XV. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD AND THE CHARACTER OF OUR SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

By D. Marsden

I

(1) THE definition of the work of science which would conform satisfactorily to the current conception of science would follow these lines: The task of science is to issue, under symbolic forms, authenticated classifications of the order of succession obtaining at any given stage in the flow of events in the external world. The modern scientist conceives the order of the external world under the form of a vast tide of groups of events constantly ebbing and flowing, and revealing in addition unceasing transmutations among the individual groups which constitute the tide. He notes, however, that the order or sequence of these transmutations, multiple as the latter are, remains in the supremest degree constant. Certain groups of conditions infallibly eventuate in certain sequels. Consequently a careful observer may become so expert in respect of the changes of this order that he can confidently assert the antecedents as well as forecast the sequels of any given condition. So proficient, indeed, may he become that he is able to play with, or, as he would say, experiment with, the order, and manipulate it in such a way that any sequel he desires he can ensure and render inevitable by using his own mobile powers to muster together certain more easily assembled antecedents in which the desired sequel is immanent. Conversely, any sequel imminent in a given condition which he wishes to avoid he can forestall by flinging into the ever-maturing flux some circumstance which—again according to a fixed order—annuls the possibility of the undesired event in favour of some other preferred dénouement.

(2) Obviously, it is just this manipulation of the order of external events which we all (following the lead of scientists themselves) have come to regard as pre-eminently science’s function. To be made to know how to manage the world by dint of an acute observation of its changes has come to represent the sum of our scientific expectations. Practical utility, which makes the world figure as the scientist’s toy, is what we look to science for rather than full intellectual satisfaction. It is therefore in keeping with our views of science when we see its energies turned in the direction of observations in the external world ever more and more protracted, voluminous, and subtle. The scientist finds himself saved from submergence under the sheer bulk of these observations by the fact that there is inherent in the symbolizing instrument (which alone renders comparison: the essential of observation: possible) a power of intensive and orderly grouping both as to the types of difference in the supposedly static appearance of things and the typical modes of behaviour or order of change of those things. It is this characteristic of the symbolizing instrument which we have in mind when we say that the scientist finds his convenience served by the processes of induction and deduction on the one hand, and the power to enunciate laws on the other. Equipped with these, he can plough ahead with the work of observation on progressively intensive lines and so bring his command over Nature’s order to an ever-heightening degree of perfection.

(3) This picture of the scientist as troubling only to read the changes of Nature’s order as these appear in salient bulk into forms of changes equally salient but more detailed: which latter forms he notes for further reference, comparison, and rearrangement under their symbolic marks: is an adequate interpretation of the activity of existent science. Its
distinctive characteristic is that it does not address itself to the task of obtaining an understanding of the order itself. It merely asserts with increasing co-


ciseness just what that order is through a wide and
detailed range. We have already referred at length
to the deliberately limited view of the function of
science in a passage which we shall venture to quote here:

“What is it that science does? It watches things
happen in order to enable itself to say when they
happen. The elucidation of the “when” of events
is the whole business of science. It seeks to know
under just what conditions ascribed specific events
take place. That is, the business of science in any
given case, and not of counting concomitants. Its
motive in doing so is obvious. The ambition of
science is to be able to issue guaranteed recipes for
reproducing all events whatsoever. Its entire atti-
dute is constructive; it seeks to do; it reproduces
by reassembling the invariably concomitant conditions
of any event: which same concomitants it calls the
event’s cause. Thus the process of science consists of
two stages: (1) of descriptive assertions saying what
events occur, giving all the concomitant conditions
whenever they occur, and (2) of descriptive assertions
of the same event under varying conditions giving
only such concomitants as invariably recur under all
conditions. When science has delivered itself of its
last assertions, it is then that it has furnished the
event’s cause; and it would claim that by reassem-
bling just those conditions the event could moreover
be made and remade again at will. The first stage
might be called that of description, and the second
stage the explanatory; but obviously, at root, both
stages are descriptive wholly and solely. Explanation
is detailed. It is description very carefully done. So:
for science, things happen—thus and thus—whereupon
science obediently recites how. Science accepts
happenings. It asks nothing and gets to know nothing
as to why they happen. Obedience and acceptation
of the inexorableness of events is science’s whole
attitude. In that way, and in that way only does it
find it can bring them to terms; for science appre-
hends that while they are inexorable, they are plant
and manageable within the limits of their inexorabil-
ities.

Let us recapitulate of the simplest assertions
science makes. It says, for instance, that every
particle of matter in the universe attracts every other
particle with a force of fixed potentialities for all
given cases. It says that two gases, H and O,
combine under certain conditions and in certain
proportions as water. It says that liquids become
gases under definite conditions. It tells tales of
magic like this: “Rub a glass rod with a silk hand-
kerchief. The rod will then have power to attract
a pith-ball. The handkerchief will have a like power.
But once let the rod touch the ball and lo and behold,
the handkerchief will repel the pith-ball!” Or it
will say that if the tips of two carbon pencils to which
are attached wires charged respectively with negative
and positive electric currents are brought almost
in contact with a tiny spark, you will get an explosion
proportionately large com-

pared with water. It says that two particles of
matter attract one another? Why do they not
rather fly apart? Why do not bodies flee the earth?
Why do H and O combine as something other
than water? Why should like electric poles so
persistently repel? “No reason in the world can be
assigned” why they should not behikh themselves
and attract. Why do the two opposite currents passing
through the carbon tips create a flame? Why
do they not rather play a tune? Why does
gunpowder greeted by a spark gracefully dissolve
as a dewdrop or a sweetly exciting odour? Why,
oh why! As the children say, “Because! They
do because they do, and they don’t because they
don’t.” Which being translated means that the
notion of cause has here outstepped its province.
The intrusion here of a why is an absurdity. These
are not the circumstances in which science knows of
any why. Science knows only of when’s, and if the
term why makes any appearance whatsoever among
the casual connexions investigated by science it is
actually the term when itself wearing a disguise. Of
why used in the sense of motive or reason, scientific
investigation reveals not a trace.”

(4) It should be noted, however, that though science
deliberately creates this limited convention in order
to furnish its efforts with guidance and leading, the
scientist has never been quite able to suppress within
himself that spirit of philosophy which recognizes
no barred zones in the area of knowledge. Hence
there has grown up within the confines of science a
curious growth of scientific “interpretations” of the
universe. These have been called the philosophical
limits stipulated for and to render of external events
their reason and their why. These interpretations
represent guesses based for the most part upon a
wide survey of the order of the world’s changes and
constitute an endeavours to so “read back” certain
outstanding but partial characteristics of events;
and their, for instance, of space, time, substance,
and the like; so as to form a theory of the nature of the
universe as a whole. It is these scientific “inter-
pretations” so based which form the groundwork of
our modern conceptions of the world and the universe.
It will be necessary to refer again to these interpre-
tations at a later stage of this chapter, when it will
become necessary to arrive at an assessment of their
truth-value.

(5) Such is the accepted view of science’s function.
The one question it concerns us to raise in regard to
it is whether there are comprehensive grounds for main-
taining that scientists might have—indeed, ought to
have—adopted a different view. Our conception of
philosophy involves the position that there are such
grounds, and this résumé of points already treated of
has been made in order to contrast the accepted
view with a suggested alternative view. This
opposed view is destined to take the precedence of the
one just indicated and radically to modify its findings.
This it will do so soon as the human mind can grasp
the import and issue the definition of that initial
classification which the symbolizing instrument (essentially the instrument of storage and classification of experience, and therefore of scientific procedure) has automatically and in advance made the foundation of all those more complex classifications which comprise the structure of knowledge. The classification to which we refer is that division of the universe into the two categories which we call the internal world and the external world.

(6) Before proceeding to a consideration of this basic division of the universe of experience it will be worth while to take note of a very curious but persistent and age-long mistrust of our existing knowledge of the external world. This attitude of deprecation and mistrust has not been ousted even by the wealth of the findings of modern science. It is as pronounced to-day as it was in the infancy of human culture. Its grudging estimates are revealed in two types of criticism directed against our theoretical knowledge. One is that our knowledge is useless to us in respect of any power to shape a higher destiny and range of organic life. The other is that our knowledge, useless or otherwise in this respect, is of the nature of illusion, that it fails to give satisfaction to the deepest interests of our intellectual nature. In this sense it declares that our knowledge is not real nor yet is it true.

(7) To take the second question first: its meaning is that there exists in the human mind a question, for the most part formless and inarticulate, which asks for an answer. The failure of this question to receive an answer has kept the human mind in a state of dissatisfaction and unrest to which the liberally proffered answers to questions it is not particularly concerned about seem so many additional provocations. It is in connexion with this frame of mind that our wealth of scientific knowledge seems to have been thrust upon us, and to have dragged us by the bare hint of such a contretemps. Orpheus-like, any rearward glance was punishable by a dire penalty—the entire show being wound up at a break the chains and direct men's gaze from the shadows towards the sunlight. As has been said, philosophy received its impress from Plato. It is therefore somewhat ironical that our most modern philosophies—Bergsonianism, pragmatism, humanism, and the like—of which we are so proud as to claim that our scientists and our philosophers should have grounded themselves in an ardent denial of the power of the intellect to meet its own intellectual needs.

