was to give some sort of expression to the life of the “Gross-
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The Prague Group, on the other hand, has a greater theoretical coherence. It consists, for one thing, entirely of poets, all of whom have some common points of style—strong symbolist influence, lyrical, as opposed to dramatic, faculty, mysticism, and a good deal of rhythmical skill. These things are, of course, not peculiar to the Prague group, as will be seen in a moment; but they are generally characteristic of the whole group, not of individual members, as is the case with the "Jung-Wiener." The chief poets of the Prague group are Hugo Salus, Franz Werfel, Richard Schaukal, and Rainer Maria Rilke. The first may be compared with Paul Wahrtheimer. A characteristic poem is "Die Stunden" (Die Stunden) which begins:

Before my house I saw the Hours stand
And slowly, slowly turn in row on row;
They stood in shadow and, as if it were a dream,
They, weary sisters, scarcely seemed to move.

Franz Werfel is a poet of quite another quality. He was born in 1890 at Prague, when only twenty-one he attracted great attention by his volume entitled "Der Weltfreund" (The Worldling) and two years later he considerably fulfilled the promise of this book by the volume "Wir Sind" (We are). It is to this second volume that the critics point when called upon to justify their confidence in Werfel's future. And if vigour, healthiness, and joy in life were all that one needed to become a great poet, there is no doubt that Werfel has already attained that eminence. He is largely under the influence of Whitman, philosophically and technically; his most representative poem is "Ein Lebenslied" (A Song of Life) in which he celebrates "will, action, and a life composed of earth." And that sort of thing, perhaps a relief after the artificial and insipid melancholy of Salus, but until Werfel has shown that his technique and sense of form can equal his vigour of sentiment no one will be inclined to rank him with the immortals.

Richard Schaukal, on the other hand, is a verse-craftsman of undoubted ability. His models are Alfred de Musset and José Maria de Heredia. In his early poems he was a decadent, a dandy among poets or, as he called himself, a "Stimmungsskrobot." There was too much artificial melancholy, self-pity, too much "pathetic fallacy." Such a question as he asks at the end of his poem "Rococo" is typical of his early work:

Who will open to me the bolted doors
Which lead to that world of pale manes,
Of madrigals and médisances?

His later poems, however, are not mere "mood-acrobatics"; they are, in many instances, very fine lyrical performances, worthy to be included in any anthology of modern German poetry: It is, in short, when Schaukal writes songs, when he has the opportunity to display his really excellent technique, that he is at his best. He is most effective when he is most "liedhaft," and he is this in his later poems, particularly in the volume "Neue Verse" (New Verse) which was published in 1912. Here is the beginning of a song from that collection:

In the grass I lie full length
And look into the blue;
I see clusters of diamonds among the shrubs of the quadrangle
Of madrigals and médisances?

Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep, pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was walking slowly to a tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration. A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionately and senselessly the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him! His soul was waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly. It was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light, and the moth flies forth silently.

An enchantment of the heart! The night had been enchanted. In dream or vision he had known the ecstasy of a serpent life. Was it an instant of enchantment only, or long hours and years and ages?

The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides at once from a multitude of cloudy cir-
cumstances of what had happened or of what might have happened. The instant flashed forth like a point of light and now and then, on clouds of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow. O! in the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh. Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber. An afterglow deepened within his spirit, whence the white flame had passed, deepening to a rose and ardent light. That rose and ardent light was her strength and her beauty. He remembered the man had known or would know, wilful from before the beginning of the world; and lured by that ardent rose-like glow the choir of the seraphim were falling from heaven.

Are you not weary of ardent ways,
Lure of the fallen seraphim?
Tell no more of enchanted days.

The verses passed from his mind to his lips and, murmuring them over, he felt the rhythmic movement of a villanelle pass through them. The roselike glow sent forth its rays of rhyme; ways, days, blaze, praise, raise. Its rays burned up the world, consumed the hearts of men, bells: the rays from the rose that was her wilful heart.

Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze
And you have had your will of him.
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

And then? The rhythm died away, ceased, began again to move and beat. And then? Smoke, incense ascending from the altar of the world.

Above the flame the smoke of praise
Goes up from ocean rim to rim
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Smoke went up from the whole earth, from the vapour oceans, smoke of her praise. The earth was like a swinging swaying censer, a ball of incense, an dipsozoidal ball. The rhythm died out at once; the cry of his heart was broken. His lips began to murmur the first verses over and over; then went on stumbling through half verses, stammering and baffled; then stopped. The heart's cry was broken.

