XVI. OUR PHILOSOPHY OF THE "REAL"

By D. Marsden

(1) WE have defined philosophy as the science of signs, and the rôle of the philosopher as the guardian of that intricately interrelated classification-structure into which signs have spontaneously grown. Close and sustained scrutiny of this structure has proved itself capable of yielding a summary of the kinds of procedure by which it can be maintained in health, and likewise of those by which it becomes infected with its peculiar disease—confusion, and in insisting on the more drastic application of these recognizable rules of well-being the philosopher slowly but inevitably grows into an apprehension of his own particular task as an ever more and more delicate work of redefinition. By the nature of the demands peculiar to it philosophy is self-determined as the neatening of the edges of definitions: particularly of those which relate to the ultimate elements of our experience. By making every such term keep strictly within the limits assigned to it, philosophy begins to see its way clear to put into operation—even in respect of our most ultimate concerns—those principles of exhaustive and mutually exclusive subdivision which maintain the system of signs in that condition of soundness and integrity in which each sign holds a definite relation to all other signs, and yet is so clearly outlined in itself that its use involves no tangling and straining of the symbolic material which is woven together with it. 

(2) The term reality itself instances the kind of condition under which a philosophy cognizant of its own true utility could have value. There is no term in respect of which attempts at definition more markedly rip, jag, distort and warp the connected symbolic material. The strain set up by the attempt to master for it ambiguity-free synonyms—which in definition is what we endeavour to do—makes it plain how far we are from certainty as to what synonymity in this connexion actually is. 

(3) It is in tacit appreciation of these disagreements among the doctors as to the exact bearings of reality that the unsophisticated man—engrossingly concerned as he is with what is real—is mainly very disinclined to put the question: What is reality? And when he does it is rather in that spirit of scepticism concerning the validity of any answer which one must suppose constituted Pilate's excuse for not pausing for a reply when on a famous occasion he posed a sister question: What is truth? Yet these same terms real and true—which embody the kernel of the meaning of reality and truth—have been coined by wayfaring men for practical use, and not even the bluntest "common" sense would readily become reconciled to their loss. Men hold to them because they have a steadily recurring everyday use for them: from which fact it is necessary to infer that as far as their essential meaning is concerned that meaning is a simple and obvious one. 

(4) This latter observation it is of great importance to the philosopher to keep in mind when he sets himself the task of framing a definition of real. It behoves him to remember that the explanation of the meaning of real must be of a nature sufficiently obvious to account for the fact that untutored non-specialist intelligence should have conceived it and showed its faith in it by establishing it among the most familiar group of our conceptions at the very time that we all profess our inability to explain and expound it. 

(5) In shaping our own conception of the real, therefore, we have adopted for our guidance these tenets. In the first place, any account to be satisfying to the philosopher to keep in mind when he sets himself the task of framing a definition of real, it behoves him to remember that the explanation of the meaning of real must be of a nature sufficiently obvious to account for the fact that untutored non-specialist intelligence should have conceived it and showed its faith in it by establishing it among the most familiar group of our conceptions at the very time that we all profess our inability to explain and expound it.
The widest subdivision of the totality of experience upon which symbols have laid their knowledge-creating mark is that of the external world. So wide-sweeping is this subdivision that the only item required to render it coextensive with the universe is the organic body which experiences (i.e. feels) both. Therefore for every given care, the external world plus its related organic body equals the universe. This statement can be attributed indiscriminately to every item of experience constituting both these divisions obviously is none other than that of being experienced: or being felt: by the organism. The latter feels, severally and in bulk, all which belongs to the world and all which belongs to itself. This fact in both cases equally is precisely what is meant by existence. Outside the range of the organism's feeling there exists an area of the organism's external world and constitute the universe of that organism.

We are hereupon met with the question: Into what more simple and ambiguity-free terms can we render the term feeling itself? We commit ourselves to the opinion that what are called feelings could be synonymously rendered as so many forms of movements and tensions of the experiencing organic substance. The feeling constitutes an organism exhaust and constitute the universe of that organism.

The finding of the principle of division which yields these two exhaustive groups necessitates a very careful picking of one's way among terms. As a result of it, however, we arrive in a position in which it occupies an involuted profession, speaking to be temporarily ignored. This is the fashion in which we conceive all abstract qualities to be formed, and in accordance with our conception we hold that the onus of proving reality to differ from the real on any deeper grounds must be laid upon those who adopt an opposing position.