(10) Our immediate purposes, however, do not lead us to an examination of the claims of anti-intellectualism. At this late stage in philosophy's history the matter of importance is not, indeed, whether or not the intellect is competent for its own satisfaction, but rather what, if it be so, are the precise changes to be made in our attack upon knowledge in order to arrive at what we seek.

(11) Our own position is that the symbolizing or intellectual instrument is adequate for the obtaining of what we want, i.e. knowledge which is real rather than "shadow" knowledge. The intellect is an organic instrument whose precise function it is to give us real knowledge. Nevertheless this instrument has, like every other instrument, laws governing the manner of its use, and its serviceability depends upon the way in which we respect these laws. If they are followed the intellect leads to "truth" and "reality," if they are not they lead to illusion. Our scientific conceptions and our theoretical knowledge in general are illusory because they have been arrived at by modes of procedure which violate the first law of the intellect, which is that of clear-cut, economical, radically exhaustive classification.

(12) Before proceeding further, it is perhaps advisable in view of the vagaries of history, and of its appearance in philosophic thought, to be more explicit about the nature of this so-called "shadow" knowledge and to make clear what we intend it should mean. We present an illustration taken from our own recent experience which, basically, follows the lines of Plato's magnificently ornate allegorical figure. Our own very modest substitute forms, we are presumptuous enough to think, a more faithful parallel to the facts of the situation than its famous and impressive prototype. The attentions of an exacting person whose age is three have for many weeks been successfully bought off by the promise and brief presentation of a new apparatus, by which a shaft of artificial light happened to fall at such an angle upon a large circular mirror that a large circular "sun" was thrown brilliantly against the ceiling. This "sun" was to be discovered by the small person whilst its connexion with the mirror remained undiscovered. The excitement caused by the discovery was so great, so ecstatic, and altogether absorbing that an observer was seized with an impulse to develop the "sun" as a show while still maintaining the mystery of its origin. The source of this creation was accordingly transposed to convenient quarters where the spectator could be provided with a fixed seat with her back to the works. Unlimited generosity in the matter of applause led to an amplification of the little show of tricks, and the introduction of a few bits of apparatus, together with a manipulation of the fingers, soon put the "sun" into possession of a population and scenery of a tolerably wide and varied range. The crucial circumstance governing the performance, however, was that the gaze of the small spectator should remain fixed upon the sun. Orpheus-like, any rearward glance was punishable by a loss of the magic, and the entire performance was wound up at the bare hint of such a contretemps.

(13) The sole merit of this illustration is the closeness of its application. The only adjusting which it requires in order to bring it upon an identical level with the attitude of our own scientists is that the
(15) Moreover, the present exclusive question of science: "What is the order of change obtaining among the phenomena constituting the world?" we regard as having no preexistence of and modified by the questions: "What is the character of the universe which unites all experience into one ultimate whole?" and "What is the principle of division cleaving that whole into the two exhaustive categories of organism plus its external world?" Now, as we hold, the answers to these questions are logically determined, and such as these answers are, they impose their characteristic upon every item of experience which goes to make up the content of the external world. Our immediate task, therefore, is to furnish ourselves with the answers to these questions.

(16) What is the nature of the universe or (as we have previously named the universe on account of its organically determined character of all experience) the ego? The universe as it exists for any given organism is the sum of the experience of that organism. But what is experience? Experience comprises the feeling of any given organism, and the sum of experience in any given case is the sum of feeling in that case. And feeling? Feelings are the specific motions of the organism, and the character of the movements and tensions as these present themselves to the organism which produces them. The universe, therefore, as it exists for any organism is the sum of the organic movements and tensions of the organic power which apprehends and produces it. Hence: the basic logical division of the universe into an organism plus its external world must be of a kind to cut across this sum-total of organic movement upon some definite line or principle of division.

(17) A question of supreme importance now emerges: "What is this dividing principle which cleaves in twain organic movement (i.e., feeling) as a whole?" In our opinion this: Out of this total of organic movement certain movements eviscerate a particular form of tension, which, speaking in terms of feeling, constitutes: that which we know as the feeling of externality. All organic activities which are infected with this particular tension group themselves (or rather have been instinctively grouped by the symbolizing instrument of language) into a vast and radically different class of feelings which constitute the external world. The remaining organic movements, not thus infected, constitute the so-called intra-organic world. Both classes of phenomena, however, originate from within the organism, but the one exhibits in its effects a projection: commonly called its position: beyond the area of the universe's projecting nucleus—to wit, beyond the area of the organic body.

(18) It appears that the first-named class of feelings are the most radical and fundamental. The awareness or feeling of external phenomena appears to be the most primary any organism has; so much so that the definition which asserts the characteristic of individual life to be the power of projection may be stated. What the particular character of the external world may be depends upon the particular character of the organism. There is no organism without its projected or externalized world; and there is no world which is not the expression of the particular organic powers of the body which projects it. The external world is thus the expression of the properties of the organism which experiences it.

III

(19) If, then, the "world" be the sum of the properties of the organic powers of the form projecting and apprehending it, in postulating any form of world what actually we postulate is an organism equipped with that particular kind of sensory—or rather motor—apparatus. Therefore: the study of the world will be the study of this motor organization. Our alternative conception of science will therefore base its position upon the positive fact that the universe represents the sum of felt phenomena: which, whether internal or external, are constituted of the specific motions of the organism. Its projection involves the interrelated corollaries:—(1) the organic relatedness of the existence of the external world; hence (2) the denial of the absolute existence of the external world; and (3) the affirmation of the continuous existence of the individual organism. It is this last affirmation which, in the abrupt inversion of men's accepted beliefs, must become the new anchor for men's minds. Its claims will require emphasis in accordance.

(20) The task of emphasizing this factor is not, on the face of it, inviting since one of the most deeply entrenched of human beliefs is that of the abidingness of the world as contrasted with the transitoriness of the individual organism. Man is accustomed to account the instinct which sees wisdom lie in "planting trees of which he can never hope to see the fruit" as that of the best of his kind. He sees himself as giving meaning to his transitory life by the one fact and the one virtue which existed antecedently of the world and which he expects will exist after it. How, then, face of this accepted abidingness of the world, and this equally accepted transitoriness of organic life, can men give credence to a theory which makes the whole existence of the world contingent upon that of the organism?

(21) For answer we suggest that the onus of the difficulty is to be placed upon what is merely an habitual manner of speech. That is to say, we affirm a negative aspect of a truth with great emphasis while the positive aspect, upon which the truth actually rests, receives no emphasis, but is tacitly assumed. Accordingly, when we affirm the abidingness of the world, it is in the abrupt inversion of men's accepted beliefs, must become the new anchor for men's minds. Its claims will require emphasis in accordance. That is to say, we affirm a negative aspect of a truth with great emphasis while the positive aspect, upon which the truth actually rests, receives no emphasis, but is tacitly assumed. Accordingly, when we affirm the abidingness of the world, it is in
sidered. There is a sense in which this phenomenon of birth becomes the seat of confusion. It obscures the facts of the organism's supervening upon and demise from a world which continues to endure. Let us consider this phenomenon of birth, entailing as it does its vast inheritance of a multiform external world. To our thinking, the element which makes this inheritance a difficulty is our ignorance of the effects upon the individual life of the incessantly bifurcating characteristic of the stream of life. Constantly these organic nuclei bifurcate, and not merely renew their strength and powers, but actually augment them in the extended branch. In general, the branch life has the powers of the parent life, and something over. Organisms not merely maintain themselves as though from some inexhaustible source under an increasing number of forms, but the species of the organism as transmitted and inherited the parent-powers slightly increased. Thus with the unending process of bifurcation organic energy grows, not less, but more: a radical inversion of those processes of distribution with ensuing exhaustion with which we have taught ourselves to be familiar in our scientific conceptions. Hence it is clear that the inherent potentialities of the world's snuffing-out in the case of every individual organism in turn. We accordingly arrive at this position: worlds are sustained by the desire of organisms to maintain their stream in perpetuity.