The veiled windless hour had passed, and behind the panes of the naked window the morning light was great and men bell beat faintly very far away. A bird twittered; two birds, three. The bell and the bird ceased: and the dull white light spread itself east and west, covering the world, covering the roselight in his heart.

Fearing to lose all, he raised himself suddenly on his elbow to look for paper and pencil. There was neither on the table: only the soup-plate he had eaten the rice from for supper and the candlestick with its tendrils of tallow and its paper socket, singed by the last flame. He stretched his arm wearily towards the foot of the bed, groping with his hand in the pockets of the coat he used to sit, smiling or serious, asking himself why he had come, displeased with her and with himself, confounded by the print of the Sacred Heart above the untended chain of hands her hand had lain in his an instant, a soft mercy over the discharging of a formal rite rather than to him, a form of homage.

For answer she had danced away from along the chain of hands, dancing lightly and discreetly, giving herself to none. The white spray nodded to her dancing, and when she was in shadow the glow was deeper on her cheek.

A monk! His own image started forth a profane of the cloister, a heretic Franciscean, willing and willing not to serve, spinning like Gherardino da Borgo San Donnino, a lithe web of sophistry and whispering in her ear.

No, it was not his image. It was like the image of the young priest in whose company he had seen her last, looking at him from depths of dove's eyes, toying with the pages of her Irish phrase-book.

—Yes, yes, the ladies are coming round to us. I can see it every day. The ladies are with us. The best helps the language has.—

—And the church, Father Moran?—

The church, too. Coming round too. The work is going ahead there too. Don't fret about the church.—

Bah! he had done well to leave the room in disdain. He had done well not to salute her on the steps of the library. He had done well to leave her to flirt with her priest, to toy with a church which was the scullerymaid of Christendom.

Rude brutal anger routed the last lingering instant of ecstasy from his soul. It broke up violently her fair image and flung the fragments on all sides. On all sides distorted reflections of her image started from his memory: the flower girl in the ragged dress with damp features offended his baffled pride: a priested peasant, railing at her paramour, whose name and voice and sides distorted reflections of her image started from his memory: the flower girl in the ragged dress with damp features offended his baffled pride: a priested peasant, railing at her paramour, whose name and voice and

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—Yes. I was born to be a monk.—

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instant his bitter and despairing thoughts, their cries arising unbroken in a hymn of thanksgiving.

Our broken cries and mournful lays
 Rise in one eucharistic hymn
 Are you not weary of ardent ways?
 While sacrificing hands upraise
 The chalice flowing to the brim
 Tell no more of enchanted days.

He spoke the verses aloud from the first lines till the music and rhythm suffused his mind, turning it to quiet indulgence; then closed them painfully to feel them the better by seeing them: then lay back on his bolster.

The full morning light had come. No sound was to be heard: but he knew that all around him life was about to awaken in common noises, hoarse voices, sleepy prayers. Shrinking from that life he turned towards the wall, making a cowl of the blanket and staring at the great overblown scarlet flowers of the tattered wall-paper. He tried to warm his perishing joy in their scarlet glow, imagining a roseway from where he lay upwards to heaven all strewn with scarlet flowers. Weary! Weary! He too was weary of ardent ways.

A gradual warmth, a languorous weariness passed over him, descending along his spine from his closely cowled head. He felt it descend and, seeing himself as he lay, smiled. Soon he would sleep.

He had written verses for her again after ten years. Ten years before she had worn her shawl cowlwise about her head, sending sprays of her warm breath into the night air, tapping her foot upon the glassy road. It was the last tram; the lank brown horses knew it and shook their bells to the clear night in their hard way, the tattered wall-paper. He tried to warm his perishing joy in their scarlet glow, imagining a roseway from where he lay upwards to heaven all strewn with scarlet flowers.

Ten years before that wisdom of children to his folly. If he sent her the verses? They would be read out at breakfast amid the tapping of egg-shells. Folly indeed! Her brothers would laugh and try to wrest the page from each other with their strong hard fingers. The suave priest, her uncle, seated in his armchair would hold the page at arm’s length, read it smiling, and then copy it to himself.