(6) Our third guiding principle is one so obvious that were it not that its obviousness ordinarily serves not only to justify the omission of its enumeration, but the omission also of its observance, it might be allowed to pass without saying. In the circumstances, however, it seems advisable to enumerate it. It is this: the exposition of reality must not be an unrelated outwork of the rest of our logic. It must show itself coherent with the containing logic of the universe as a whole. We conceive this reality to differ upon those who adopt an opposing position.

(7) Briefly, our exposition of the known phenomenon was this: Any object is known when we have experience of it under two orders of existence. The one order is that of conception, or thought, whose distinguishing characteristic is that it can be created and re-created at the bare instance of the symbol. The other is that order fuller and richer in its expenditure of organic movement which on this very account is much less volatile and much more stubborn to create, demanding conditions much more elaborate in the way of releasing cue. We can say that the items of the first, or conceptual, order are such as can be started into being by the very minimum in the way of preliminary excitement or perception. The creation, demand is made for nothing whatever, for instance, in the way of preliminary excitement of the senses via their termini on the organic periphery. The forms of the second order, on the other hand, normally require precisely this terminal sense-excitement, and in order to obtain just the specific cues necessary to instigate it the organism usually needs to embark on a course of externalized movement varying according to circumstances from the simplest to the most elaborate. This more elaborate mode of creating sense-forms by excitations of the peripheral organs is incomparably the older of the two. The simpler and more elementary of the two is a produced instigating symbol is a very recent development: a novelty. It is precisely the effect of its operation in conjunction with the older order which has yielded us the phenomenon of the known.

The group of movements thus infected is very large, and it has differed from that of another so has his definition or his activity or experience of the given organism. It has been sufficient that the forms of the second order, on the other hand, normally require precisely this terminal sense-excitement, and in order to obtain just the specific cues necessary to instigate it the organism usually needs to embark on a course of externalized movement varying according to circumstances from the simplest to the most elaborate. This more elaborate mode of creating sense-forms by excitations of the peripheral organs is incomparably the older of the two. The simpler and more elementary of the two is a produced instigating symbol is a very recent development: a novelty. It is precisely the effect of its operation in conjunction with the older order which has yielded us the phenomenon of the known.

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(8) Power to create and apply symbols being, therefore, the very essence of the meaning of the known, if it be known, then it is this: The only item required to render it coextensive with the universe is the organic body which experiences (i.e. feels) both. Therefore for every given care, the external world plus its related organic body equals the universe.

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physical seat is inner, and whose expression accordingly tends to be more occult. We mean the power called mental. On the one hand we get such a definition as the naturalist's: "Man is the (mammiiferous) animal which possesses two hands." On the other hand, we get the typical definition of the logician: "Man is the animal which reasons": that is to say, the animal which possesses a mind. (11) Let us look closely at these apparently diverging definitions. What we seek is a common feature under which both may be subsumed. In the light of our own interpretation of the genesis of mind, we find it to be this. Both powers represent a vast augmentation (involving control) of organic mobility. This increased mobile power has, however, found itself along two diverging physical channels. A single form of power, vastly augmented, has bifurcated, and according to its particular physical form of egress has taken on sharply differentiated dual functions. One, in the increased mobility expressed in the hand, has evolved itself into the manipulative, manufacturing, constructive interfering power which has transformed the items of the entire human sensory apparatus into the means and control of the muscles of the throat and head, has evolved itself into that power to create and apply symbols which collectively we know as the power of mind, and to which has to be referred all those mental products which constitute the human innovations of the conceptual, or thought, world. Allusion is indicated to what an important extent symbolization is implied in our opinion to the altered balance of the entire human structure. Inasmuch as this last factor is responsible for the heightened power of sensory muscular clutch, it is responsible for that sense of heightened saliency which is so strongly in evidence throughout our entire human sensory experience. It is this highly salient character of experience which makes it necessary for the furnishing of the symbolic power's basis in imitatio. And imitation is, we hold, symbolization's "kicking-off" place. The extent to which the freeing of the fore limbs and the development of hands must be due to the same factor is even more plainly obvious. For a consideration of the thesis to action. The antithesis, however, is merely employment of the hands. Thus one aspect of this subject, the reader can be referred to an earlier study on "The Power of the Will," Egoist, February issue.)