By giving due emphasis to this fact of birth, i.e. that it is merely a means of renewing, refurbishing, and augmenting life (which latter in "nutrition" maintains itself, indeed, by a reincorporation of its own forms), we are able to give right dimensions to the duration-period of the individual life. Every existing individual life must necessarily, we see, be as old as the phenomenon of life itself: as old also as the phenomena which collectively form the external world. Hence the sense which the new individual will have of being born into a matured world with which, nevertheless, it feels itself in a relation of close kinship. The dual inheritance of the universe cannot be one-sided. Just as the individual human organism, for instance, born in this latter day inherits the bodily organization which through its age-long past has been slowly evolving with every new bifurcation, so, too, does it inherit the accumulated projected effects of that organization as created during its entire history. The physical organization of life being cumulative and transmissible, the character of the world is likewise cumulative and transmissible. It is in this sense only that the world has a past and can be certainly assumed to have a future. The unbroken physical development which the individual organism trails behind itself is matched—and necessarily so—by an unbroken accumulation of the items of the external world. The periods of the world and organic life are coterminal. As two faces of a single fact they emerge together and could, were we to conceive of an identity, they would be one.

(23) But granting, men will say, these defects of phraseology, what are we trying to express are the phenomena which collectively form the external world. The periods of the world and organic life being cumulative and transmissible, the character of the world is likewise cumulative and transmissible. It is in this sense only that the world has a past and can be certainly assumed to have a future. The unbroken physical development which the individual organism trails behind itself is matched—and necessarily so—by an unbroken accumulation of the items of the external world. The periods of the world and organic life are coterminal. As two faces of a single fact they emerge together and could, were we to conceive of an identity, they would be one.

(24) By giving due emphasis to this fact of birth, the new knowledge will cause to emerge a connexion with that living motive which through the shaping of living forms is shaping the destinies of the universe. This fact, taken in conjunction with the power of swift modification of an organic sense provided by man's new ability to construct instruments which enlarge the scope of any given sense, renders man, even in his brief moment of individual effort, the moulder and master of the world's destiny.

(25) The change which this logical connexion of his bases will impose upon the conceptions of the scientist will be to cause him to withdraw his gaze from the remote corners of the earth in order to fix itself upon the partially explored properties of his own vital mechanism. The bent of his curiousness about the world will return upon itself. To make use of the analogy which we offered in an earlier paragraph, it will cause him to become conscious of the location of the "world" within the brackets of his own "absolute" mirror-like action of his own power of movement.

(26) The special sciences will then be provided with a parent philosophy or omni-science to which they will adjust themselves. Devoting themselves to their limited areas of observation, they will, however, be at no time at liberty to proceed with classifications in antagonism to the basic one which defines the relationship of the element which makes up the "world" to that of its own. They will recognize that all that is in the universe is exhausted in the bracket which contains these two, and not even the subtlety and elasticity of language will have power to lift the scientist outside that bracket in order to provide himself with standing-room from whence to commandeer either of the two terms comprising the relationship which makes up the universe.

(27) From whence there will arise the possibility of a scientific knowledge capable of being interrogated with a why in addition to science's normal when, and of a kind of knowledge it will give himself more than a mere time-table and guide for the reproduction or annulment of external events. It will be such as can dimly see in all this scheme of external change and chance a basis of organic striving and desire. In the forms of the external world themselves the new knowledge will cause to emerge a connexion with that living motive which through the shaping of living forms is shaping the destinies of the universe. This fact, taken in conjunction with the power of swift modification of an organic sense provided by man's new ability to construct instruments which enlarge the scope of any given sense, renders man, even in his brief moment of individual effort, the moulder and master of the world's destiny.

(This chapter is to be continued)

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ONE of the advantages of Paris over London has always been the tobacco-shop's shop which sells you a stamp. But it must be allowed that the tobacco-shop's presiding genius has never facilitated the purchase of the said stamp with that affability which excuses so small an acquisition. Only necessity if one happened not to be a smoker. But nowadays that latter customer has also fallen out of her good of the direst could induce one to make appeal to her the dame more than to make a claim upon her professed procure the necessaries of life, but a pile of courage also. Not a shopkeeper but seems to object to sell in incredible price "already for a long time, a fortnight at least." A kind of swell in the tone announces proportionately with the growth of the charges. So, 100 100 and in numerous other more or Finance completes the Minister of Food's familiarity since necessities were so unattainable, superfluities Fayard's little three-sous pocket editions, in Nillsson's francs of most acceptable quality while of bookshelf knowledge of human nature. He who was about to with the economic problems by, apparently, a sound with the Exchequer, on the same plane with the coarsest permission has already been identified with the pictorial "attractions." Most ephemeral of these to sell the old 3 fr. 50 volume, recently increased to 4 fr., at 4 fr. 50. It will be interesting to learn, a year hence, whether its sale will be affected by this measure and, if so, whether the higher cost will ensure a balance favourable to the trade. This is not a paucity question. The free evolution of modern French literature in the immediate future depends upon it. This 4 fr. 50 will frighten many people for a time. They will want to know how to keep flush with French literature without being obliged to make the new call upon their other contributions. Thedateness will be difficult, no doubt, and often back numbers will have to be substituted for the latest publications. There are numerous cheap editions which, if the paper famine does not become too acute, permit a fair acquaintance with modern French authors and which seem to keep the balance steady between the disadvantages of the increase of price in the 3 fr. 50 volume and the repercussion upon its sale. Unluckily, they are of a format unsuited to the bookshelf and often encumbered with superfluous pictorial "attractions." Most ephemeral of these is the three-sous newspaper format of La Feuille littéraire, to which allusion has been made here several times of late. Fayard issues a series at 95 centimes (slightly increased now) entitled Modern-Bibliothèque, producing one new addition each month, wherein it is possible to read such authors as Jules Renard, Henri de Régnier, Octave Mirbeau, Eugène Montfort, Pierre Louys, Paul Hervieux, Éléonore Bourges, Maurice Barrès, Claude Farrère, Paul Adam, etc. La Renaissance du Littére (78 Boulevard Saint-Michel) issues handy paper-bound volumes at a couple of francs of most acceptable quality while of bookshelf format. As to the classics, these may be found in Fayard's little three-sous pocket editions, in Nillson's 100 Chefs-d'œuvre, and in numerous other more or less lasting and useful formats. And now and again there are incredible finds such as Les Nuits chaudes au Cap Français, by Hugues Rebell (at Crés' for 1 fr. 95).

Le Courer d'Azur is a little first volume of sustained poems by Paul Aeschimann (Crés; 3 fr.), some of which have already been identified with the Mercure, as with Vers et Prose. The spirit of this sensitive work is earnest, and suggestive of a modest self-confidence. It is not "imagist," and contains inversions such as this:

"Mais la terre et le temps qu'il nous faudra connaître, de leur rumeur lointaine ébranlant la fenêtre. . . ."

The cover is as green as the author's native Swiss meadows. M. Aeschimann is of those who have fought voluntarily for France in the Légion étrangère.

The legend of Renée Vivien is hardly elucidated by M. André Germain in his book on that mysterious personality (Crés, 4 fr.); but it is well he has anticipated others who might handle it with less tact and truth. This biographical attempt supplies an apt corollary to the essay on the poetry of Renée Vivien by M. Charles Maurras. While dealing with this frail character with exquisite consideration, M. Germain does not allow himself to be carried away by uncritical admiration. He almost realizes that the artist was not on a pitch with her art. This is, no doubt, one of the reasons why the writer has passed, leaving barely a trace of herself, whereas her writings are facts of permanent, already classified, import. Her judgment, except in the poetic art, was incomparably inferior to her genius; but this is discerned by the reader rather than confessed by the biographer, partial as he is to the "misunderstood" and "misunderstanding" who are apt to give vent to a drawing-room mysticism in offerings to little bronze Buddhas.

M. André Germain's views on Renée Vivien's poetry are those of a connoisseur.

M. Francis de Mion-Jeandre has two successors ready for his delightful Le Veau d'or et la Vache enragée. Le Voyage d'un Sédentaire will also appear at Émile Paul's; La Saison des Dupes (in collaboration with "Tommy Spark") has appeared at Albin Michel's.

La Reine de Saba, by Dr. Mardrus (Pasquelle), is, as it should be, a little world of marvels. I am told on good authority that it is one of the most delectable of books we have had for a long time. So au revoir to it.

L'Intransigeant gives the war record of the "Futurest" as follows: Eight killed: Cantucci, Stoiano-vitch, Santello, Erba, Casarini, Labozzetta, Cabu, Visone; ten wounded: Doro, Zacarello, Marinetti, Forlai, Piga, Gennari, Formoso, Jamar, Pigato, Gennari. Soffiet, Russo—not to speak of Boccioni, who died under the colours.

M. C.

TO MY HEAD CLERK

Do you know What lies under the hedgerow grass-stalks? Have you seen Where the frogs close their bronze eyes? Has the plower Screamed you a field away from her four eggs? Or has it been always thus With ledgers and a buzz of nothings?