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In the eighteenth century it was expected of a poet that he should instruct as well as interest; traces of this frame of mind are noticeable in much nineteenth-century poetry, and they are still present in our academicians, correct, sound, whatever you choose to call it, criticism. The ordinary reviewer’s preoccupation with a poet’s “message” is another eighteenth-century relic. The poets of the nineteenth century—and, indeed, of many other centuries—who have most influenced the younger generation departed from this rule, “They did not presume to instruct nor consciously to “elevate” their audience, but were content to render life as they saw it, leaving the reader to form his own judgment, treating him as a reasonable equal, not as a child or an inferior, to be impressed by recondite knowledge, by bombastic language and high-falutin’ sentiments.

We do not nowadays expect a poet to profess pious or “classic” periods, the Attic tragedians, the Augustan poets, the authors of le grand siècle, and the Elizabethans; we do not, indeed, deny their genius, but a modern, who reads poetry for love of it and not from a sense of duty nor from compulsion, tends to widen very greatly the scope of his reading, to forgive vast quantities of so-called “faults” in poetry provided that the words give him the sensation of being in contact with a new, unique personality. Such an attitude may or may not be “decadent”—it is probable that it has nothing to do with decadence—but for better or for worse it has become the attitude of a large and active part of the modern intellectual world.

We do not nowadays expect a poet to profess pious and probably hypocritical sentiments; to parler raison et vertu is now as affected as to parler Euphues; we immediately suspect that the poet who professes so great virtue, or so profound sympathy, or so altruistic an interest in humanity, is recording what he ought to be rather than what he is. It may be the scientific spirit, it may be the devil, it may be from ennui, it may be from a healthy interest, but it is true that we are now primarily interested in the poet’s personality whether he reveal it consciously or unconsciously.

Whenever I read Racine or Virgil I find that to keep up my interest I have to tell myself what wonderful men they were, that they really existed, that they ate and drank and lived amid the tapping of egg-shells.
fell in love and committed follies and eccentricities and
generosities like any other human being. On the other
hand, when I read Catullus or some modern Frenchman
I find my interest in their world so intense that I do
not need to use any artifice to re-kindle my interest.
The limited faculties of each one of us give us one
world and only one, but every artist is fixed for us
his world, and vicariously we can re-live his most
poignant moments, we can increase our sensations, our
existences. How curiously monotonous, even to the
most sensitive and most imaginative nature, must life
have been before the arts were devised to admit us into
the different worlds perceived by the greatest of our
fellows.

Amy Lowell is a modern poet. She does not exhort
her readers to virtue or commercial honesty, she does
not advise them how they may get to heaven or cure
their chillblains ; she does not even bid them use Gillette
Safety Razors. She does none of these things ; she
simply records, " presents " as accurately and as pre­
cisely as she knows how, the most interesting moods, the
most emotional moments, the most poignantly
obser vations of her life, and in doing so she unconsciously records
for us her world, etches for us her personality.
You may think that this is all rot, but if you really absorb
that presentation of a bath-tub you may unconsciously think
of it during your own five minutes of frantic
ablutions. Did anyone ever unconsciously think of
Gray's " Elegy " when entering a graveyard? I know
I never did. And I do not believe that Gray's poem ever increased anyone's pleasure in graveyards, or any­
one's interest in graveyards. As to the respective
merits of bath-tubs and churchyards—for there are
many people who profess ecstasy for the
" Elegy " who will deny vehemently one's right to make
poems about bath-tubs—I may point out that one takes
a bath every morning, and that when the time comes
to take a deep and permanent interest in churchyards
it is too late to take an interest in anything.

The sunshine pours in at the bath-room window and bores through
Little spots of sunshine lie on the surface of the water and dance,
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.

Amy Lowell, then, is a modern poet, a poet of per­
sonality, a poet recording moods, not maxims ; impres­
sions, not philosophy ; and to understand the buying modern poetry, even of a reasonably good kind, is
such a hazardous speculation. It is curious, but the
dullest and commonest sort of people seem to thing
they are divinely constituted to increase our collection of
familiar phrases. Nine times out of ten the
poetaster has the soul of a graver or, what is worse, the
soul of a pedagogue or parson. You can be quite certain
that 90 per cent. of these gentry have never taken the
trouble to inquire if their view of life, their experiences
are any different from anybody else's, or to fit themselves
to express what individuality they may possess in any
particularly efficient manner.

Happily this remark concerns the subject of these
observations only in that it does not apply to her.

I said to myself that I understood Amy Lowell's
poetry completely for the first time.

Let me quote:

The eye is a sunshine pool at the bath-room window and bones through
the water in the bath-tub in lathes and planes of greenish-white.
It cleaves the water into flaves like a jewel, and cracks it to bright light.

