VIEWS AND COMMENTS

THE contributing Editor of this journal (whose regretted inability to contribute as usual to this month's issue explains the appearance of these "Comments" from an unaccustomed pen) would no doubt be not only ready but insistent as to the reason why my interest in her interesting distinction between literature and journalism, worked out in the "Views and Comments" of November 1, was more than doubled by force of the fact that the views therein expressed fitted in aptly with some reflections of my own. For a considerable time I have regarded with suspicion those sects and peoples—their ranks are multitudinous—who are bent on "rushing" theories. I should imagine a considerable time I have regarded with suspicion this attitude takes on the appearance of the most obviously commonplace: a feature apparently due to the fact that the obviousness is so complete that it overreaches itself and succeeds in practice in appearing the most obscure and remote.

Leaving in abeyance all question as to "ultimate realities" and "things-in-themselves" and attempting only to trace out their manner of action in the sphere where causes produce effects, the theory, rightly handled, is in this sphere an indispensable preliminary to sound knowledge. In essence the theory is a guess at a fact—or else that it shall emerge only to be discarded. Theory—that it is with a feeling of surprise and relatively true home of the perpetuated Theory—the theory having served its purpose and been duly discarded for fact—to establish laws of universal validity.

Whether it is to this unusual destiny of destruction to which theories are born that men find it difficult to accustom themselves; or whether it is to prolong the excitement of the hunt—and certainly when theory to which theories are born that men find it difficult to become hobby—is to be found.

In the realm of physical science there is no great temptation or opportunity to regard the theory otherwise than with coldness and suspicion, for it is here to a great extent possible to apply rigorous tests and—the theory having served its purpose and been duly discarded for fact—to establish laws of universal validity. It is in the domain of psychological phenomena, where experimental tests can rarely be applied, where exact measurement can be obtained only within the narrowest limits, where even the most careful observation is often at fault, and where words with their shifting and shifty meanings reign supreme, that the fertile breeding-ground is the motive inspiring their creation.

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Thus a theory is one of the few things whose destruction must necessarily be subjected to tests—such subjection being indeed the reason for its original formulation: to suggest a method of observa­tion and experiment from which it is intended that the theory shall emerge as something else—as established fact—or else that it shall emerge only to be discarded. Thus a theory is one of the few things whose destruction is the motive inspiring their creation.

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guarded from all assault. Accordingly where a theory has once taken possession of the mind so deeply as to have secured a niche in the affections all attempts by an opponent to oust it are almost always failures. The bias in favour of the theory is such as to render the mind impervious even to the most sustained attack. At its extremest this absorption in a theory or doctrine produces the enthusiast and the propagandist, and it may be accepted as a rough guiding rule that the greater the affection or enthusiasm with which a theory is held the more clearly it should be handled by the outsider desirous only of discovering its value as a means to some end.

And since the weapons of the warfare of beliefs are language, the shifting meanings of words, the fluidity and mistiness of connotation of abstract terms give the protector of any favoured theory his chance. For if it be difficult for a writer or speaker to make clear the precise meaning he attaches to a word when endeavouring to be most exact, what an opportunity is opened up for those who, far from wishing to be clear and exact, deliberately set out to raise the dust of misunderstanding! Without consciously going such lengths, the propagandist nevertheless becomes skilful at so manipulating words that, once he is quite clear in his own mind as to the theory he actually measures his success by his ability finally to create a dilemma from which the only apparent way of escape is by adoption of his theory.

Of an array of conflicting theories, each purporting to explain a set of phenomena exhibiting some common characteristic, the one first seized on by any individual has the best chance of prevailing as far as he is concerned, and the reason which explains this helps to explain the whole theory of the perpetuated theory. Every one probably is familiar with the apparently curious phenomenon that, if asked to name one of two pieces of evidence before one, nearly always the second shows the first to be completely useless. The explanation is not at all far-fetched. The procedure of the mind is to put, as it were, on the watch for all corroborating instances—among which there slip in also those that corroborate only in show: which latter, being not too closely scrutinized, are classed and given equal weight with those which are more truly relevant to the main state of the attention, it is struck by the faintest and most superficial similarities. Faint resemblances are magnified and perhaps unconsciously exaggerated; so strong, indeed, is this tendency that it is not infrequently happens that facts which in reality are in opposition to the particular theory are distorted in such a way as to take on the appearance of confirmatory evidence.

On the other hand, it is considerably more difficult and needs a far stronger mental effort to take note of instances that would upset the theory. For in this case the stimulus of interest is lacking.added to this, there may be a concealed and perhaps unconscious wish not to find disturbing facts. Unless there is a deliberate concentration of the will in a firm resolve to arouse and keep the attention on the strain, and probably due also to some counteracting influence, attention fails and another theory or related facts previously unobserved. Psychologists lay stress on the influence of the preparation of the attention in cases of this kind; in illustration of which they point out, for example, that a sound is heard more quickly if one is listening with strained attention in expectation of it than if one is quite unprepared. It does not seem improbable that a like explanation explains the prepossession which exists in favour of the perpetuated theory. The foundations of the theory, taking possession of the mind, acts as a stimulus to the attention, putting it on the watch for all corroborating instances—among which there slip in also those that corroborate only in show: which latter, being not too closely scrutinized, are classed and given equal weight with those which are more truly relevant to the main state of the attention, it is struck by the faintest and most superficial similarities. Faint resemblances are magnified and perhaps unconsciously exaggerated; so strong, indeed, is this tendency that it is not infrequently happens that facts which in reality are in opposition to the particular theory are distorted in such a way as to take on the appearance of confirmatory evidence.