Iris Barry
THE EGOIST wishes to call the attention of its readers to a case which was recently tried in the New York Courts, and which should be of interest in England as well as America to the small public which cares for literature. Miss Margaret C. Anderson, editor and owner of the *Little Review*, received complaints from numerous subscribers, who reported that they had not received the October issue. On first inquiry at the post office, Miss Anderson was told that "all deliveries are likely to be slow in these days"; but inquiring again a week later she learned that the issue was held pending a decision from the Solicitor of the Post Office in Washington as to whether a certain story published in that issue was lewd and indecent. 

The distinguished New York barrister, took up the case for Miss Anderson. We pass over a point which was clearly brought out by the prosecution—the financial loss from the suppression of an issue of three thousand copies to a review which without subsidy is struggling quite alone in America to obtain and publish only contemporary work of the finest literary quality. We merely offer for the perusal of our readers the text of the curious law under which judgment was given against the *Little Review*, and the words of the judge in delivering the decision:

Section 211: Every obscene, lewd, or lascivious, and every filthy, lewd, or lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character, and every article, or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception or inducing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use; and every article, instrument, substance, drug, or medicine, or thing which is advertised or described in a manner calculated to lead another to use or apply it for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; every written or printed card, letter, circular, book, or pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information directly or indirectly, where, how, or from whom, or by what means any of the hereinafore-mentioned matters, articles, or things may be obtained or made, or where or by whom any act or operation will be done or performed, or how or by what means conception may be prevented or abortion produced, whether sealed or unsealed; and every letter packet or package, or any other mail matter containing any filthy, vile or indecent thing, device or substance; and every paper, writing, advertisement, or representation that any article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing may or can be used or applied for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every description calculated to induce or incite a person to so use or apply any such article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing, is hereby declared to be unmailable, and shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier. Whoever shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited for mailing or delivery, anything declared by this section to be unmailable, or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier. Whoever shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited for mailing or delivery, anything declared by this section to be unmailable, or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier.

We may reflect upon the bearings of this attitude toward literature.

T. S. E.

LES SAISONS

III

Le soir d'un jour d'été mélancolique montre un ciel pâle à travers les branches plus sombres; la pluie s'est tue comme une voix lasse, et l'odeur de la terre humide imprègne l'ombre où quelque oiseau perdu se reprend à chanter. 

Les cœurs sont lourds et les feuilles sont lourdes de tristesse et de pluie; mais brusquement touchés par un souffle nocturne, on les entends qui se délivrent, goutte à goutte, du poids de leur mélancolie. 

La lumière n'est plus qu'un peu de rouge brume au bord du ciel rejoint par l'horizon; on ne peut pas s'asseoir dans l'herbe et les perrons sont trop mouillés pour qu'on y vienne attendre un clair de lune. 

Qu'importe! Il sera beau demain, pensent-ils, car pour eux la jeunesse est demain; ils n'ont pas le regret d'un printemps d'été. Mais d'autres, regardant l'ombre des nuits monter comme l'ombre du temps sur leur chair anxieuse, frissonnent de sentir l'odeur de buis trempé d'une journée pluvieuse, qui les frustre du soir, où se méthamorphosent la chaleur en désir et le soleil en roses émoussées sur les seins, eux que l'été de l'an prochain, si chaud soit-il, trouvera déjà gourds, et trop vieillis déjà pour l'élan de l'amour.

PAUL AESCHIMANN

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Studies of Individuality in Contemporary Music

XII (continued), DÉODAT DE SÉVERAC, A MODERN PASTORAL POET IN MUSIC

The Works of de Séverac

In the matter of his compositions, the poetic conceptions forming their basis, de Séverac is particularly and consistently pastoral:

Cerdana: Études pittoresques pour piano

In this sequence of tone-poems for piano, de Séverac presents a series of impressions markedly objective in matter, but which are nevertheless something more than a mere realistic chronicle. Throughout, from the first number, "En Tartane," with its curiously intimate undercurrent of exhilaration, one is aware, not merely of incidents and surroundings exciting to the emotions, but also of a highly sensitive temperament which has felt their influence acutely, and conveys their characteristics and peculiarities with a refinement of feeling which, penetrating through the confusion of the mass-impression, picks out, and gives exquisite value to, the most subtle and significant features. Most particularly is this sense of personal relation, of intimate narrative, felt in the second number, "Les Fêtes," where at times, despite the vibrant harmonic colouring, and the strong rhythmic element, one cannot but be aware of an element of reactive emotion which at times transcends the objective matter, and creates, notwithstanding the movement and clan of the music, a sense of spiritual aloofness. Traces of the same element of personal apprehension appear in the last number of the set, "Le Retour des Muletiers," though here the objective impression is modified by a more intimate and deracinating element, the whole statement more naturalistic than in the remaining numbers. The third number, "Ménétriers et Glaneuses," while obviously veristic in intention, gives the sense of a participation in pastoral revelry not so much active as passive, in the sense of sympathetic and interested observation.

Le Chant de la Terre: Poèmes georgiques pour Piano

In this work de Séverac treats a conception more massive in proportions than that presented in his other piano-sets. The component numbers (Prologue, 1, "Les Semailles"; 2, "Les Semaines"; 3, "La Grète"; 4, "Les Moissons"; Epilogue), form a condensed epic-cycle, in which the sequence of the matter is systematically arranged with a view to dramatic continuity, and with the obvious intention of conveying, in subdivisions, one unified conception. Here de Séverac presents a remarkable series of genre studies as vivid, objective, and experienced as, and of kindred conceptual proportions to, the verse-libres epic poems of Verhaeren, Les Villages illusoires and Les Campagnes hallucinées, but unobserved by the Belgian's subsidiary symbolic significances. Objective in treatment, the cycle presents a series of broad impressions, each complete in itself and without mortal infirmity, which, by the method of their co-ordination, enable us to comprehend a particularized aspect of rural conditions. The whole work is a chant of energy, essentially modern in source and statement, the harmonic texture consisting of rich, strongly defined masses of colour corresponding to the synthetic mass-effects which have formed the composer's inspiration.

En Languedoc: Poèmes pour Piano

Here de Séverac deals with impressions produced by the features of a particular locality, a country teeming with the elusive beauties of form and colour, not merely interesting in isolated features, but possessing, in its peculiar attributes, a markedly evident character of its own—Languedoc, the land of "stirring hive-like working districts" of which Daudet writes, where "between the houses, narrow little gardens wander up the hill-side, tiny gardens of southern climes, faded and burned up, arid and airless, full of cactus and aloes, of tall bottle-gourds and gigantic tomatoes turning their full-blown beauty towards the west, with the bent attitude of corollas seeking the sun, and filling the atmosphere with the sickly odour of their ripening seed," where the stony hills are "crowned with old and deserted windmills, ancient purveyors of the towns, left standing on account of their long services, the skeletons of their sails standing out against the like gigantic broken ruines of the sun." The whole scheme of the music has a quiet, subdued beauty, the repose and refinement of feeling induced by those tranquil surroundings wherein the spirit, undisturbed by the excitement of vividly contrasted sensations, becomes receptive of the subtile, more delicately tuned emotions which, past all formalization and speech, constitute the extreme measure of beauty. The set "Les Moissons," entitled "Dans la Prairie," is more objective, less emotional in the common sense, though a sense of quiet personal exhilaration pervades the music, and the harmonic colour, while strong and clear, is treated broadly. The fourth number, "Coin de Cimetière au Printemps," is perhaps the most intensely olive-coloured, one of the vibrant, kaleidoscopic mood-impressions so characteristic of de Séverac—"Vers le Mas en Fête." Here the composer seems more actively immersed in the episodic mood of the moment than is usual with him, the harmonic colouring being sharply contrasted and somewhat restless, the rhythmic element more incisive and dynamic than in the other, more reflective mass-impressions of de Séverac. The second number, "Sur l'Étang le Soir," is a delicate statement of a physical state, rather than the expression of reflective thought. The whole scheme of the music has a quiet, subdued beauty, the repose and refinement of feeling induced by those tranquil surroundings wherein the spirit, undisturbed by the excitement of vividly contrasted sensations, becomes receptive of the subtile, more delicately tuned emotions which, past all formalization and speech, constitute the extreme measure of beauty. 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of kaleidoscopic effects, which combine to give the impression, not only of irrepressible vitality, but also to round off the combined numbers of the suite with an emphatic reiteration of that sense of breadth and rare atmosphere which, in varying degrees, permeates each several number, that local genius, which, quoting de Guefin once more, is imaged in "the Languedoc sky, so bountiful of light, so blue, so largely vaulted."