Little spots of sunshine lie on the surface of the water and dance,
and their reflections wobble deliciously over the ceiling; a
stir of my finger sets them whirring, reeling. I move a foot and the
planes of light in the water jar. I lie back and laugh, and let the
water fill the garden with its rushing,
In the midst of the quiet of close-clipped lawns.
PASSING PARIS

A STRANGE observation is that Goethe's prophecy (expressed to Eckermann) that "national literature has no great signification to-day; the time for universal literature having come, and to hasten which each must contribute his efforts," has, in spite of humanitarian, international, "European" (the German Nietzsche's term), and other such theories, that it is in spirit the fashion of current" and communications found only inverted application. Society has lost in cosmopolitanism since Goethe's time, and though we now master the frontierless air, politically, the numerous frontiers of the earth receive increasing affirmation. Far from having been effaced they seem to multiply. The better we with which this war is pursued testifies to the national consciousness of each country engaged in it. Never before was this sense more strongly developed, and men have never fought with more vehemence to proclaim and defend it. Instead of the fusion to which the evolution of scientific and social conceptions would seem to lead, new national individualities (for individualism is expressed by nations as well as by persons) seem to branch forth, practical particularism constantly gaining ground on the opposite and opposing theoretical tendency of universality. Within four centuries a completely new race has been formed; Japan's recent participation in Western currents has as a self-contained people. Poland has, with increased and ever-increasing vigour, manifested its national, that is, its "particular" integrity since its political division; Belgian literature as such, as a distinct fruit of the soil, is thirty-five years old, and its most typical exponent is among us at this hour.

Goethe said: "The day of universal literature has now come." Yet who more universal than the Greeks? Are Corneille and Racine not universal? Was the French Shakespeare, for whom his ambition was broad, not universal? Was he not himself universal? The attribution of national characteristics to art is a risky proceeding and needs—exactly as does that of universal qualities—the clearest thought and expression, but how can it be avoided, and why should it be? Fundamentally, doubtless, art is universal or international, and to call a poet "national" is merely to enunciate a vulgar truism. Molière may be appreciated or criticised, which is a pity, for either a name deserves its enunciation in its own right, or not. What is meant by the definition "national literature," for instance, what distinguishes the Belgian writers from the French, their "particular" from their "universal" qualities (for individualism is expressed by nations as well as by persons)?

Fundamentally, doubtless, art is universal. There is an affinity between two Belgian authors that will distinguish them from a French writer as there are physical affinities and distinctions. For example: Verhaeren is too rough-hewn to be a French poet; Maeterlinck too much of a mystic for France; Huysmans, though not properly a Belgian, displays his extraction. You may say: Shakespeare would not have written the works he did had he not been Shakespeare, but you may add quite honourably, and without fear of enunciating merely a vulgar truism, that he would have written them had he not also been English and an Elizabethan. This is what is meant by national literature. Molière may be appreciated by all, he is none the less representative of his time and country. To detach a man from these is to put him in the air, in nothingness. Verhaeren is more typically Belgian and modern than was Rodenbach, probably because he used his eyes to the detriment of his imagination. But they need a basis to ascend from, like certain birds who sweep the earth for a long time before rising definitely and soaring into space.

Verhaeren, writes M. de Gourmont, "only owes to France its language and generalisations, and he has never ceased describing his environment: the land of Flanders... at each step his poetry recalls the colouring of Jordaens, the luxuriance of Rubens. His race makes itself heard above his culture. Before being a poet he is a native of Flanders and nearly all his pictures of life are pictures of Flemish life. Thus certain poets and writers of romance proceed, by creating a similarity whereby to shape their dreams or characters. They are called, therefore, realists, which does not imply they have used their eyes to the detriment of their imagination. But they need a basis to ascend from, like certain birds who sweep the earth for a long time before rising definitely and soaring into space. Verhaeren is of these;" But the various and complex characteristics of a nation are not, and cannot be, completely reflected in the individual, in the "only" or "typical." The rough-hewn, Gothic, prolific Verhaeren and the naturalistic Camille Lemonnier find their antitheses in the somewhat pale and insipid Rodenbach, and in the suave Maeterlinck, who "gives a mystical interpretation to the real" in contrast to the romantics who "gave a realistic interpretation to the ideal." Camille Lemonnier, who was in turn Zola's master and disciple, preceded Verhaeren, "having come at a time when his compatriots were hardly conscious of themselves or the gifts with which they were endowed." According to M de Gourmont, M. Grolleau and other critics, Camille Lemonnier would only rank, with the naturalistic school for his subject; his treatment of the "emigrant with the shame of nature giving him a nobler place in literature.