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January 1, 1916

THE EGOIST

all movements and caught on to none. That is its
distinctive quality and one which we aspire to retain.

The Egoist is wedded to no belief from which it is
unwilling to be deviated. To it, down to the depths of human
nature, to keep its curiosity in it fresh and alert, to
regard nothing in human nature as foreign to it, but to
hold itself ready to bring to the surface what may be
found, without any pre-determination to fling back all
but welcome facts—such are the high and uncommon
pretensions upon which it bases its claim to permanence.

HARRETT SHAW WEAVER.

LIBERATIONS

STUDIES OF INDIVIDUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

No. IX. Fantaisiste Spirit in Modern French Music

I

THE spirit evinced in the works of the modern
French school of Fantaisiste poets has served to
connect the most motley movement in contemporary
literature; a movement which, while essentially French in origin, embodies an attitude to,
and a conception of, art which, by reason of their
sanity and rejuvenative force, are already exercising
a palpable effect on the art-developments of other
nations and on all like minds, however distant.

But at present, as is natural, it is in France,
the country from which this influence emanated, that
its widest operation is apparent, and in all probability
this will remain so, allowing for proportionate develop-
ments, even when the spirit of the movement has
attained more universal familiarity and wider accept-
ance. For La Fantaisie, apart from its present artistic
association, is the expression of fundamental psycho-
logical characteristics inherent in the French nature.
Throughout the poetry of France, from Charles d‘Orléans,
through François Villon, Ronsard, Du Bellay, La Fantaisie,
Gautier, Ger maine de Nerval, Theodore de Banville,
Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue, and
Paul Fort, to the present school of Fantaisiste poets
(Guillaume Apollinaire, J. M. Bernard, René Bizet,
Francis Carco, Claudien, Tristan Deréme, Fernand
Divoire, Max Jacob, Fernand Deréme, Tristan Klingsor,
Alexandre Mercereau, Jean Pellerin, Charles Pernon,
Louis de la Salle, André Salmon, André Spire, and Paul-
Jean Toulet), one can trace its manifestations, together
with the development of its mental scope and expression.

It is, in fact, as M. Alphonse Séché once more declares in “Les
Caractères de la Poésie Contemporaine,” “one of the
most constant traits of French poetry, a characteristic
which may be said to be one of the essential marks of
our national genius.” But while so intimately connected
with French temperamental characteristics and impulses,
this spirit, in its latest manifestation, as represented by
the modern Fantaisiste school of poets, evinces qualities
which, potentially, greatly exceed any mere local expres-
sion of racial traits or peculiarities. It is almost impos-
sible to obtain words in English which convey the
precise sense of the words Fantaisie and Fantaisiste
in French. The significance of our words “Fantasy” and “Fantastic” would not fulfill the
function of an accurate translation. These indicate
features of actual life and experience, he conveys them
through the intensifying medium of his own personal
preferences, his characteristic rhythmic and chromatic
responsiveness and force. The angles, contours, and
shades of emotion and thought are acutely defined in all
Fantaisiste works, as are the objective and subjective
values of the actual environment, but never exaggerated
or stereotyped according to conventional patterns or
standardized measurements in such manner as to confuse
or obliterate their mental import or human origin. Thus
the Fantaisiste is in absolute opposition to the old
conventional type of decorative artist who, by the
force of his fantasy, sought to adapt life, thought, and emotion to some decora-
tive formula, and who did not scruple or hesitate to
repudiate, mutilate or totally eliminate all elements
which hindered or inhibited this consummation. Viewed
in comparison with this type the Fantaisiste is more
personal and more capable, while he is at the same time
more interior in the French sense. Considering the sum
total of these characteristics it is apparent that Fantais-
isme can be equally both subjective and objective. These
expressive possibilities render it unique among
modern art movements, in that they create an intel-
lectual arena where both broad types of modern artistic
thought, the analytical and the synthetic, can meet
without friction, or the relinquishment of essential con-
ceptions, to exercise those intermediate sensibilities and
functions which, by unrelieved concentration upon intel-

* We are glad to say that Mr. Leigh Henry, though still a prisoner
in 1914 and are still obtainable.—Ed.]
FEODOR SOLOGUB

BY JOHN COURNOUS

B Y means of all the words that he (the author) can find he speaks of one and the same thing. Towards one and the same thing he calls untiringly."

Thus speaks Feodor Sologub of himself in one of his characteristic introductions. And you find a correlative to this confession in the thought expressed by the poet Trirodov in Sologub's novel, The Created Legend: "A man's whole life is barely sufficient for a proper inquiry into a single idea. . . . If this were understood, human knowledge would take unprecedented steps forward."

Sologub's own twenty volumes, comprising almost every literary form—the play as well as the novel, the short story and the fairy-tale as well as the essay and the poem—show that Sologub has put this precept into practice.

It is true that you can reduce Sologub—philosophically—to two or three ideas. But these are expressed so persistently and so untiringly and in so many extraordinary variations that you are astounded at an imagination capable of transforming its limited material into such multitudinous and fascinating shapes.

This is far from implying narrowness. Quite the contrary. A man may have a single idea, and, like the small window of a small cell, it may open out on a vista, broad, clear, and far-reaching. A man roaming about in the freedom of this expanse may see actually less if he happen to be one of the many million near-sighted beings who inhabit this miserable earth. What men call broad-mindedness—it is usually the tourist who sets out to be broad-minded and to like everything that he sees—is too often the acquirement and possession of elderly lady's pink-papered bedroom.