**Baigneuses au Soleil**

In this work the physiological source of de Séverac’s music, to which I have already referred, is frankly manifest. Yet the music is thoroughly consistent in objectivity. There is no voluptuous effusion, no languorous sentiment: the music is a series of tonal images, so clearly defined, so composed in pure colour and rhythm essentials as to be the nearest equivalent to Imagism in music that I know of. While acutely physical in apprehension, the mood is so accurately expressed, the sense of values and proportions so consistently maintained, that the result is an art-work of intrinsic beauty of form and rarity of content reminding one irresistibly of that other tonal delination, so close in manner and expression to the Bathers of Cézanne. Considered in relation to the rest of de Séverac’s music, it unquestionably assumes something of personally symbolic proportions, but there is nothing in the actual matter of the music to authorize our assuming this as the composer’s intention. Rather must it be viewed as an affirmation of the moving force of a spirit keenly attuned to the most subtle physical influence of atmospheres and objective actuality which, by its intensity of expression and intimacy of realization, gives to the music a clarity and rarity which reveal far more than its immediate psychological or emotional content.

**The Songs of de Séverac**

The songs of de Séverac, beautiful though they almost invariably are, seem to me not quite to reach the individual expressiveness of his instrumental work, probably because the limitation of mood-statement inevitable in treating any given literary text, together with the necessities of rhythm and colour-restriction consequent on the less plastic nature of words, and, above all, the presence of a personality extraneous to the musician and his experience, i.e. the poet, prevents the instantaneous statement which is essential to work such as that of de Séverac. Nevertheless, the depth and mood of the expression in all de Séverac’s songs is full of his characteristic sensitive­ness, and contributes materially to a more penetrative comprehension of the poetic content. Moreover, the decided individual preferences of the composer, the natural emanations of his temperament, are always evident in his selection of poetic matter, so that he sets nothing to which he is not temperamentally fitted. His songs, "Le Chevrier" (P. Rey), "Les Cors" (P. Rey), "Chanson de Blaisine" (M. Magre), "L’Eveil des Pâques" (Verhaeren), and "L’Infidèle" (Maeterlinck), are almost invariably of a pastoral nature, and to their matter his intimate consciousness of physical beauties gives an intensifying and informing tonal delineation which brings out the reality inspiring them in high relief, in a sense re-creates or actualizes them.

**Further Works**

In addition to the above-mentioned works, de Séverac has written an opera, *Le Cœur du Moulin*, which has set a humorous though liminally public in Paris. It is a work in which all the deep sense of rustic life informing de Séverac’s pianoforte works finds broader and more sustained expression, and which, by reason of the human theme, has much of his penetration exhibited in direct psychological delineation. As an operatic work I can find no other which quite touches upon the same field of expression, unless, perhaps, it be the *Village Romeo and Juliet* of Frédéric Delius. The whole work leaves one with a sense of intimate understanding and clarity of vision and statement akin to that exhibited in literature by work such as Flaubert’s *Story of a Simple Heart*. But, notwithstanding its beauty and curious individuality among operatic works, it still leaves one with some­thing of a sense of aloofness, after hearing de Séverac’s piano work, which is probably traceable to the same causes as those producing a similar effect in the songs.

One of the few works in which de Séverac departs from his characteristic pastoral subject-matter is *Le Soldat de Plomb*, a piece for children, in which, notwithstanding the departure, the sympathetic nature and inherent simplicity of the composer have given us a wonderful little miniature full of the humour and the curious, barely conscious pathos so intimately a part of childhood. The *Suite pour Orgue* is the one work of de Séverac in which the influence of d’Indy is markedly apparent. Yet even here, where three of the movements are of an obviously formal character, the composer has been unable to resist his natural impulses. The third number of the suite is a Fantaisie pastorale, in which we once more discern that sense of bright imagery, of open places, and free air, of natural colour and forms, and above all that sense of light and atmosphere which, without considering anything else, have made de Séverac’s music a powerful factor, both metaphorically and actually, in bringing modern French musical creation to “a place in the sun.”
of John is very like that of the cadaverous man to the one in Petrograd. The sword is curiously similar the background, are not unlike; but in St. John the Hermitage one than in the Venetian; yet the ears lace; the long nose, sunken cheeks, closed eyes, and stands with a somewhat empty elegance, fingering the sword and her drapery that bunches awkwardly folds: which are unexistent in any of Giorgione's about the waist and falls in crowded and too elaborate painting, few and faint colours, and splendid simplicity certain a genuine masterpiece.

Then, to invent a paradox: as for the Hermitage Judith, pale hair, that is a little like the Judith in the Hermitage; yet see how this youth sinks into insignificance beside the superb figure of the Knight; in the choice colouring, the perfect grace of the attitude, the perhaps the finest that he ever painted—one might execution of this Oriental creature.

In Bergamo (Accademica Carrara, 12645) Catena's Christ at Emmaus is very masterly, with its thin painting, few and faint colours, and splendid simplicity and breath of design; which is here ascribed Simmaco. The drapery is one of the master's pictures. The Kneeling Knight in the National Gallery. There is a youth, feminine, with pale hair, that is a little like the Judith in the Hermitage; yet see how this youth sinks into insignificance beside the superb figure of the Knight; in the choice colouring, the perfect grace of the attitude, the

Over the Magi (painted on wood), I saw in the Hermitage in Petrograd. Clear, gem-like in colour (as in the olive-green robe of elaborate work worn by the youngest of the three Kings, who presents incense to the child), finely balanced in composition (the two lines curving up to the central arch of masonry behind which the Child sits, Joseph standing, looking down on the old King's head with a broad smile); the firm realism of all the minute details, the minutely painted heads, so full of expression, and with original details as in the young man who thrusts his cheek between the old man's cheek and the wall, to see better; the young man with a strange look of anguish in his eyes, who pulls at the horse's bridle: all these stand out, invested with, as in his rarer moments, a character of loveliness and energy, with his consciousness of the shadow upon it of the great things from which he shrinks: for never did he paint without some shadow of death on faces or on flesh or on flowers. The drapery is in clear solid folds, without any of the elaborate tangles found in Botticelli. The Virgin's face is very characteristic, slim, gracious, with the slightly curved nose; she has a long, thin body, elongated at the waist, where she holds the child on her knees, a slender and gracious child, who looks out on the Kings and their coloured cavalcade with a quite natural simplicity.

And here, as always, he captures the Greek spirit. He has not the Nativity of the Greek rhythm, and nothing in his feeling comes to break or disturb that rhythm. Whether he paints the birth of Venus or of Christ, he has the same indifference and curiosity: each is a picture to him. Judith going home through the midst of her enemies, with the sword and olive branch in her hand, Truth in the Calumny, Simonetta in the picture in London, have all the same look of weariness, of those who do or endure great things in a dream and are all hypnotized by the same meditation, which is really the soul of their visible beauty. And in his designs to Dante's Inferno, coiled snakes twist and voyage across certain designs and intricate arabesques, and Gorgon has a kind of morbid elegance in his round eyes and shapeless neck. But it is not in their rendering of the evil powers of Nature, nothing that does not lose rather than gain from its subject, and no accidental beauty that would not be in keeping with either Purgatory or Paradise.

The Bronzine (125) represents a woman holding an enamelled vase of flowers, in which are three carna­tions, a lily, and a rosebud on a green ground. There is the golden veil, of the scattered gold in the eyes, pearls in the ears, a pearl necklace, and a heavy rose worked in raised embroidery of extraordinary rich­ness, almost like the wrought metal of the vase. The ground is dark blue, flowered over with a conventional design of intricate arabesques in gold and silver braid. Her face is gravely smiling; she has a fine profile: the tightly curled red hair has a somewhat boyish look to the really mature features. The prominent eyes gaze with a disquieting fixity, and there is a somewhat disquieting line tightening the cheek from nose to mouth. She is vain and cruel, a beautiful idol, absorbed by the sombre consciousness of her wealth, and the beauty which has been prepared for her.

In regard to the similarity of Luini, Solaro, Gianpietrino, one questions oneself whether all this mystery and beauty, then, is only style, and acquired style? Intense time, when style had become a thing of such subtlety that it affects us to-day as if it were actually a part of the soul! But was there not, in Leonardo, a special quality which goes some way to account for this? Does it not happen to us, as we look at one of his mysterious faces, to seem to distinguish, in those eyes, reluctant to let out their secret, some glimpse, not of the soul, of Monna Lisa, or of the Virgin of the Rocks, but of an actual soul? Just so, I fancy, Leonardo may have revealed their own souls to Luini and to Solaro, and in such a way that for these men it was no longer possible to see themselves without something of a new atmosphere about them, the atmosphere which Leonardo had drawn to him out of the wisdom of secret and eternal things. With men like this, really, the soul, and their influence on others the influence of those who have discovered a little more of the unknown, adding, as it were, new faculties to the human soul.

These questions lead me up to the more than questionable Madonna Lisa attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. She is very charming; the hair especially (curled in fine, close, gold curls) of the child, and his face, might almost remind one of Leonardo; and the piece of gauze ribbon across one shoulder of the
Virgin; but the Virgin’s hair is done quite coarsely, and the blue background which repeats the harsh blue of the robe with absolute exactitude is both crude and vague; and the Virgin’s face, in its dead white, does not show Leonardo’s hand. I can well imagine that a pupil of his painted it, and that he gave a few touches to it.