M. de Gourmont alludes to a number of poets who, "whether Flemish or Walloon, have made of Belgium one of the richest provinces of French poetry": M. M. Van Leberghne, Albert Mockel, Marc Elskamp, André Fontainas, Edmond Van der Steenhuyck, Van Lerberghe, Albert Mockel, Marc Elskamp, André Fontainas, et al. Some of them have written works, others, some of whom the dimensions of his book, no doubt, do not permit him to quote or criticise, which is a pity, for either a name deserves better than to be mentioned without comment or which does not deserve as well.

* * * * *

The book to read at present is Le Dernier de, that "novel of national energy," by Maurice Barrès, whose Colette Baudoche, a much inferior and recent production,
has just been staged at the Comédie Française. There is absolutely no equivalent to it in English letters. The sub-title tells its mission. In a country where the chief object of literature is diversion (and advertisement) no one has ever thought of daring to so widen the traditional scope of the novel. The observation is humbling to the serious English mind. Who has not read Les Déracinés? Should he begin; who has, should begin again. It should be read because it discovers the vast resources of French purpose, the meaning of patriotism in its broadest and most mystic sense, while it preaches the practical advantages of collective effort.

Though sharing M. André Gide's view, which is opposed to that of M. Barrès, that to uproot the individual may be of advantage to him in exactly the same sense as transplantation benefits a tree, and that the richest soil becomes impoverished if foreign elements are not superadded to it, I consider that M. Maurice Barrès is justified in his opinion that French intellect and energy would gain with decentralisation. He would have Paris relieved of the enormous influx from the provinces, he would have the provinces keep their fruits for their own consumption. The monopoly by the capital of the best thought and activity is, no doubt, an immense evil, but to oppose the transfiguration of physical and mental restriction by the houses, the homes, from which they spring, is to exchange one evil for another; it is, in fact, to make opposition to a natural law. Mobility and dispersion furnish the only solution.

This said, Les Déracinés stands apart in French and all literature, for no book, in the guise of a novel, stirs up to such a degree M. Barrès, the arch-individualist and egoist, who is a personification of the theories of Max Stirner, which he has expressed in other forms, has gone a step further than Max Stirner, having shown that the cult of country and tradition of all the elements which go to the building of the individual of the French race, are of advantage to him in exactly the same sense as superadded to it, I consider that M. Maurice Barrès would gain with decentralisation. He would have all literature, for no book, in the guise of a novel, stirs up to such a degree M. Barrès, the arch-individualist and egoist, who is a personification of the theories of Max Stirner, which he has expressed in other forms, has gone a step further than Max Stirner, having shown that the cult of country and tradition of all the elements which go to the building of the individual of the French race, are of advantage to him in exactly the same sense as superadded to it, I consider that M. Maurice Barrès would gain with decentralisation. He would have

³The strength of one who speaks in the name of his country is proportional to the number of guns his compatriots can draw into line; a community of which none has been and is powerless he must distinguish between voting-machines and such citizens who, under given circumstances, are capable of action.

Has the extension of France anything in common with military successes in the Far East? These distant possessions are of value only when supported by our action on the banks of the Rhine.

On the folly of facilitating education and encouraging university careers when there is no outlet for the intelligentsia thus trained and on the mercilessness of "liberty" and "equality":

Racanot and Mouchefrin fight desperately. Unbound from their country and all society, they appeal, for the right to live, to that liberty of which they die. But a person does not figure in life as he might in a fine circus, where he may make a show of his activities. He is occupied in finding a means of livelihood. Racanot and especially Mouchefrin are neither able to find a fixed position; they know no specified liberty of which they die.

The fagott, long drawn out, somewhat expressionless, unfeeling, quivering in the deep of emptiness, long, long—by these everything little by little became green. First deep and somewhat muddy. Then it was known that through the quite deserted streets a white horse was wandering all alone. This sound lasted long, very, very long. And therefore it was not known for certain when it ceased. Ah, who knows when stillness comes?

The notes of a fagott, long drawn out, somewhat expressionless, unfeeling, quivering in the deep of emptiness, long, long—by these everything little by little became green. First deep and somewhat muddy. Then it was known that through the quite deserted streets a white horse was wandering all alone. This sound lasted long, very, very long. And therefore it was not known for certain when it ceased. Ah, who knows when stillness comes?