So Sologub, by means of all the words that he (the author) can find, speaks of one and the same thing. Towards one and the same thing he calls untiringly.
January 1, 1916

THE EGOIST

By RICHARD ALDINGTON

THERE is one thing more futile than writing books; reviewing them.

The world takes boring books. The world is not anxious to be probled or excited or seduced into spiritual activity; it wants to be comfortably bored into somnolence after its meals; it wants to be delicately and sentimentally tickled—more or less delicately, more or less sentimentally so according to climate—with tales of love in varying degrees of chastity. Hence the demand for mediocre books. Hence the necessity—far worse for a man's soul than for him to aid in the production of humbug. This is a truism.

To read mediocre books and to be forced to write about them is as disastrous a misfortune as can befall any writer. It is ruination and damnation. And since the world is quite unconscious of this, poor, dear thing—does desire the suppression of originality, and new literature, it immediately sets a writer on reviewing, giving him all sorts of comfortable and untrue maxims about starting at the bottom of the ladder—those who start at the bottom of the ladder usually remain there—and thus insidiously, dammably, and wickedly ruins many a budding talent!! There are only two genuine reasons for writing a review: first, when a man so likes a book that he is bursting to initiate others into the enjoyment of that book; and second, when he is so disgusted with a book that he desires to warn all men to leave it alone. Too often the second reason is an excuse: bad literature, if unprofitable, will fail.

The crux of the whole matter is this: "Literature as a trade" needs a constant demand for new books, and since most people have uninquiring minds an imitation of a good book or of a popular book is mere to their taste and therefore more profitable to publishers than an original, good book, whose originality will annoy most people and therefore make the book unprofitable to the publisher. But it is necessary for the publisher—and the periodical editor—to persuade their public that an imitation, a dilution of a good book is better than a good book. To this end they (publisher and editor) hire a hack whose speciality is to publish such a piece of work in such a way that it will not spoil the rest of his more profitable trade. The author will probably get nothing, and to damp his high spirits and wreck his talent they will set him to reviewing—which job he will accept as an alternative to starvation.

Far better starve. The sycophantic attitude demanded of a book reviewer is truly the finest-His perceptions, his keenest moral sensitiveness, and in spite of his protests and struggles bring him into line with Messrs. X's spring catalogue!
THE TEMPLE OF ARES

These are not my trophies. Who has disgraced the temple of Ares with these shameful trappings: unbruised helmets; flashing shields, unstained with blood; unbroken spear-shafts? My face reddens at the sight, and sweat falls from my brow upon my chest.

Deck a festive hall or a bridal chamber with such arms, but enrich this temple with the blood-stained spoils of war!

TO ATHENE OF KORYPHASIA

Agnon, the brave warrior, Euanthes’ son, dedicates to Athene of Koryphasia eight shields, eight helmets, and eight coats-of-mail, captured from the Lukanians.

ON AN EMPTY TOMB

O turbulent sea, why did you not cast me far from your deserted shore? If I dwelt in gloomy Hades, I would not be so near you.

THE HIDDEN STREAM

Do not drink, traveller, from this warm stream filled with mud by pasturing sheep, for a little way beyond the ridge that is browsed by heifers, near the shepherd’s pine, you will find a spring, colder than the snows of the north, trickling from the damp rock.

TELEUTAGORES, LOST AT SEA

O barbarous sea, why has Teleutagores, Timares’ son, who set sail in a little ship, been cast with his cargo into the abyss beneath your greedy waves? The fish-eating coromants lamented his death with plaintive cries, and now Timares stands weeping by the empty tomb of the shipwrecked lad.

THE HUNTER GOD

May good fortune follow the hunter of hares, and the fowler who comes here to seek the birds nesting beneath this double hill! Call to me from the cliff, O Pan, guardian of the wood, for I join in the chase with my dogs and my reeds.

THE WitherED VINE

“O cling to my staff for support, like a vine to its dry pole, and death summons me to Hades: ‘Be not deaf as a stone, Gorgos! Is the thought of three or four summers beneath the sun so sweet to you?’” The old man said this and died.

DIOSKLES

I am a mound for shipwrecked Dioskles. Alas for the daring of sailors, who cast off their moorings, forgetful of their graves.

SPRING ON THE COAST

Now is the season for sailing; already the west wind has brought the swallows; the meadows are bright with flowers, and the sea is silent, no longer swept by wave-churning gales. Weigh your anchors, cast off your hawser, sailor, and set all your canvas to the wind.

I, Priapos, God of the harbour, command you to sail wherever your trading may take you.
THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE

I.—J.-H. ROSNY

Sous le Fardeau; L’Impérieuse Bonté.

It will be impossible, in a short monographic dissertation, to attempt a comprehensive review of the authors known as J.-H. Rosny, a name attached to the work of (in great part) two men. Where this duality has its precise boundaries is not clear or distinct. The Rosnys’ industry and prolific imagination has not been the least of the reasons that have made of them such popular attributes. The Rosnys’ name is especially familiar to, and esteemed by, an élite which has given itself the trouble to sift the chaff from the wheat. The Rosnys have written contemporaries, novels, idylls of primitive times, have described Étruscan and Latin life, have given us “L’aïné et jeune,” “Life life,” “Paris life,” “theatrical life,” “literary life.” They have written the usual novel about the French Revolution, they have even written the biography of a cyclist; they have sought information and entertainment among anarchists and collectivists; they have looked back and have anticipated; they have translated from English, Spanish, Egyptian, and Corean; they have contributed to all the periodicals and they remain great writers notwithstanding. They have done all they could to bury themselves under their work. Their faults are injurious to their qualities, and as distinguishes them as poor exchange for wealth of this resource they rank with those who surpass them in this particular.