The difference of workmanship is, of course, unmissable in his St. Sebastian (74), of Luini (which Morelli, who had never seen it, assigned to Gianpietrino), is one of his most adorable women. She sits in a cool green place, and it might seem beside water, for beside her head droop long sprays of maidenhair, and behind her, at the other side, a simple green fern. She holds a spray of delicate grey-blue columbine in her left hand by her shoulder, looking down at it with a smile in which is the subtle simplicity of all those cool, faint, watery things; her other hand cherishes a spray of white flowers on her knees. Her inner robe of white gauze, adorned with a faint yellow pattern in delicate angles, has fallen down over one breast, in spite of the clasp of jacinth which supports it; a dark blue rosette across her shoulder, and a gold platter; she is elaborately robed in warm red daisies in her hair, beneath the halo (worked like a green leaves shine out of the background in that favourite decorative way of Luini. There is something pathetic in the youthful, drooping slenderness of the Virgin, whose almost closed eyes seem already weary—the forehead already marked with painful hollows. She is a young girl, on whom the weight of things almost too heavy to be borne has come early. Her face, in her cool, languid hands, which touch the flowers, and leant on them if they loved them, is one into whose veins has passed the spirit of leaves and ferns and running water.

Near to her (75) is a Virgin and Child—a rather small picture, not immediately impressive, but full of charm; the thin hollow Virgin who leans her sad head on the red curls of the child who holds out his hand, while his brother, which bends her left hand covers her lap. You just see that her left hand rests on a ledge of the rocky and reedy place where she sits. Her dark red hair is parted in the middle over a placid forehead; it is tightly curled in front, and braided across the head. In her quiet, smiling, pale face, in her cool, languid hands, which touch the flowers, and leant on them if they loved them, is one into whose veins has passed the spirit of leaves and ferns and running water.

Next to her (75) is a Virgin and Child—a rather small picture, not immediately impressive, but full of charm; the thin hollow Virgin who leans her sad head on the red curls of the child who holds out his hand, while his brother, which bends her left hand covers her lap. You just see that her left hand rests on a ledge of the rocky and reedy place where she sits. Her dark red hair is parted in the middle over a placid forehead; it is tightly curled in front, and braided across the head. In her quiet, smiling, pale face, in her cool, languid hands, which touch the flowers, and leant on them if they loved them, is one into whose veins has passed the spirit of leaves and ferns and running water.

St. Sebastian (73), said to have been done after Maximilian Sforza, is a large and grave bearded man, leaning against a flowering lemon-tree, surrounded by broken darts and transfixed by three. It has the air of a portrait—an almost academic study of the nude. The face is grave, sad, patient, experienced; the colour sombre and almost uniform. There is no anguish on his face. So sombre, with a curious breadth and largeness about it, it might be Marsyas or Prometheus who hangs there, filling the space of dim woods in which he stands. The tree-trunks are just visible in the shadow, and the branch of lemon-leaves with one lemon standing out at the side in Luini’s manner. Above his head, on the other side, is a scroll to which he points with his fettered hand. A spray of trefoil lies at his feet among the broken darts. One observes the serious harmony of his smooth brown flesh, with the drab striped loin-cloth with its elaborate edging, which plays so important a part in the simple, original composition of the picture. It is remarkable for its abandonment of the traditional ascetic anguished youth (as, for instance, in Titian’s rendering beside it). There is something of the effect of slow music in its grave harmony, the self-absorbed face, the patient gaze, the whole decorative composition.

ARThUR SYMONS

VERSE PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT*

VERSE stands in constant need of what Samuel Butler calls a cross. The serious writer of verse must be prepared to cross himself with the best verse of other languages and the best prose of all languages. In Georgian poetry there is almost no crossing visible; it is inbred. It has developed a special form and an absolute quality of its own. In the present volume there are exceptions; Mr. Squire’s “Lily of Malad” rises from the mud with a good deal of sweat and blood, but is an original and rather impressive poem which deserves better company. Most of the authors (including the fresh recruits) are truer to type. Mr. Stephens’s “A Visit” has a kind of odd humour which must be pleasing to the adept, but is unintelligible to any one who has not substituted Georgian emotions for human ones. There are, of course, differences between the writers: Mr. Stephens’s syntax is not quite the same as Mr. Drinkwater’s, and still more different from Mr. Turner’s. What nearly all the writers have in common is the quality of pleasantness. There are two varieties of pleasantness: (1) The insidiously didactic, or Wordsworthian (a rainbow and a cuckoo’s song); (2) the decorative, playful or solemn, minor-Keatsian, too happy, happy brook, or lucent siropos. In either variety, the Georgians caress everything they touch; Mr. Monro is the most modern of the others, and most intelligently; THE EGOIST has praised the volume (Strange Meetings) from which the selections in this anthology are taken. Another variety of the pleasant, by the way, is the unpleasant (sc. Rupert Brooke on sea-sickness, and Masefield on various subjects).

I cannot see the resemblance to Tennyson which people often remark in Georgian poetry. I do not care to pose as a champion of Tennyson, and Mr. Chesterton’s approval makes one uneasy about him. But Tennyson was careful in his syntax; and, moreover, his adjectives usually have a definite meaning; perhaps often an uninteresting meaning; still, each word is treated with proper respect. And Tennyson had a brain like a large dull brain like his own, which saved him from triviality. The subject given (airy fairy Lillian) he took it lightly, but as a serious study in technique. Mr. Stephens takes a trivial subject ponderously; only the technique is without seriousness.

And the bell rings loud, and the Railway whistles urgently, and the Railway whistles urgently, and the Railway whistles urgently.

happy in his adjectives. He weakens one of them
by a superlative ("frieze on whitest marble"); his silence is naked, pure, grave, and broken; and
he is at no pains to avoid sibilants:

> Giant, breathless palms,
> Azaleas, elematis and vines,
> Whose quietness great trees becamas . . .
>
> Mr. Squire slips in, referring to a house as a "mean
edifice." Mr. Nichols effects a rhetorical balance:
Whose voice wouldmock me in the mourning bell,
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

Mr. Graves has a hale and hearty daintiness. Mr.
Gibson asks, "we, how shall we . . ." etc.
Messers. Baring and Asquith, in war poems, both employ the word "oriflamme." Mr. Drinkwater says, "Hist!"
Mr. Freeman has some power, and his "Stone Trees,
if it were condensed, would be a striking image.

Wheels is a more serious book. It is not Mr.
S. P. B. Mais's sort of poetry at all; these are not
the good boys of the Sixth Form. The book as a
whole has a dilettante effect, refreshing after the
schoolroom. The authors are certainly conscious of the fact that literature exists in other languages than
their own.

While the Georgians have the appearance of ignorance, the Greeks have little of smattering.
Instead of rainbows, cuckoos, doaffoldis, and
timid hares, they give us garden-gods, guitars
and mandolins, Lancret rather than Watteau, though
they seem to have thrown Pierrot overboard.
They need Catullus, Homer, Heine, Gautier; they
haveextracted the juice from Verlaine and Laforgue.

OSBERT SITWELL: "Fountains," with the exception of a few
adjectives, is a success. "Promenades" is not tight enough.

the best point unfortunately occurs in the middle ("rich retired
provincial mayors"—the "rich" is superfluous). "Prospect
Road" tends to dissolve into its constituent adjectives and sub-
stantives, and "gigantic" should not be followed by "immense"
in the next line. "The Return of the Prodigal" is good in
conception, but is let up by artificial transitions; and perhaps
this sort of thing may not be left to John Rodker. "London"
shows Mr. Sitwell in risk of becoming descriptive. "Prome-
nades," however, indicates a real speciality for him.

ALDous HUXLEY: It is difficult to tell what he is really like.
He has come down with a serious attack of Laforgue (which
may be a very good thing), and we must wait until he has worked
it off.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL: The most important and most diffi-
cult poet in the volume. In fact, the best that has appeared
for several years. "The Feathered Hat" is a very unusual
poem—we are apparently the first intelligent reviewer to
perceive this. In "The Mayor of Murcia" Mr. Sitwell rambles
a bit, and he should not have allowed "blossoms of the sea
and timbrells" to hearken to the voice of art; and perhaps
this sort of thing may not be left to John Rodker. "London"
shows Mr. Sitwell in risk of becoming descriptive. "Prome-
nades," however, indicates a real speciality for him.

IRIS TREE: The most mature of the lot: on a much smaller
scale than the last mentioned, but established. She does
not need to be told what her line is. "Ballad" is very good,
and really light. "Black Velvet" is very good. But "Impos-
ture" should be compared with Mr. Pound's "Piccadilly" (at
the end of "Personae"); he has done it in a third the space;
and if the first four lines of "Personae" are quite worth a place:
if from "The Nun" are omitted lines 2, 6, 11, 15, 16; and if the first four lines of "Song" are printed alone.

THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE

IX. FRANCIS DE MIOMANDRE

MONSIEUR DE MIOMANDRE is not a jeune,
though he be young; as few ever are, most
toold naturally and peculiarly. His output is
by now important.* Not a single page in his writings
bears the trace of a date. When you look at the man,
a little elin person, you wonder what his age may well
be and fail to conjecture. When you read his books
you gather the impression that, though he grasps life,
life has not absorbed him: that he is detached, that
he knows the world from aloof and is, therefore, not
exactly of it; that he is paradoxical and on his guard
but not sceptical. Scepticism must be loathsome to
him.

His novels are, in one way, very different from those
of his contemporaries in any country. Extremely
pure in subject-matter, they radiate a much more
important feature—purity of mind. I do not allude
to an absence but to a presence. I do not mean

M. de Miomandre’s novels contain less than those of others,
but that their purity brings an additional element to
their value. Francis de Miomandre is the most purely
intentioned novelist in France to-day. He is no
moralizer and flourishes no cant about love for
humanity or truth or anything vague, vain and
intangible of the kind, but he brings to his
characters, through his Irish blood, a manly
skepticism. He can hate, however, and his likes and dislikes are much as were those of
Charles Dickens, whose partiality for the grotesque
he also shares, with just that attenuation natural to
the more sensitively attuned, more low-toned French
nature.

M. de Miomandre is a writer of comedy in the sense
that Mollière was. But he has over and above Mollière,
and in common with the greatest, a faculty for the
expression of tragedy. When his comedy is a mask
for mute misery or lurking calamity, as in
Le Veau d’or and, more conspicuously, in
Thérèse Beauchamps,
M. de Miomandre transmutes himself into bitter-
sweet Pierrot, not disdaining even buffoonery as the
complement to tragedy.

His last book, Le Veau d’or et la Vache enragée,
is a collection of freakish characters evolving in
freakish circumstances. His charming and pathetic
little bourgeois, Thérèse Beauchamps, loves a Chin­
man, even two Chinamen, one for the sake of the
other. M. de Miomandre is just that sort of specia­
list who gives accent and the sense of caricature Au
Bon Soleil might have been dull; instead, it is as
dverting as it is deft—this scathing gallery
of character-sketches taken from life. In L’Ingenu
is a scene, that of the two ladies who meet at midnight
in Patrice de Céreste’s house, which is one of the
most delicately manipulated complications in the
archives of comedy. In all these books a certain
number of sympathetic characters, for whom their
creator entertains evident affection, contrast with
a certain number of odious or ridiculous silhouettes
in whom he is either deeply interested or whom
he openly despises.

Among M. de Miomandre’s peculiarities is self­
knowledge. If he entitles one of his books
L’Ingenu it is because he realizes that, ingenuousness being
natural to him, it is a possession valuable and to be
drawn upon. When Patrice de Céreste says, "Je ne
dis jamais, je vous le jure, que ce que je veux dire et
m’efforce d’exprimer le plus clairement possible tout
ce que je pense," he is speaking for himself and might

* Les Reflets et tes Souvenirs, essais, critique; L’Ingenu, roman;
La Veu d’or et la Vache enragée, roman; L’Ingenu, roman;
Au Bon Soleil, dialogues; Histoire de Pierre Poniz, Pantin de
Feutre, roman pour les enfants; D’Amour et d’Eau fraîche,
contes; L’Aventure de Thérèse Beauchamps, roman; Le Veau
d’or et la Vache enragée, roman.

March 1918

THE EGOIST

PROSE

STEAM OF FOOD

A P I T E R Y
use the phrase as motto for his work. He does not jest—as he loves to do—to evade sincerity but to convey it.

Francis de Miomandre is an incomparable couture. As stories his tales are quaint enough, but it is in the wonder of their telling—as though each were a fairy tale—that they score. Compared with M. Henri de Régnier—and the parallel is not incongruous—M. de Miomandre differs not only by his freer originality, his spirituality and his almost English and scarcely French humour, but also by his participation in the characters and scenes described, breathing a warmth and an inner excitement and showing a far-sightedness that is in his senior's marble narratives. M. de Régnier, moreover, is only occupied with appearances, while to Francis de Miomandre an appearance is always a symptom. Had he not been a novelist of the most outstanding professional skill (see the artfulness of the conclusion to Le Veau d'or) and a happy teller of tales he would have expressed himself in poetry. Had he not been a poet he would have been concerned with metaphysics.

The prose-poem which raises the curtain on Au Bon Soleil will most accurately and seductively show that M. de Miomandre's qualities are superiorities of mind as well as of craft. Here are its concluding lines in the beautiful curves of the original text:

Maurice rêve. Comme il est loin des soucis de la vie du jour, des pensées d'un Français de notre siècle, des pensées d'un homme quelconque des villes! Il n'est plus un homme mais, dégagé de son corps dans la mesure où ce corps le générant, engagé en lui dans le travail, il peut par lui prendre une conscience plus complète de son bonheur naturel, il est une sorte d'âme planante, diffusée, panthéiste, légère, délicieusement flot­tante dans le paysage. Par quels organes des sens inconnus, par quelles antennes invisibles va-t-il lui toucher cette feuille de chêne, contractée, croquante, magique, qui persiste à sa branche depuis le dernier automne? se rouler dans le gazon de la plaine qui suit, énuméraire, molle, à deux lieues plus bas? caresser les plumes lisses et le ventre tiède de ce vif oiseau bleu-paon qui jaillit d'un buisson de roques et retombe dans un cyprès? prier dans l'église de village qui semble, dans la verdure grise des oliviers, la proue d'une nef de pierre engagée dans les récifs mystérieux, arrêtée net? plonger dans l'étincellante coule de mercure qu'est, tout au loin, l'anneau de la mer et dans la largeur profonde: vermeille, ardente, flamboyante parmi l'azur profond: une prodigieuse extase, dans le calice de cette rose, de cette paon qui jaillit d'un buisson de ronces et retombe dans un cyprès? prier dans l'église de village qui semble, dans la verdure grise des oliviers, la proue d'une nef de pierre engagée dans les récifs mystérieux, arrêtée net? plonger dans l'étincellante coule de mercure qu'est, tout au loin, l'anneau de la mer et revenir, ah!: revenir pour s'enfonder en une folle, une immobile, une prodigieuse extase, dans le calice de cette rose, de cette rose pânée au sommet de sa branche épineuse, contre le ciel, à même l'azur profond: vermeille, ardente, flamboyante parmi le bleu du firmament?

Mme. Colette may be able to keep up with the outer form of this, but M. de Miomandre leaves her far behind in feeling and vision. The difference between a nature-scene described by the two writers is the difference between a still-life by Renoir and one by Odilon Redon.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA

THE NEW GOD

W HENEVER people ask loudly enough for a new thing, they are always granted one, though it is to be doubted if they are ever completely satisfied. For some time past, various people have been clamouring for a new religion, without seeing that a new one was being born under their noses.

Mr. H. G. Wells, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Sugimori, and hoe genus omnne are hereby respectfully invited to throw their books of philosophy into the Thames and to subscribe once and for all to a good newspaper. Our newspapers, not our sons, have shown us God; and they have even begun to spell His name in capital letters.

The New God is the Tank. Like most of the other Gods, His birth was somewhat ridiculous. The part taken by Winston Churchill therein has never been sufficiently cleared up. But His progress since that event has been nothing short of miraculous.

The Tank has already travelled farther in the last two years than any other organism. One reads of His appeasement of France; He has already entered Jerusalem in triumph or is about to do so. A captured specimen has, we understand, invaded Germany, and has roused the phlegmatic Boche to a pitch of blood-thirstiness before which Hindenburg's wooden statue in the Sieges-Allee was seen to totter visibly. And as for London, have we not seen Him hold His court in Trafalgar Square, and are we not about to do so again?

Nor is this all. The Tank has collected millions for the Cause in England already. How many millions I do not know. When the Tank appears on the battlefields, the armies of religious thought are compelled to stand on the top of the Tank, and to preach to the houses of God, in fact, that we need some new form of religion. Wells, Lodge, and all the rest are but symptoms of that.

When the Tank wearies of performing His miracles with money, He may give us other miracles. He may, for example, go about the streets to the houses of food-hoarders and force them to disgorge for our benefit. In this way the miracle of the loaves and fishes will be repeated.

Is there any limit to the power of this new God? There is only one; He is somewhat slow and unwieldy. But this can be avoided, if the Tank will surround His person with troops of aeroplanes. The aeroplane cannot be our God; at the most, it can only be His angel. Let the Tank therefore guard Himself with aeroplanes. "To thee biplanes and triplanes continually do cry."