The buildings shot up into the air and became slender. They all inclined to one point on the right, where the morrow was maybe. It was perceptible, this striving towards the morrow. And still more light, more coldly, more virulently growing grews the sky, the houses, the pavements and the people who walked thereon. They walked on perpetually, in an unbroken line, slowly, always eyes to the front. And always alone.

But now the withered tree had gained a great luxuriant crest. Topmost was this crest, with its compact, tailed crown, tracing the sky. The force of this crest was so shirll that no soul could endure it. And it is well that none of the people walking underneath saw the crest.

The fagott endeavoured to express this hue. It went higher and higher, grew shrill and nasal in straining for its note.

What luck it is that the fagott could not reach that note!

Translated by A. W. G. Randall.
POEMS

CINEMA EXIT

After the click and whirr
 Of the glimmering pictures,
 The dry feeling in the eyes
 As the sight follows the electric flickerings,
 The banal sentimentality of the films,
 The hushed concentration of the people,
 The tinkling piano—
 Suddenly
 A vast avalanche of greenish yellow light
 Pours over the threshold;
 White globes darting vertical rays
 Spot the sombre buildings;
 The violent gloom of the night
 Battles with the radiance;
 Swift figures, legs, skirts, white cheeks, hats
 Flicker in oblique rays of dark and light.

 Millions of human vermin
 Swarm sweating
 Along the night-arched cavernous roads.
 (Happily rapid chemical processes
 Will disintegrate them all.)

MALADIE DE L’APRÈS-MIDI

Why does the clanking of a tip-cart
 In the road
 Make me so sad?
 The sound beats the air
 With flat blows,
 Dull and continued.
 Not even the clear sunshine
 Through bronze and green oak leaves,
 Nor the crimson spindle of a cedar-tree
 Covered with Virginia creeper,
 Nor the humming brightness of the air,
 Can comfort my melancholy.
 The cart goes slowly,
 It creeps at a foot-pace,
 And the flat blows of sound
 Hurt me,
 And bring me nearly to weeping.

MIDDLE AGE

Like black ice
 Scrolled over with unintelligible patterns by an ignorant skater,
 Is the dulled surface of my heart.

A RAINY NIGHT

Shadows,
 And white, moving light,
 And the snap and sparkle of rain on the window.
 An electric lamp in the street
 Is swinging, tossing,
 Making the rain-runnelled window-glass
 Glitter and palpitate.
 In its silver lustre
 I can see the old four-post bed,
 With the fringes and balls of its canopy.
 You are lying beside me, waiting,
 But I do not turn.
 I am counting the folds of the canopy.
 You are lying beside me, waiting,
 But I do not turn.
 In the silver light you would be too beautiful,
 And there are ten pleats on this side of the bed-canopy,
 And ten on the other.

HAUNTED

See! He trails his toes
 Through the long streaks of moonlight,
 And the nails of his fingers glitter:
 They claw and flash among the tree-tops.
 His lips suck at my open window,
 And his breath creeps about my body
 And lies in pools under my knees.
 I can see his mouth sway and wobble,
 Sticking itself against the window-jambs.
 But the moonlight is bright on the floor,
 Without a shadow.
 Hark! A hare is strangling in the forest,
 And the wind tears a shutter from the wall.

TIGRESS

I

I know you are crouching close behind me,
 Little tigress,
 For your breath is hot and damp on my neck,
 You are wanting me so;
 And I you;
 But I—I do not show it.

 II

Nowadays I can scarcely sleep
 For love of my dear.
 I lie awake and cry
 Because she is not by me,
 She, my mistress,
 My tyrant,
 My passionate, fierce demanding lover.
 I want to have you coming on me
 Like a tigress;
 I long to feel your claws in my flesh;
 Then I will wrestle with you,
 And will not let you go
 Until you have assuaged my tears.

IN SWABIA: SPRING 1914

No doubt it is still very peaceful there
 In Swabia;
 Where I used to stretch myself in the sun
 Full length on a hill-side of gentians:
 (Oh, the unspeakable ecstasy of that mountain of blue!)
 And when I turned there were black-garmented women
 Silhouetted against a white, unexpressive sky,
 Plodding up the painful road,
 Kneeling at each Station of the Cross—
 A gaudy thing in blue and brick-red—
 Toiling up the broken path
 To the cemetery.
 The little Friedhof on the crest of the hill,
 Where they would mutter quaint prayers
 And sprinkle their dead with holy water.