Their evolution finds a parallel in that of Mr. H. G. Wells, realistic fiction, earning the qualification “sociological” and “psychological,” having succeeded to imaginative romance in the semi-scientific order. But this latter phase in their work lacks the vividness of Wells or the visionary insight of Kipling, with whom they have also been compared. There is no revelation in it; it is chaotic and often unintelligible. Where a Kipling travels at his ease they tumble and labour; they have no magic when they are alone.

I will leave this phase of their work on one side for the time being although it contain, no doubt, much of undeniable novelty and interest, and turn to that which is more arresting and which has also provoked comparisons favourable, generally, to the Rosnys. Here they show more originality if less eccentricity.

Critics have desired to read a philosophy in two of their leading efforts: Sous le Fardeau, with the subtitle “roman social,” and L’Impérieuse Bonté distinguished as “roman contemporain.” It would appear that they started out with philosophical intentions but that these fell through later, for, in the preface to L’Impérieuse Bonté, we find them asking the reader not to seek any philosophical or social thesis in that book, but merely an element of beauty in the altruism therein described. “For,” say they, “altruism is a force wherein the highest intelligence and the most obdurate will may as fruitfully develop as in science or art. If humans are capable of jointed solidarities, without the infinite power of kindness yielding each to the other, an ardent ambition must find gratification in the active love of his neighbour as satisfactory as in the acquirement of knowledge. A small nature will not grow great therein for it exacts intellectual subtleties as subtle as those demanded by philosophy.”

They add that it is on aesthetic grounds that they adopt this conception, which is diametrically opposed to the passive, Oriental conception favoured by certain French and Russian writers. There is not the slightest doubt that, whether or not the altruistic faculty provides a new note to the scale of beauty, the Rosnys achieve beauty, literary and emotional, in their presentations of human suffering.

Their picturesqueness at times recalls Dickens plus that more adult realism of Gallic narrators. Many critics, always pre-occupied by their hunt for philosophic secrets within the written word, have described the Rosnys as optimistic interpreters of life. Personally I can find no optimism in Sous le Fardeau or in L’Impérieuse Bonté, which together embrace all the tragedies of life, its trials and sorrows, its moral defects and lack of affection, and concealed, of the rich and of the poor, of the body and of the soul. Writers like Hardy, like Rosny, who spare neither themselves nor their readers, who are always ready to reveal that half of human misery which the other half is ignorant of, such writers are not optimists. But an altruist may, as does a sister of charity, encourage himself with certain spiritual consolations and promises. So do even the Rosnys, for now and again there emerges the corner of a singular faith in which some people seem to find compensation for the defects of the present; for instance, in the phrase (in Sous le Fardeau): “He knew it, and lacking in intelligence, she was, nevertheless, of choice essence, of that rare and fine substance which shall form the humanity of the future.” Writers who lay stress on the evils of this world—the only explanation of which is that they are contrasts, the contrasts necessary to emphasize the perfection—placing the misery of the poor and rich, the prisons, in slums and in hospitals, among the sick and the incurable, among criminals and martyrs, such writers are fatalists, in spite of their occasional credulity in respect of an evolution towards a more agreeable and equal condition. Meanwhile the victims it is apparently unnecessary to deprecate provide the Rosnys with themes of impressive magnitude.

The construction of these two books is very much after the manner of Dickens—that is, somewhat disjointed, the chief object being to present typical characters in an atypical environment. This rather random manner of proceeding increases the realism of the narrative. In its form, Sous le Fardeau, originally published as a serial, is compact to the point of clumsiness. The chief figure in this book is a doctor who carries the burden of his own cares and those of his patients. In L’Impérieuse Bonté, the millionaire and his wife are the two unhappiest characters in the book. The aspiration which led to the foundation by Jules Romains of an “unanimist” society of authors has been expressed in this novel, and the story of a philanthropist provide the pretext for introducing the numerous social phases of a capital. Here the millionaire and his wife are the two unhappiest characters in the book. The aspiration which led to the foundation by Jules Romains of an “unanimist” society of authors has been expressed in this novel, and the story of a philanthropist provide the pretext for introducing the numerous social phases of a capital. Here the millionaire and his wife are the two unhappiest characters in the book.

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The judges, the workmen, the merchants, the gentlemen and ladies, the lamps and the carriages, these things which are only social and not connected with the dark and distant space whence they come, make a kind of country. A mother and her children cannot be allowed to starve. The asphalt, the lamps, the carriages, the judges, the asylum, the rich relation allows her to starve. The words fly wildly about in her head, and her humiliation, nevertheless, the rich relation allows her to starve. The words fly wildly about in her head, and her humiliation, nevertheless, the rich relation allows her to starve. The words fly wildly about in her head, and her humiliation, nevertheless, the rich relation allows her to starve.
These quotations should suffice to disperse any misunderstanding as to the nature of the Rosnys' realism. It is not Zola's, or the Goncourts', or M. Octave Mirbeau's. Some reviewers have styled it "analytic," but this term does not seem satisfactory. Perhaps Mme. Rachilde came nearest the mark when she called their novels "human" (in English one might say humane), in preference to their own qualification of "social," while carrying a non-conclusive philosophy, "the wisest of all" as she adds (though it is not clear how a theory can be at the same time non-conclusive and philosophic). It would be preferable not to attempt any special qualification of books coming within the category of good: that is, literature, pure and simple. Whatever other purpose they may conceal or achieve is secondary provided the claim to literature be satisfied.