Let no one think this is mere irreverence. It is a fact that we need some new form of religion. Wells, Lodge, and all the rest are but symptoms of that. It is also a fact that the ceremony of buying war bonds from the Tank is a religious ceremony. It is preached to us as a duty, and I have seen it carried out with reverence, to the strains of the Coldstream Guards band. For the rest; every one—even the devil, is permitted to quote scripture; or at least so Shakespeare says. And if Father Vaughan, who calls himself a servant of Christ, is not ashamed to take his stand on the top of the Tank, and to preach to the assembled multitude, neither am I.

I confidently expect that prayers for the success of the next tank will be, like those in the previous war, offered in our Churches. The Tank, in fact, is now an Institution; and if this is but the beginning, where will the Tank end? I cannot tell; and if you, casual reader, can, I do not envy you.

This much is certain. The toil and struggle of a great age of mechanical invention have culminated at last in devices of supreme destructive and annihilatory power. Among these there is nothing which, either by its appearance or by its legendary powers,
has aroused more interest than the Tank. Even in
this age of rapid oblivion the Tank has, by the exer-
cise of a commanding personality, captivated many
imagination. It is true that aeroplanes produce
something of the same effect. But aeroplanes are
becoming too common. Whenever Behemoth pays
us a visit, the visit is an event.
On the last night of the last visit of the Tanks to
London, I was in Trafalgar Square, which was
brilliantly illuminated with calcium reflectors. I
could not help going back in my mind to the London
I have not forgotten, but which is now only a memory,
the London of four years ago. Then there were
lights for all; now only the Tank has lights. And as I
looked at the crowds still pressing forward to obtain
the coveted bits of stamped paper, I could not help
reminisce, and this verse :
"Consider the Tanks of the battlefield; they toil
not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his
glory was not arrayed like one of these."

J. G. FLETCHER

FIRST LOVE

It was half-past three in the afternoon of a dry
day in late October. There had been a meet
of the harriers at Ketchem's Inn that morning.
Alphonse had been walking, running, and standing
about for the last five hours, and was now walking
home across the fields.
He came out of a thick wood of Scotch firs, very
neatly hedged in, and provided with a stile over which
he had to climb, mounted a short grass slope, and then
stood for a moment on the top of a sunny hill. The
sun was rather low in the cloudless sky, and the
valley was in shadow; there was a slight mist in
the distance, a hint of coining frost in the air, and the
subtle smell of a bonfire far down the hill. There was
no wind, and the only sound all round him was a
short cut.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

They had known each other since childhood, but
it was not until he had left his Public School, in the
previous July, that he first began to love her.
One day, she and he were asked to tennis at some-
body's house. When he arrived she was watching a set.
She was standing close to a low fence made of
wood and wire netting that surrounded the court;
and he went up to her: she was almost the only
person there whom he knew at all. Well, there
were no boys—and just then he saw two boys with the bitter
hatred that a Public School sometimes produces,
and which it takes a University to overcome.
At first she seemed rather shyly interested in him.
But she was a year older than he, and had just begun
to cultivate a society manner. And the old intimacy
was checked, and then he looked up at her . . . and
she looked away, and he looked down, and there was
an awkward silence. Then she looked back, and a
note of slight excitement and growing self-confidence
came into her voice. And there was a new feeling
in his breast, as if his heart was being very, very
gently rained upon by warm rain . . . And he played tennis atrociously, and he wanted to say:
"Love fifteen, love thirty, love forty," when he was
serving, and he might have served truthfully, but
afraid of betraying his secret to the onlookers.
And then he walked home across the fields in the
evening sunshine, and kept making little excursions
into the mowing grass, and hit off the heads of
dandelions with long sweeps of his racket, and once,
after looking carefully all round him, he said . . .
Then she said in a small voice, "Hunt a reminder of Somerton's "Stand-
chen," and he whispered that again and again.
And so he came home to a new house and new
people whom he recognized as father and mother and
brothers and sisters, but they did not know his secret.
Nobody did except himself, and he felt wise and
happy.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

There was a little stream that flowed about five
hundred yards below her home. He found that
he could only get a good view of the gate out of which
she came with her dog for a walk, while he himself
was hidden, if he stood in the middle of the stream.
He used to stand in the stream for nearly an hour
almost every other day. He saw her come out about
twice a week, with her sister and her dog; but only
rarely had he the courage to go and meet her.
Once she passed near him, and he scrambled out
of the stream. She called to him, and he went out
for a walk with them. His boots made a squashy
sound as he walked, and so he said:
"Slipped in the stream !"
She did not answer for some time. Then she
stopped and blushed, and pointed to a field-path and
said:
"Go home at once and change your boots. And
do not . . ." here she swallowed a little laugh,
"... slip in again!"
And then she added in a
lower, amused, and tender voice:
"If I say I slip . . . he might as well come on Monday. I was fishing a hundred yards farther up."
And then she got quite serious. "I suppose I ought
to have shouted or something to let you know; but . . ." and she broke off.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

There was an elm-tree which grew in the little
valley beside the stream, and one afternoon he cut
on it her initials enclosed in a heart-shaped frame.
Then he rubbed some earth into the white cuts to
make them look old. He wanted her to see it, but
he dared not tell her the truth : so he asked her
casually one day if she had carved words on that
tree. Some days afterwards she told him that she
had been to look, and she thought that she must
have carved those initials herself when she was a
small child, trying to copy something she had read

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
One day she picked a tea-rose and fastened it in his button-hole. Of course he preserved it carefully; he kissed it reverently, and put it into a box by itself, that very evening, before it had begun to fade. And then he composed— it was his first serious attempt at verse—a sentimental and appallingly bad stanza on this flower, supposed to be faded:

Only a rose, a faded one,
Discoloured by merciless time;
Its scent is gone, yet there lingers
A memory sweet of those fingers,
Of a hand which placed it in mine,
Of a face and form so divine,

and beyond that inspiration refused to move. Genuine love is never ridiculous, but sometimes it looks perilously like it.

Towards the end of November his father suddenly had the quaint idea of having dinner at half-past six so that he could work at archaeological books and old memoirs that he got from the London Library from half-past seven till nine. Then came tea and many biscuits—for everybody was hungry again—and then, perhaps, a short game of chess before bed. He began evening walks to her house then. It was just over a mile away, so that, if he walked fast, he could watch outside the house for nearly fifty minutes for a candle in her room.

He would open his father's front door quietly and run down the steep, curving drive between the laurel-bushes and the rhododendrons, open the eccentric gate with an arrangement of pulleys and a weight, which his father had designed, which never fulfilled the function of shutting itself for which it was designed, and which was much too heavy for its hinges. Then came a lightening of heart at the thought that already about a thirtieth—the same fraction that a day is of a month—of the distance was covered; and then a quarter of a mile of dark lane that was always muddy. Then he passed the edge of the little country town of which his father was Vicar, and then there was under a mile of broad dry high road, sloping down into the valley on the side of which she lived. The broad road shone faintly white under November stars and led into November mist, and the cold, raw air filled his lungs, and love filled his heart, and he was warm and half dreaming and his body seemed so light and he whistled Schubert's "Ständchen" much too loudly... and he was happy.

To key dined at eight, and sometimes her room was illuminated at first, and then the candle was blown out and the house looked out into the night with black, sightless eyes... Some of the lower windows showed thin lines of light between the shutters...

One night it was rainy and very windy. The house was in darkness, but as he stood under a tree near the garden a faint yellowish-red light came into her room... vanished, came again, and then vanished altogether... Her bedroom door had been blown to and fro by the wind, and had let in and then shut out the light from the passage outside... And then he used to walk home, and came into the unreal, bright, warm drawing-room, and his eyes noted at first after being used to the darkness, and he drank very hot tea, and played chess dreamily... He was full of the wonders of the night...

He never kissed her and never spoke a word of love to her, and, next October, he went up to Cambridge, and kissed her photograph—that he himself had taken—every night... for a week, and never saw her again.
WESTMINSTER GAZETTE:
A poet who finds even poetry laughable, who views life with a dry, cool derision and comments on it with the true disengagement of wit. He is not like any other poet, not even the Imagists whom he seems at first sight to follow... He writes in an apparent cera libre which has a decidedly rhythmical effect; his handling of language is pointed and often brilliant.

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Mr. Eliot may possibly give us the quintessence of twenty-first century poetry. Much of what he writes is unrecognizable as poetry at present, but it is all decidedly amusing... He has a keen eye as well as a sharp pen and draws wittily whatever his capricious glance descends upon.

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A witty and dissatisfying book of verse... which flourishes many images that are quite startling in their originality.

SOUTHPORT GUARDIAN:
One of the moderns; an imagist; an impressionist... Inevitably as impressions these poems are very unequal. Some are strangely vivid.

LITERARY WORLD:
The subjects of the poems, the imagery, the rhythms, have the wilful outlandishness of the young revolutionary idea... With him it seems to be a case of missing the effort by too much cleverness... the strangeness overbalances the beauty.

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