II

(12) Now the characteristic feature of our philosophy of the real is that we conceive the latter as finding its significance precisely in this bifurcation of the augmenting mobile human power. It is the latter's twin-manifestation as a power of manual construction on the one hand and a power of symbolization on the other that gives birth to the order of real existence. The real is something born of the power to act in the capacity of anthropological relations. As far as an explanation of reality is concerned, neither of these powers acting independently is competent to furnish a solution. Though the one unique power may suffice for the needs of the definition of the naturalist, and the other unique power for those of the logician (of sorts), for all who seek to expound reality (for all philosophers that is) the two powers must be construed in the light of a dually functioning unity. The latter have to accommodate themselves to look on real as a purely relative term, and just as other relative terms derive their meaning solely from the completing term to which they relate: just as, for instance, the term parent explains itself solely in terms of offspring; the term right in reference to that of left and the like: just so must real be explained in terms of the hypothetical and the symbolic. A thing is real when, we, by putting into operation the more extended powers of movement which our freed limbs place at our disposal, bring about the existence of forms of that more amplified order of organic movement which includes excitation of the peripheral sense-organs, and of the same type as the forms antecedently created by the simple enactment of the symbol which, as label, does duty for the forms of both orders. We have to regard the symbolically-created form as the form-type created by the very minimum of organic movement; while the real has to be regarded as this organic motor-minimum's antithetical relation. Forms grow progressively more "real" in direct proportion to the wealth of pertinent movement expended on their creation, and as only arbitrary limits can be set under this expenditure, the real or real things ought to show in or as with the smallest degrees of reality corresponding to the wealth of movement lavished on them. This is, in fact, exactly what we find. The "same" things do not remain the same under the lavish expenditure of effort represented by chemical and physical "experiment" as under the comparatively measure expenditure represented by the movement of the smaller powers. (13) But, however far real things develop along this path of progressively extending movement, the fact which constitutes their realness remains unchanged. Always, it is the expression of the relationship which they—as the creations of extended schemes of movement involving the excitation of the peripheral sense-organs and related schemes of creation by the symbols which serve as common labels for both orders. It is the expression of what we can create by "doing" in the extended sense which (basically) necessitates the employment of the hands contrasted with the expression of what we can create by "doing" in the most rarefied medium possible, i.e. by means of those movements of head and throat, which in uncounted records create the forms and conceptions of thought. To the latter form of "action" we are accustomed indeed to deny the name of action. Owing to its drastically limited bearing we are content to call it merely assertion (audible or silent), allowing ourselves to make all the while the implication that the latter is something which is in antithetical relation to action, that of a motor-minimum to any form of activity progressing beyond the bounds of that minimum. The rubicon is definitely passed when the extended movement involves employment of the hands. Thus the factor which was partner to the creation of reality establishes the criterion to which all crucial tests must have recourse when any doubt arises as to a thing's reality.

(14) It may appear that to say a thing is real when we find that we can produce by extended (manual) action what in thought-form we asserted we could, is to reduce the philosophy of reality to a level of commonplace at which it ceases to be worthy to be classed with the profundities of philosophy. Such a judgment would be wrong, and it is, in our opinion, because it has prevailed that no progress has been made towards any ultimate understanding of the real. The reason, of course, why a sceptical glance can be expected to fall on this simple explanation is clear. The terms to do and to say are the most commonplace in our vocabulary. We refer to them in the most casual and matter-of-fact manner. Yet atmosphere of Press or novelty clings to them. Yet it is these two powers which represent all that is unique and innovating in the human species. It is they which create the profound differences of procedure which exist between those of Man and those of every other type of organic life, and a first step towards bringing about an understanding of the real must be a correcting of the easy acceptance and slurring over of these revolutionizing novelties.
To this end we need an illustration striking enough to indicate something of the degree and quality of the innovation they effect. The only adequate parallel which presents itself to our minds is that of the introduction into the biological world of the principle of sexual differentiation. Between these two innovations, separated from each other by countless ages of time, there is a remarkable degree of similarity. Barring the closing consideration of degree, which is constituted by the fact that in the case of sex specialization of function is worked out in separate organisms, whereas in the distinguishingly human innovations both functions are vested in the one organism, the points of likeness between these two landmarks of evolutionary progress are impressively striking. The bifurcation of the lighthand sheltering force and the lighthand restraining force of thought-existence and real-existence matches precisely that emergence of dual agencies, opposite but related, which supervened upon the organic world in the principle of propagation of organic species by the joint action of male and female. Both innovations again seek, by differentiation and specialization, to speed up the rate of development in their respective products: the two to mature in the order of time, the hand represent­ one hand and the individual member of an organic species on the other. Both create their antithetically related differences out of powers which basically are homogeneous and one. In both cases the destined end: the swifter development of their joint creations: is attained by securing for desire a longer rein for play. And in order that this enlarged scope of desire shall take on fresh meaning in the possibility of actual achievement both establish in their respective spheres a new element of choice. By these means in both cases all those upward-striving and self-defining tendencies, too weak and immature to establish themselves definitely in either of the parent bodies, but which were able to work upon the concept obtaining precedence in their respective conceptions, are concentrated in the hands. Comparison of choice, seize upon forms possessing the desired characteristics in more pronounced form. In the case of sex, even before the era of definite choice fully dawned, when fertilization took effect by a chance propinquity, propagation was delivered from the monotonous repetition of like from like; and it stood to reason that this same agency of evolution, in its chance partner a reinforcement of what was best in itself and a weakening of what was feeblest.