The Rosnys' books form a living, mobile literature, rich, sensitive, animating, a literature of facts with their repercussion upon the mind and senses (but chiefly upon the mind), a tragic realism by the side of which the boldest writings of modern English authors are timid—a literature of observation and of consideration, whose outstanding merits consist in extreme pity and extreme earnestness, entirely deprived of both irony and cynicism, an apostolic literature and not less literary because apostolic than are, for instance—all things being equal—the Scriptures, whose mission does not detract from them as art. Muriel Ciolkowska.

THE CLIFF TEMPLE

I
Great, bright portal,
Shelf of rock,
Rocks fitted in long ledges,
Rocks fitted to dark, to silver-granite,
To lighter rock—
Clean cut, white against white.

High—high—and no hill-goat
Tramples—no mountain-sheep
Has set foot on your fine grass.
You lift, you are the world-edge,
Pillar for the sky-arch.

The world heaved—
We are next to the sky.
Over us, sea-hawks shout,
Gulls sweep past.
The terrible breakers are silent
From this place.

Below us, on the rock-edge,
Where earth is caught in the fissures
Of the jagged cliff,
A small tree stiffens in the gale,
It bends—but its white flowers
Are fragrant at this height.

And under and under,
The wind booms.
It whistles, it thunders,
It grows—it presses the grass
Beneath its great feet.

II
I said:
For ever and for ever, must I follow you
Through the stones?
I catch at you—you lurch.
You are quicker than my hand-grasp.

I wondered at you,
I shouted—dear—mysterious—beautiful—
White myrtle-flush.
I was splintered and torn.
The hill-path mounted
Swifter than my feet.

Could a daemon avenge this hurt,
I would cry to him—could a ghost,
I would shout—O evil,
Follow this god,
Taunt him with his evil and his vice.

III
Shall I hurl myself from here,
Shall I leap and be nearer you?
Shall I drop, beloved, beloved,
Ankle against ankle?
Would you pity me, O white breast?

If I woke, would you pity me,
Would our eyes meet?

Have you heard,
Do you know how I climbed this rock?
My breath caught, I lurched forward—
I stumbled in the ground-myrtle.

Have you heard, O god seated on the cliff,
How far toward the ledges of your house,
How far I had to walk?

IV
Over me the wind swirls.
I have stood on your portal
And I know—
You are further than this,
Still further on another cliff.

LITTLE TALES, BY FEODOR SOLOGUB

Translated by John Cournos

TWO CANDLES, ONE CANDLE, THREE CANDLES

TWO white candles were burning, and there were many lamps upon the walls. A man was reading a manuscript, and people were listening in silence.

The flames trembled. The candles also were listening—the reading pleased them, but the flames were agitated, and trembled.

The man finished reading. The candles were blown out. Every one left.

And it was just as before.

A grey candle was burning. A seamstress sat sewing. An infant slept, and coughed in its sleep. Gusts of cold air came from the wall. The candle wept white, heavy tears. The tears flowed and congealed. Dawn came.

The seamstress, with red eyes, kept on sewing.

And it was just as before.

A woman was weeping. The candles flickered from fright and from pity. A crowd came. Chants were sung, incense was burned. The box was carried away.

And it was just as before.

Three yellow candles were burning. In a box lay a man, yellow and cold. Another was reading a book. A man was weeping. The candles flickered from fright and from pity. A crowd came. Chants were sung, incense was burned. The box was carried away. The candles were blown out. Every one left.

And it was just as before.

HE BECAME BETTER

There are all sorts of boys in this world, good ones and bad ones.

Once there were two boys, a good boy and a truant.

A magician came to them—it was Uncle Better. He asked them:

"Would you like to be better?"

"I'd like to be better, uncle dear," replied the good boy.

"A good man is well off everywhere," said the truant.

"I am good enough as I am. Too much goodness might tear my mouth apart with yawning."

"Well, remain a truant," Uncle Better said to him.

"As for you, my good boy, you will become so sweet that every one will marvel at you."

THE EGOIST

January 1, 1916
Then he went away. The good boy became so sweet that he began to ooze with treacle. Hardly any one was glad to see him. Wherever he went he made the place sticky with treacle. His mother was angry with him.

"On account of your sweetness," she said, "it's impossible to keep you supplied with clothes. I'd much rather see you a hooligan.

The good boy enjoyed gathering in the outpour of treacle. So he remained. He grew up, and gave pleasure to others: he rolled pound horns out of paper, and poured treacle into them, and gave them to the poor.

THREE GOBS OF SPIT

A MAN went by, and spat three gobs of spit. He walked away, the gobs remained. Said one of the gobs:

"We are here, but the man is not here."

Said the second:

"He has gone."

Said the third:

"He came precisely for the purpose of planting us here. We are the goal of man's life. He has gone, but we have remained."

FAIRY TALES IN THE GARDEN, AND FAIRY TALES AT COURT

There was a garden in which fairy tales grew in the beds along the paths. All sorts of fairy tales grew there—white ones, red ones, blue ones, purple ones, and yellow ones. Some of the tales had an agreeable perfume, while others made up in beauty what they lacked in perfume.

The gardener's little son went every morning into the garden to delight in the fairy tales. He learnt them all, and often told them to his companions in the street; no common children were permitted into the garden, for it was the garden of a great queen.