In the valley were their lazy men-folk,
 Feeding the hogs or drinking, or discussing the weather
 In speech high-pitched, and plaintive like the speech of a child,
 Yet leisurely and with some care for humour.
 All day long I used to sun myself on those hills,
 Or talk in inns with simple men:
 And in the evening I would return through the woods.
A FRENCH BOOK.

"L'E Retour dans la Nuit," by Martial Piechaud (Bernard Grasset) was originally published as a serial in La Revue Heddonadaire. This commanded attention: its quality commanded admiration. Unlike most first novels, which are generally loosely constructed or overcrowded, this work is firmly composed and thoroughly well balanced. The title refers to the eventual loss of his sight in a young man whose childhood days were already obscured by the absence of his mother from the family hearth. When the physical catastrophe asserts itself off with rain, he first went to his room, then came back to the dining-room and sat down by his son. He took his hand and covered with mud; his overcoat was stiff with rain.

As he first went to his room, then came back to the dining-room, the irremediableness of his son's infirmity. Another, the book's climax, describes the prodigal mother's return: the young man and the old servant are together in the dining-room.

"Half-past what?" asked abruptly. "What a stupid way of giving the time! . . . Be quiet!"

Leaning forward, putting his hand to his ear, he absorbed the noise of slowly approaching steps. "Who is it?"

"The bell . . . Perhaps she won't come tonight."

"If she does come, I will open the door."

And the cab passed the house; its noise in the island street was absorbed and completely dead. "The bell, what?"

"There's the bell. . . . Perhaps she won't come tonight."

"I didn't think it was so late."

"Listen," whispered Germaine. "Who is it?"

Pierre felt his father's hand was quite damp and that, from time to time, it trembled. Suddenly he heard a light ring at the bell. Germaine, who had made up her mind to lay the table during the interval of waiting, stopped, with the plate-basket under her arm, as though she had been caught stealing.

"It's the post, no doubt," she said at last to give herself courage. "Good night," said M. Hinquel with the same purpose.

She went out, closing the dining-room door after her. Pierre felt his fingers being held ever more tightly in the professor's grip. The latter began to speak: "You know all. But it is your mother who is coming back. Your mother, do you understand? You must forget all you may have heard. . . . It is finished . . . quite finished. . . . She is only your mamma. . . . His voice was toneless; the words seemed to slip from it aimlessly. He might have been speaking of the most ordinary things. "Your mamma," he repeated. But what was Germaine doing? He called but there was no answer. He called again. Pierre could not remember ever having suffered more horrible anxiety. He pressed nearer to M. Hinquel's arm. In spite of his emotion he realised the professor had put on his frockcoat.

Suddenly his hand was dropped. The door had opened in the midst of a great silence. The carpet absorbed the noise of slowly approaching steps. Who was it? But a double sob burst abruptly above his head and then against his legs, and he felt the folds of a wet skirt.

Then he also rose, white as a sheet. He nearly uttered a cry. Two lips were on his forehead.

And in the midst of a woman's silent embrace, his heart gave way to at once inexpressible anguish and joy, because around him he felt no perfume and that the two hands pressing him were ringless and burnt.

This dramatic scene does not end the story; there is still one chapter describing how the mother and son became acquainted and closely united. As the reviewers say: "We recommend this book."

M. C.

SOME BOOKS RECEIVED.

"The Old House and Other Tales," by Fedor Sologub, translated from the Russian by John Cowrouns. (Martin Secker, 6/-.)

Sologub is a sort of Russian symbolist with a very fine, fantastic imagination; Mr. Cowrouns, in his preface, speaks of the great influence which Chekhov has had on this writer. But it is obvious that he has been influenced by modern French writers—as indeed, who has not? A good deal of this book hovers between poetry and prose, especially in "The Old House;" where the descriptions are very beautiful and vivid. There are moments when one becomes extremely disgusted with the rather shallow self-appreciation of the Anglo-Saxon; at such times the hesitation, the sense of the fulness of things, above all the exquisite pity of an author like Sologub, become almost an obsession. "Russia," says a fashionable contemporary, "has contributed to music and dancing, but very little to literature." We venture to prophesy that our contemporary will not enjoy Sologub; on the other hand, there are thousands of people who will. Mr. Cowrouns is the first to put some of Sologub's tales into English, and has done it extremely well. Obviously it is extremely difficult to bring over into English stories like these, where each depends upon the same simplicity, upon a certain naivety, upon themselves. We would like to see more of Sologub's work in English as well as the other new Russian authors whom Mr. Cowrouns has up his sleeve.