(16) We are not, however, concerned here with the question of the extent and rapidity with which sexual differentiation has influenced the propagation of life-forms for their betterment. It is sufficient for our purpose to parallel ex­plained the advent of the joint agencies of the hand and mind, and no mystery what­ever as to why the symbolic creation should in the sequel have preceded the manual. The former, as popular speech has already indicated, is literally conception, and the safety of human activities depends upon the concept obtaining precedence in their generation. Only by maintaining this order in human affairs can man save himself from self-extermination at his own hands. Whenever manual activity gets out of hand and constructs in advance of adequate thought, the same threat of extinction begins to menace him as must have menaced transitional man before mind fully established itself as an invariable concomitant of the possession of hands. Nor here, however, should we strain our perceptions of antithesis and affinity as in primitive man whose awed submission to "spiritual" agencies creates amazement in an age which, swinging to the other extreme, has discounted totally the authority of the symbol, and has stripped itself naked of its old religions before it has taken the precaution to see a new one shaping itself. In primitive man the symbol was the framework, though its unbridled mind cast itself upon action in a strength so great as to cause the inhibitory influence to recoil back upon thought itself, and almost to petrify even that volatile essence. This for primitive man constituted his religion's practical side. But in modern times, this primitive tendency has been replaced by its opposite. Since the authority of the older religious forms began to be undermined by the advent of a wider knowledge, the authority of the symbolic in general has experienced steady deterioration, until finally no body of philosophic principles exists possessing force enough to inhibit any course of action, provided the latter be strong enough to enforce itself in the immediate present. Upon this condition of affairs our present state is the sufficiently appraised commodity. In the first place, we find an almost purely manufacturing age ushered into existence in which constructive ingenuity travels by its own unbridled momen-
turn, fabricating a multiplicity of creations which are an hourly distraction, at the same time that it destroys a beauty whose lack creates an hourly thirst. In an hourly distraction, at the same time that it destroys vital. Finally, without warning or preamble, we while upon which its ingenuity might be spent, it continued long, since for the most heedless of such as the human species be a very temporary aberration. In long ages of time, disasters of a similar kind may many times have threatened the species, but the consequences are too harsh for them to have continued long, since for the most heedless of such as escaped the weight of the punishment must have served to correct the balance. Whence we get the birth of the sense that what men may do must inevitably be dictated in the long run by a sense of direction worked out in thought. The restraint laid upon the works of the hand will be dictated not wholly by the sense of immediate penalties, but by a sense of destiny which mind has been able to come by in that universal sweep of experience which the eternally fine substance of the symbol renders possible.

(19) It is the power to generate, with impunity, in every type of action and thing into this fine impress-taking symbolic material for its re-creation at will. All the assets of human experience which has thus been able to liquidate and make current in the present. (This chapter to be continued)

HYMN TO VIRGINITY

THE VIRGIN SINGS

Lo! we treasured our wine
till it went sour.
The State stored it for us
in the churches’ vaults.
When we went for it
it gave us colic.

INVOCATION

It has gone sour—
it has given us colic,
spoilt our complexions,
eaten away our hearts.
Therefore love is dead in us.
Can we longer believe in the goodness of man
and the sons of men?
Yet stay!
maybe one skin
ripening more slowly
will have marvellous body,
be as luminous as new suns,
more maddening then wind.

"Vinegar, vinegar, will no one buy vinegar?"

JOHN RODKER
book in the March Little Review, couples Miss Mina Loy, and points out the type of verse of these two writers, inheritors, perhaps unconsciously, of Laforgue: "logopoly...a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modifications of words and ideas." Miss Loy's "Effectual Marriage" is extremely good, and suggestive of de Bosc'hère (whom Miss Loy has probably not read).

When Mirovanni thought alone in the dark
Gina supposed that peeping she might see
A round light shining where his mind was
She never opened the door
Fearing that this might blind her
Or even
That she should see
Nothing at all.