The children told about these fairy tales to their mammas and papas, and these told them to their acquaintances, until their fame spread far and wide. The queen also heard at last that fairy tales grew in her garden. She asked to see them.

And so one early morning the gardener cut down many of the fairy tales, gathered them into a beautiful sumptuous bouquet, and sent them to Court.

The gardener's young son cried because they were cutting down the fairy tales, but no one would listen to him. As if there were not enough things that one might choose to cry about!

The queen looked at the fairy tales, and asked in astonishment:

"What's interesting about them? Why do you call them fairy tales? They are the most common flowers."

They threw the poor fairy tales into the backyard, and gave the gardener's little son a birching so that he should not speak such nonsense again.

A MARRIAGE

A DROP of rain fell through the air, a speck of dust lay on the ground. The drop wished to unite with a hard substance; it was tired of its free, active existence. It joined itself to the speck of dust—and lay on the ground a blob of mud.

CAPTIVE DEATH

A LONG time ago there lived a brave and invincible Knight.

One day he happened to capture Death herself. He brought her to his strong castle, and put her in a cell.

Death sat there—and people ceased to die.

The Knight was overjoyed, and thought:

"Now it is well, but it is rather a worry to keep a watch on her. Perhaps it would be better to destroy her altogether."

But the Knight was a very just man—he could not kill her without judgment.

He went to the cell, and, pausing before the small window, he said:

"Death, I want to cut your head off—you've done a lot of harm upon the earth."

But Death was silent.

The Knight continued:

"I'll give you a chance—defend yourself if you can. What have you to say for yourself?"

And Death answered:

"I'll say nothing just yet; let Life put in a word for me."

And the Knight suddenly saw Life standing beside him; she was a robust and red-checked expressionless woman.

And she began to say such brazen and ungodly things that the brave, invincible Knight trembled, and made haste to open the cell.

Death went out—and men began to die once more. The Knight himself died when his time came—and he told no one upon the earth what that expressionless, brazen woman, Life, had said to him.

SIX FRENCH POETS


A MY LOWELL has sent me her book, "Six French Poets," who are: Émile Verhaeren, Alfred de Musset, Stéphane Mallarmé, Frédéric Mistral, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Paul Fort; and it occurs to me that I must be her severest critic—are we not rivals? When, in the summer of 1914, she told me of her intention to write this book and of the names of the poets she had chosen, I objected to Samain. Samain, I said, was exquisite, but not important; and he could only be read a few pages at a time without weariness. Stuart Merrill and Francis Vielé-Griffin, I went on, are both more considerable poets; both are Americans, and the public to which you make your first appeal is American; if you will not have them, Rimbaud and Laforgue are immensely more important than Samain; and since you insist on including Remy de Gourmont as one of your poets, you might increase your number to seven, in many ways an appropriate number where poets are concerned; and so on. But she would hear nothing of it. Even if I wished to damn her book (I do not), she will have already heaped coals of fire on my head in her preface, where she says kind things about me because I happened to mention the names of one or two books to her, information she did not really need.

Miss Lowell states that she has "made no attempt at an exhaustive critical analysis of the various works" of her six poets. "Rather, I have tried to suggest certain things which appear to the trained poet while reading them. The pages and pages of hair-splitting criticism turned out by erudite gentlemen for their own amusement, has been no part of my scheme. But I think the student, the poet seeking new inspiration, the reader endeavouring to understand another poetic idiom, will find what they need to set them on their way." That is so: this book contains six causeries in which Miss Lowell tells you why she loves these poets, and what she loves about them, interrupting her talk every now and then and then a fragment of biography to correspond with the stage of the poet's work to which she has brought you, or stopping every now and then to pick out rare phrases and rare music of words for your especial delight. No one, I suppose, will have listened to Miss Lowell's causerie in so happy a setting as the sitting-room of her hotel, where she talked to us in the August of 1914. Through the long French window
open in the corner could be seen the length of Piccadilly, its great electric globes, its shiny roadway, and, on the left, the tops of the trees of Green Park, dark grey in the moonlight; the noise of the motor-buses and of the taxis reached us in a muted murmur, and at the corner the newsboy, whose headlines we strained our eyes from time to time to catch. It was in this tenseness created by the expectation of news that Miss Lowell read Paul Fort or Henri de Régnier to us (she reads French beautifully); and it is the emotion of those evenings, more than anything else, that her book brings back to me. This is not criticism, I know; but I am a critic disenchanted. You can take up Miss Lowell's book, and read five to ten pages every time to catch. It was in this tenseness created more than anything else, that her book brings back to me.

You can take up Miss Lowell's book, and by the expectation of news that Miss Lowell read Paul Fort or Henri de Régnier to us (she reads French beautifully); and it is the emotion of those evenings, more than anything else, that her book brings back to me. I should add that the book contains an excellent signed photograph of each poet.

F. S. FLINT.

WHITECHAPEL

Noise;
Iron hoofs, iron wheels, iron din
Of drays and trams and feet passing;
Iron;
Beaten to a vast mad cacophony.

In vain the shrill, far cry
Of seagulls sweeping by;
In vain the silence and green
Of meadows Apriline;
In vain the clear white rain—

Soot; mud;
A nation maddened with labour;
Interminable collisions of energies—
Iron beating upon iron;
Smoke whirling upwards,
Speechless, impotent.