"Reports of Certain Disscussions at the International Polity Summer School." (Harrison & Sons.)

These discussions took place between July 17 and 27, 1914. We regret that they were unsuccessful in averting the European war.

"Hypnos," a novel by M. T. H. Sohler. (Constable & Co.)

A study of a young man at Oxford who "discovers" modern art. Ingenious contrasts—different types of undergraduates—the swagger, the athletic, the genuine—in the Swiss Alps nice girl who flirts with hero—Oxford, dance, proposal—girl seduced into marrying strong-minded, purposeful villain—distress of hero—America, discovery of former protege, Daisy, on a music-hall stage, dieting on lemonade—villain turns up, catches the heroine's prototype, makes him swear not to marry heroine, "Think of her turpitude, make her swear not to marry heroine, "Think of her children," villain swears, hero goes off content—last chapter, letter from hero's friend, another letter brought in, contains announcement that villain has wedded heroine. "Spartoi!"

"The Bruno Chap Books." (M. T. H. Sohler.)


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The case of Mrs. Sanger.

To the Editor, The Egoist.

Madam.—In the February number of The Egoist, that trenchant hater of humbug and lover of liberty, R. B. Kerr, had a letter on the subject of Mrs. Margaret Sanger, the American Suffragist, and her movement for birth control.

Since the U.S. Post Office confiscated her pamphlet The Woman Rebel—whose motto was "No Gods. No Masters"—the movement for birth control has been a superb indication of the boldest direct action. Indicted before the Federal Courts, refused time to prepare her defence, Mrs. Sanger has privately printed and launched one hundred thousand copies of a pamphlet explaining the most reliable contraceptive methods in the cheapest language.

These were distributed to various centres of the I.W.W. movement, and have since been duplicated twice over by private printing presses, so the law is practically a dead letter! Mrs. Sanger then offered Sir Boyle Roche, the President of the Board of Agriculture, her work, and have since been duplicated twice over by private printing presses, so the law is practically a dead letter! Mrs. Sanger then offered Sir Boyle Roche, the President of the Board of Agriculture, her work, and have since been duplicated twice over by private printing presses, so the law is practically a dead letter! Mrs. Sanger then offered Sir Boyle Roche, the President of the Board of Agriculture, her work, and have since been duplicated twice over by private printing presses, so the law is practically a dead letter! 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Meanwhile Comstock has arrested Mr. William Sanger, an artist of strong and independent personality. Mrs. Sanger's husband. He was in no way implicated in the preparation and distribution of the pamphlet on which he was arrested, by an act of intimidation. For the pamphlet he was entrapped into giving a single copy of the pamphlet to a supposed comrade, and was arrested by Comstock in person, and offered his liberty on the condition of betraying Mrs. Sanger's whereabouts.

His trial has been repeatedly postponed. Mrs. Sanger's trial is fixed for October, and will be fought on the issues of Free Speech and Birth Control.

The Anti-American Suffragists have rushed to the defence of Comstock and his copies, and a New York paper recently contained two delicious interviews. One was with a married female mandarin, who said that people who have the knowledge of the movement concerning contraception should be deprived of it, but omitted to state how.

Interview No. 2 was with a virgin in some high educational post, who was very enthusiastic about the matter, and would have saved the whole subject, but thought Mrs. Sanger should be suppressed. The Suffragists have officially refrained from any statement of their position; you see it touches a real, vital, mentalized at all.

The fact that Britain has not adopted conscription is not due to any subsection of our rulers to morality, but to the fact that in our case it seems it is rather harder to make that particular kind of tyranny seem expedient than it is in one countries. One party does want to regimentalize us for war, but the other prefers to regimentalize us in all other possible ways, driving us into insurance, etc. Individualists offer as much resistance as they can to being regimentalized at all.

Conscriptionists talk about "defending Anglo-Saxon freedom." Miss Marsden is too logical for that absurdity, so she uses "Anglo-Saxon supremacy." Does she really believe that German men are necessarily because it gave military efficiency (it never did so), but because all rulers, whether kings or democratic majorities, like to drag on their subjects' careers in their hearts that the cause of the crown is a cause of state. Men are not soldiers by profession, but by angry to see him refuse their will. They cannot make a sheep fight, but they can drill it and put it in uniform and say "serve it right."

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