But Miss Loy has not here presented such a bulk of work as Miss Moore, and it is impossible to tell whether there is a positive aevore or only a few successes. "Human Cylinders" is not so good; she needs the support of the image, even if only as the instableness of departure in the flux of thought and abstraction, and the word separates from the thing. Miss Moore is utterly intellectual, but not abstract; the word never parts from the feeling; her ideas, imageless, remain quite personal. Even in Laforgue there are unassimilated fragments of metaphysics and, on the other hand, of sentiment floating about; I will not assert that Miss Moore is as interesting in being as Laforgue, but the fusion of thought and feeling is perhaps more complete. She has an admirable sense of form:

I recall their magnificence, not now more magnificent
Than it is dim. It is difficult to recall the ornament
Speech, and precise manner of what one might
Call the minor acquaintances twenty
Years back; but I shall not forget him—that Gilgamesh among
The hairy carnivores—that cat with the
Wedge-shaped, slate-grey marks on its forelegs and the resolute tail,
and a sort of Latin stateliness. I do not know what Miss Moore has read, but being an American has perhaps added, her unaware, to the flux of nineteenth-century English poetry. (Mr. Henry James and Mr. Conrad were also foreigners.) I dare say Miss Moore has written much bad stuff in her time, but the poems in this anthology have the distinctive and un-Anglo-Saxon character of an aevore; it is not one or two fortunate hits but the whole body of work that counts.

A writer of literary criticism may be doing one of several things, or he may be doing them all; but he certainly ought to know which he is doing, and not confuse them all under the name of criticism. Perhaps the essence of his work is bringing the art of the past to bear upon the present, making it relevant to the actual generation through his own temperament, which must itself interest us. Reymy de Gournon and Laurent Tailhade are good critics; their temperaments are interesting, and they have a keen sense of activity and a conscientious sense of fact. A great deal of critical writing is aimless appreciation which is pernicious in so far as it encourages people to the lazy occupation of reading about works of art instead of forming their own opinions. Two books from Dublin* are not altogether useless, though the greater part of both need not have been written. Professor Rudmose-Brown writes somewhat like a professor who wants to write; we are told that one of his qualifications is a personal acquaintance with the symbolists; but his essays on Stuart Merrill and Vié-Griffin are the weakest in the book. Mr. Rudmose-Brown explains their philosophy and ideals; which in the case of men like Merrill and Griffin is not very exciting. We do not want to be told that Griffin's work is a hymn to life, nor do we need to hear that Mallarme is alembicated and precious. There is an interesting letter of Merrill's on page 102, containing the sentence: "What we must fight with all our might and power of hatred is the religious and patriotic spirit." The essay on Verlaine does not add much. But there are two charming essays on the poets of the eighteenth century (Delille, Bertin, Parny) and the School of Lyons (Maurice de Scève) and there are some sensible remarks in the introduction (as on the "bourgeois spirit" of Diderot). Altogether, it is not a bad book.

Mr. Boyd deals with a select number of Irish figures, not all strictly literary. He does not quite convince us of the importance of Lord Dunsmay or of John Eglington, but he makes interesting two notables of provincial life, Standish O'Grady and Edward Dowden; paralegonema of Irish history, not studies in European literature. Decidedly the best thing in the book is the long study of Bernard Shaw, "Irish Protestant," which brings to light a good deal of evidence for Shaw's unpopularity in France. "On the subject of sex Shaw is frankly and medievally intolerant...towards this sex question his attitude remains in its primitive simplicity, cutting him off from all sympathy with the whole tendency of modern life." "While it would be too much to assert that Shaw's work is literature..."—such remarks are worth making. Of course the simplest thing to say is that Shaw's work has nothing to do with literature, either for good or evil.

* * * *

The chief moral to be drawn from these two books is that literary studies can be meritorious and readable, but that they must not be supposed to be literary criticism. Coleridge occasionally wrote good criticism; and Walter Pater, if he had had a better English style, and been more interested in what he wrote about, might have done something in the same way.

T. S. APTERYX

"PSITTACUS EOIS IMITATRIX
ALES AB INDIS"

OVID

THE Parrot's voice snaps out—
No good to contradict—
What he says he'll say again:

Dry facts, dry biscuits.

His voice, and vivid colours
Of his breast and wings
Are immemorably old;
Old Dowagers dressed in crimped satin,
Boxed in their rooms—
Specimens beneath a glass
Inviolate—and never changing,
Their memory of emotions dead;
The ardour of their summers
Sprayed like camphor
On their silken parasols
Intisued in a cupboard.