In vain the shrill, far cry
Of kelpies that fly
Where the sea waves leap green.
The meadows Apriline—

Noise, iron, smoke;
Iron, iron, iron.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.
hovering above the waves in the background and the legend: "Mamma, mamma, why?" Another: a group of children, one of whom shows bandaged arms: "Do boche children kiss their fathers too?" and so on. There were a number of cartoons by M. Jean Veber. One: a small boy shot by German soldiery "because he had pointed his toy gun at them." Another: French peasants tied by the feet to carts and dragged at full gallop through high village streets.

I stopped before a newspaper-kiosk. An appalling rufian representative of "Our Prisoners" had been portrayed by M. Charles Haard. On the first page of the Journal were types of German officers with the appearance of hard old gaol-birds.

Is this the hatred of mere whim or is it an ancient, heartfelt instinct of the times? Recent events? For my part I believe the tolerance was passing while the hatred is lasting.

I shall not forget the man I saw on the platform of a country town in the month of August last year go up to a Highlander—probably in his grave now—on his way to Le Mans (heavenly repose by times) and shake him mutely by the hand. That scene compensated for all Willette’s drawings.

To the French—generally speaking always and now without exception—whoever is against Germany is with the French. And whoever is not against Germany is against the French.

The enthusiasm sending a Charles Péguy—a humanist in his opinions—to the war should be a proof of my assertion as to the popularity of this war at its outset before opinion had been fanned by the Press and the cabal of optimistic falsehoods which MM. Téry in L’Œuvre, Compère-Morel in L’Humanité, and that tardy patriot Hervé (who once said the dunghill was the only proper place for the national flag) in La Guerre Sociale are now, somewhat late in the day and long after the public has opened its eyes of its own accord, beginning to criticize. Yet one may ask oneself whether this artificially created optimism had not its advantages if it helped to contribute to the stoicism shown by the French to every one’s, including their own, surprise.

The Germans argue that war cannot be conducted courteously. The French may reply that as it cannot be conducted without hatred, therefore, as with other munitions, the more there is of it the better, and that whatever is done to increase the supply is justified by the end in view.

If purists of the truth, humanitarians, pacifists and socialists, etc., had not undergone the metamorphosis they did it is possible Paris would now be as German as Brussels. Which would be a grievous pity.

The poet-humourist Guillaume Apollinaire, who has occasionally been quoted in these columns, is a second lieutenant. It is M. Jean Loew, not "Load," as misspelt in the last issue of The Egoist, editor of the Revue du Temps Présent, who is, unfortunately, reported among the "missing." One or two other little slips in punctuation, inverted commas, and so on will have been indulgently corrected by the reader, I hope.

Muriel Chilkowska.

STUART MERRILL

BY ROALD KRISTIAN

FRENCH POEMS

From "Suite de Romances," in Une Voix dans la Foule (Mercure de France).

Viens, cette nuit, poser tes lèvres,
Fleurs tiches de chair, sur mes yeux.
Je croirai sentir sur mes fièvres
Des roses s’effeuiller des cieux.
Glisse tes deux mains dans les miennes,
Doucement, comme un don secret;
Glisse tes deux mains dans les miennes,
Davantage, comme un don secret;
Frais chance des choses anciennes,
Faites d’amour et de regret.

On dirait que par la fenêtre
Le Malheur nous guette, sournois.
Mais l’aube va bientôt paraître,
Et j’ai tes baisers et ta voix.

STUART MERRILL.

O PROVINCE! . . .

From "Poèmes (1906-1910); Poèmes provinciaux—La maison pauvre," by poet Lefon (Les Éditions du Temps Présent).

Deux heures, l’ombre basse au ras des murs, Dimanche,
Les vêpres vont sonner. . . . Province, je revois
La blancheur des façades closes et les toits
Que les jardins touffus assaillent de leurs branches.
Après-midi paisible où le cœur sentira
Le jour que nul plaisir futile ne troubla!
Et ce que peut tenir d'ardente songerie
Pieux après-midi de rêve, de pensée,
La rue est assoupie; elles vont le front grave,
Pour demeurer cela qu'elles furent toujours,
L'humble main au foyer qui balaye et qui lave;
De la lampe avec soin préparée et remplie
A l'heure où, rappelant le salut à Marie,
De l'intime parfum, Province, de tes pièces
Où, près de la fenêtre, à la place qu'il sied
Le sommeil la gagner avec le jour qui baisse;
Pour bien voir, vient se mettre une aïeule qui laisse
L'enfant aux yeux profonds, seule au jardin, rêvant
A quelque amour naissante et qu'elle devra taire,
Cherche déjà la place ombreuse pour s'y plaire
Avec le champ, la cour et les meubles amis,
Aux sentiments plus sûrs en des logis transmis
Tes fleurs, tes chères fleurs, toutes pour les tombeaux
La servante qui vit s'éveiller notre enfance,
Mystère respecté de la Semaine Sainte
Que l'automne pleureur jonche déjà de feuilles,
Pâques et cette joie, au matin, quand on sort
De l'Eglise, et l'aumône au plat tendu qui tinte. . . .
Qui te laisse trois jours méditer sur la mort,
Roses, roses de Mai se haussant aux croisées,
Dans la paix dont tu sais envelopper tes jours,
Au calme aérien des espaces lactés!
De sagesse à rester muette et lente pour
Toute je te revois avec ce que tu caches,
O Province qui me gardas, par qui je vis,
Tout comme je vivais lorsqu'à notre seuil gris
Toi qui t'éteins, hélas! qui meurs, mais que je veux
Honorer dans mon âme ainsi que dans un temple
Se posait le sommeil sans fin de tes journées!
Le silence émouvant où seul nous parle Dieu.
Pour qu'y règne, inspiré de tout austère exemple,
A DRAMA

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF A. P. CHEKHOV

ANDRÉ LAFON.
tells the audience that she has not slept the whole night for thinking of Valentine, the son of a poor teacher, and how he is now in prison. Valentine, a young man, has been sent to prison for a crime he did not commit. The audience is shocked and moved by Valentine's story.