Reflective, but with never a new thought
The parrot sways upon his ivory perch—
Then gravely turns a somersault
Through rings nailed to the roof—
Much as the sun performs his antics
As he climbs the aerial bridge
We only see
Through crystal prisms of a falling rain.

SACHEVERELL STITWELL
PASSING PARIS

W

ith a paraphrase of one of the world's seven wonders in fiction (my friend M. Edmond Jaloux says there are nine), MM. Francis de Miomandre and "Tommy Spark" continue a new series (inaugurated by M. René Boilevse), published by M. Albin Michel, under the auspices of M. Henri de Régne, of the Académie française, and "appealing to readers expecting from a novel not only is of a dramatic, picturesque character, but also qualities of style and of artistic value giving it a place of superiority in current literature." M. de Miomandre and his partner have fulfilled this order to a perfection which has called forth the exclamation of "masterpiece" from at least one critic. The hyperbole should not discourage. La Saison Des Dupes is superficial, and the cha­

The quotations heading each letter sow the seed for hyperbole should not discourage. La Saison Des Dupes is superficial, and the cha­

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What an exemplary writer Mme. Colette must be

The greatest modern French composer (in the sense that Rodin was the greatest artist), Debussy, has just died. But, different from the sculptor, there are few anecdotes connected with the musician, who lived the retired, unsocial life of a man hard-working and, in his late years, ailing. He was born at St. Germain in 1862; after studying at the Conservatoire and, in his late years, ailing. He was born at St. Germain in 1862; after studying at the Conservatoire

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The Anglo-French Society and M. Davray

By Ezra Pound

As an American I perhaps intrude in the discussion of the above-mentioned society, but a few words of mediation, even of defence, may not be wholly out of place. I cannot flatly contradict the recent Egoist correspondent who complained that English literature was inadequately represented upon its committee. English literature is very poorly represented, but on the other hand the committee of French music given under the society's auspices are very valuable contributions to the musical life of this city. Having heard the Ravel "Septuor" this afternoon, and hoping to hear the Debussy memorial concert a fortnight hence, I can only express my gratitude to the society for beginning as happily in music as they may, for all I know to the contrary, have begun ineptly in literature. They are not so much their own worst enemies, I believe.

In regard to the letter concerning the Mercure critic, an honorary secretary of the Society, I am repeatedly being told that "the Mercure is dead." It is undeniable that the loss of Remy de Gourmont is a very serious matter for the Mercure, and the difficulties of continuing to publish the Mercure must be numerous. Even so, a certain amount of creative work has managed to appear in the magazine during the last two or three years. The number for April 16 is decidedly more alive than numerous recent numbers.

M. Davray is engaged on war work, and has, I believe, very little time for reporting on English publications in general. Indeed, a complete silence on his part would be wholly pardonable and explicable. He should break this silence to inform Paris of the appearance of such outrageous rubbish as Gosse's "Life of Swinburne" or of Colvin's maunderings about Keats, is an error, an error due, no doubt, to M. Davray's amiability. But the excess of this quality, the feeling that he must be loyal to friends of his own standing, is not a grace for which he can expect sympathy from any one under—oh well, let us say any one under fifty.

On the other hand, when in the mid-April number he gets round to the dull soggy "Georgians" (1916-17) he says very much what The Egoist critic has said of the same volume. He says it is a little more gently as if it were a milder nature, but the dullness of subject is not concealed by this paragraph:

"Sons agréables et harmonieux, mais il manque ici l'âme d'un musicien. Tous ces écrivains sont des virtuoses..." — "Littré," "le dictionnaire bien pensant." And the tradition of the Mercure is not always that of the le dictionnaire bien pensant.

It is the enlightened organ of French opinion, one would hate to be thrown back upon the Claudel-fake-bigotry crowd and, for that matter, any periodical given up to dilettantisme or religiosity is bound in its very nature to oppose international communication. These pseudo-theatrical melodramas, which are only substantiated by flattering some local sentiment, and they wither in the keener air of communication. France is driven to kiss-in-the-ring catholicism for picturesqueness and out of merest romanticism, having mostly destroyed her sole other receptacle of tradition during the Terror and in ensuing republics; given any sort of heraldic ornaiments, quarterings, "nobles," etc., a nation is not driven to digging up dead forms of religiosity. Forty years, sixty years ago, America had an outburst of Elks, Knights Templars and what not: same old desire for orders and hierarchies, same old lust for titles, and badges. ("Et le pape est boche," dit M. Croquant.)

But the company can make an ass of itself over Dowie and Lourdes simultaneously; it cannot have Mrs. Eddie and the Bishop of London both at once; it cannot have a catholic-Bourbon craze and Sir Arthur Yapp plus Y.M.C.A. and gum-shoes at one same intellectual tea-party; or even split the same pair of ears between a Tagore and a Rev. Wm. Sunday. These strawberry festivals are strictly local.

In so far as the Mercure has stood for French clarity, and for an honest agnostic inquiry into all things, one is bound to support it against any other French periodical set up to boom French fuzziness, and to propagate fads and cults of the moment.

If M. Davray will but leave his septuagenarians (whether by age or by temperament septuagenarian), if he will seek a bit further I do not think he will have to blame either Mr. Joyce, Mr. Lewis, or even Mr. Eliot "on the climate." His "d'écrire avant d'avoir vécu" and "sentiments pour les accommoder à leur vocabulaire " and "des mots pour exprimer leur passion" are phrases so banal that we cannot permit him to be lost in a general disarrangement of work done under great difficulty.

Towards a Theatre of Peace

By Huntly Carter

If there is a worse thing than the war it is the neglect of art in the theatre. But I do not think the neglect will continue. My own impression is that the present moment, black as it appears, is a favourable one for making a start at a preliminary reorganization of the new theatre. As though in confirmation of this impression there comes from Florence Mr. Gordon Craig's new and precious
publication. *The Marionette* is a Lilliputian affair just pocket-size, yet it contains as much gay matter—gay as the mind of the creator behind it—as *The Mask*, and is an eighth of the price. Sixpence buys it. Moreover, it crosses the highly submerged seas once a month bearing in its bright-coloured embrace a supplementary sheet. It is *The Mask* reduced almost to the irreducible. *The Marionette* is the Unmask. The new Florentine continues the best traditions of *The Mask*. It is fresh, joyous, witty, provocative, and stimulating. It is frankly out for propaganda as *The Mask* was, and maintains that Mr. Gordon Craig's transforming idea will be in the long run of more substantial service to humanity than the theatrical eminence theatrical ideas put together. As most of us know by tradition, the idea in its pre-war form was concerned with the Theatre and its visible objects and agents (of representation and interpretation) defined in terms of Drama expressed by Art, and with Drama and its invisible objects and agents, sensibility, sound, and movement, conceived of in terms of a theatre resting on Art. In other words, the idea was for restoring the Theatre as a shapely, highly unified, and supremely purposeful instrument of dramatic expression, thus securing to it, as *The Mask* monthly leaflet reminds us, "the existence of a vitality which was to reveal itself in a beautiful and definite form based upon an ancient and noble tradition." What more ancient and noble tradition is there than Drama as the master initiator? Was it not born with the silent prayer, nowadays called dumb-show, of early man when he danced in ecstasy in response to the call of the sun, and thus initiated his fellow-men into the mystery of his soul? This, the complete surrender to Truth crowned by Beauty, I take it, was Mr. Craig's dominant idea. But in applying the idea its leading exponents did not go as far as the original programme promised. Perhaps there was not time before the war began. In any case, in interpreting vitality, unity, and purpose they failed to go beyond a vision of aesthetic to a vision of Drama. Their activities took definite shape during immediate pre-war years in a concentration on the application of certain principles--artistic expression. In an earlier way a strong emphasis was laid entirely upon the virtues of representation and interpretation, whilst the really vital thing to be expressed by the theatre passed unnoticed. The fact is the approach to a great eternal truth was not made. It was not made as Ibsen, for one, made it.

I ask at the great eternal truth of liberty in reality in one way. He saw a pathway to liberty that lay across a region bristling with the destructive restraints of social lies and hypocrisies. He believed it could be cleared by human beings recognizing and throwing off all outer and artificial limitations. Women, for example, must throw off certain domestic restraints and refuse to accommodate themselves to the restraints of fatal ideals of human government. We believe it can be cleared for ever by human beings recognizing and throwing off the tyrannical limitations of warlike desire. In peace resides the spirit of liberty that is renewing our finest aspirations. And it is with the truth of the spirit that Drama will renew itself and set human marionettes unfolding in a theatre presided over by art. There are plainly signs that a theatre of peace is coming. It will come in courage and vision and city throughout a peace-desiring world, to give an immense stimulus to Mr. Craig's pre-war ideas of unity, measure, and purpose. And when it does come may I be there to see. Perhaps I shall have an opportunity to discuss in detail the organization of this theatre.

Some of the details appeared to me during a period of indescribable excitement in a military concentration camp.