Paul Vasilevitch, a well-known playwright, was so touched by Valentine's story that he decided to write a drama based on it. He went to see Madame Murashkina, a famous actress, and asked her to star in the play. Madame Murashkina agreed, and work began on the production.

During the course of the play, Valentine's love for his wife, Anna, becomes more and more apparent. Anna is a strong and independent woman who loves Valentine dearly. She is a symbol of hope and sustenance for Valentine during his time in prison.

The play ends with Valentine being released from prison and returning home to his family. He and Anna are reunited, and the audience is left with a sense of hope and promise for the future.
enjoy a thousand destinies. And life, however his conditions and surroundings, will be broken up, in this crystal of many facets, into the most radiant colours.

For all art is indeed useless.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**ENGLAND’S NEST OF SINGING BIRDS**

To the Editor, The Egoist.

March. — Do you not see me retreat across the stage, my “soul above,” before the storm of Mr. Wells’s attack on Miss Pulley’s terrible tidings? Faith, I was almost drowned in a sea of commas. Day in the sixth paragraph of Life in future, I can only be dealt with in fragments. And all the gods, now, will we have the little great man, the specialist. There is no doubt that the Miss Pulley and the rest of the “austerely restrained,” and greet society as a product of modern times. There have always been such, at all events from the point of view of Miss Pulley rightly postulates the existence of a frame of mind that demands a respectable art, easily appreciable by “lesser men.”

Wrongly, she supposes it a product of modern times. There have always been such, at all events from the point of view of Miss Pulley, who is anybody, and yet knows nobody. He never attempts to appreciate motives, study character, or make friends, and finally finds his level amongst congenial nonentities who never stimulate any unpleasant intellectual or emotional effort. But to him who strives, spontaneously and sympathetically, the many sensations and emotions, aroused either directly by personal experience or indirectly by adequate expressions of the aspirations of others, literature offers rich treasure.

It will comfort him in his sorrow and rejoice with him in his gladness; in it will he find the expression of his secret thoughts and voice will be lent to his unhappier aspirations. He will live a thousand lives and die a thousand deaths — enjoy a thousand destinies. And life, however his conditions and surroundings, will be broken up, in this crystal of many facets, into the most radiant colours.

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For all art is indeed useless.
them by rising to the present great occasion, and that the younger men have not even the excuse of a faded and dying art.

I grant Mme. Ciołkowska—joyfully—one of her great men. Synge was an artist in the highest sense of the word, and he is dead in fact, as the others are in spirit.

Believe me, I do not yearn for an imitated classicism—grateful as one may be for the earlier Hofmannsthal—any more than (poor Miss Pulley) I year to sink in the repulsive seeds of self-abdication. But I have faith in the possibility of a finer art than the interesting, the provocative, and the accurate. That such attributes are offered as essentially applicable to modern art is almost a justification of facile abuse. Were I a modern artist, instead of an offensive journalist, I might pray to be saved from these my friends.

MARGARET STORM JAMESON.

"MOTHER EARTH"

To the Editor, The Egoist,

Madam,—In your November issue Mr. Richard Aldington writes an interesting article on the best magazines now published in the United States. I understood the Laurence to say he had overlooked the best of them all—Mother Earth, edited by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman.

I think it may safely be said that Emma Goldman is at this moment the most effective person in the United States. No other person has been so successful in breaking through the dense crust of American Philistinism. Miss Goldman’s greatest triumph consists, of course, in her breaking down the power of the police and the drastic laws against free speech. She is known to the police as “the woman who cannot be stopped” and they never try to stop her if they can possibly help it. For instance, to give information about birth control is a crime equal to arson or rape in the United States. One doctor was sentenced to four years and fined $2000 for such an offence, and there have been many other sentences not much lighter. Emma Goldman glaciers in defying this law, and in letting Mrs. Grundy know by active defiance. She advertises a lecture on “Birth Control,” gets a vast crowd together, then under the noses of many policemen she gives such minute details that the education of the most innocent person is complete before the meeting closes. It is needless to read any supplementary leaflet. Strangely to say, the ferocious American police become quite tame in presence of Miss Goldman. Some time ago she addressed a garden-party in a clergyman’s garden, and nineteen policemen were present; but they were quite subdued.

One of the greatest occasions in Emma Goldman’s life was when she went to Mrs. Pankhurst’s meeting in New York. It was a very large meeting, and full arrangements had been made for the sale of Miss Goldman’s book, The Great Sorge, at the doors and in an adjoining book-store. To the consternation of the very proper persons who compose the suffrage movement in New York, Emma Goldman arrived with a pamphlet prepared for the occasion, called “Emma Goldman’s Argument against Chastity.” The two books were hawked in competition by earnest missionaries crying their respective wares at the entrance.

Alexander Berkman is also a remarkable man. He endured fourteen years’ imprisonment by trying to assassinate a millionaire, and came out of prison as fiery a revolutionist as he went in. Like Milton’s Satan, he bears “a mind not to be changed by place or time” (for separate items add 1d. postage).

Some time ago I read an article by Mr. Aldington on Emma Goldman, and said that if the woman is the most competent living critic of the prison system, the prison system is the most competent living critic of the woman. Mr. Aldington is right.

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R. B. KERR.

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