**A CELEBRATION**

_A MIDDLE-NORTHERN_ March, now as always—
gusts from the south broken against cold
winds—
but from under, as if a slow hand lifted a tide,
it moves—not into April—into a second March,
the old skin of wind-clear scales dropping
upon the mould: this is the shadow projects the tree
upward causing the sun to shine in his sphere.

So we will put on our pink felt hat—new last year!
—newer this by virtue of brown eyes turning back
the seasons—and let us walk to the orchid-house,
see the flowers will take the prize to-morrow
at the Palace.

Stop here, these are our oleanders.
When they are in blossom—

_You would waste words._

It is clearer to me than if the pink
were on the branch. It would be a searching in
a coloured cloud to reveal that which now, huskless,
shows the very reason for their being.

And these the orange-trees, in blossom—no need
to tell with this weight of perfume in the air.
If it were not so dark in this shed one could better
see the white.

It is that very perfume
has drawn the darkness down among the leaves.
_Do I speak clearly enough?_

It is this darkness reveals that which darknes alone
loosens and sets spinning on waxen wings—
not the touch of a finger-tip, not the motion
of a sigh. A too heavy sweetness proves
its own caretaker.
And here are the orchids! Never having seen such gaiety I will read these flowers for you: This is an odd January, died—in Villon's time. Snow, this is and this the stain of a violet grew in that place the spring that foresaw its own doom.

And this, a certain July from Iceland: a young woman of that place breathed it toward the south. It took root there. The colour ran true but the plant is small.

This falling spray of snowflakes is a handful of dead Februarys prayed into flower by Rafael Arevalo Martinez of Guatemala.

Here's that old friend who went by my side so many years: this full, fragile head of veined lavender. Oh that April that we first went with our stiff lusts leaving the city behind, out to the green hill—May, they said she was. A hand for all of us: this spray of blue butterflies tied to this stem.

June is a yellow cup I'll not name; August the over-heavy one. And here are—russet and shiny, all but March. And March? Ah, March—Flowers are a tiresome pastime. One has a wish to shake them from their pots root and stem, for the sun to gnaw.

Walk out again into the cold and saunter home to the fire. This day has blossomed long enough.

I have wiped out the red night and lit a blaze instead which will at least warm our hands and stir up the talk.

Time is a green orchid.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE

X. JEAN GIRAUDOUX: Provinciales; L'Ecole des Indifférents; Lectures pour une ombre

Il vivait en général. That phrase contains Jean Giraudoux. It occurs in the firmest of the three books which have sufficed to bring him admiration and celebrity: L'Ecole des Indifférents. The last of this trinity, Lectures pour une ombre (a war-book: M. Giraudoux is one of literature's most genuine war-heroes), was submitted to the Goncourt committee for the 1917 prize and, though it held most of the chances, by some mysterious conjury and to general disgust the award gave M. Giraudoux's work the "slip." For Jean Giraudoux is of those rare ones who, relished by some, are esteemed by all, his work being of a quality which cannot be denied it. Sympathy is not here conditional to appreciation although it be its corollary generally.

M. Edmond Jaloux, the author of Le Reste est Silence, who couples a versatile erudition in the literatures of the imagination, past and present, with a magnificent enthusiasm, fancies a comparison between Giraudoux and Shakespeare. A relationship with Heine is also apparent to him. (This involves a fellowship with Laforgue.) The reasons must be left with their own translation when he deigns to favour us with them. I should fear to betray them by an unfaithful and too personal rendering. At the close of this little study they may suggest themselves automatically. Another finds in his whimsicality, in his man-of-the-world cosmopolitanism, perhaps, a link with Sterne. Certain passages remind me of M. Marcel Proust (the childhood reminiscences notably), others of Jules Renard (though M. Giraudoux is never caustic), others again of Francis Jammes. He has not yet the vue d'ensemble of these two last, the same sustained construction, but a suppleness, a poetry and a femininity over and above them.

M. Giraudoux's originality consists chiefly in this: he is wholly occupied with the reaction of experience upon the mind. The experience is the element, the thought is the achievement. And as the mind works outside time or locality it past and the future melt into a uniform tense which you may, if you like, call the present. Similarly the same poetic and metaphysical impressions are brought into play in the United States—of which country he is the only writer I know, except Miss Amy Lowell, to convey a poetic impression—because it is the atmosphere of his own mind.

A statement, a description, or an exposition never occurs in M. Giraudoux's prose; he furnishes no information. You do not tell yourself as you walk down a street that you are walking down a street; you do not tell yourself when you are ailing, "I am ailing"; or when you are in love, "I am in love"; but the fact of walking down the street, the fact of being ill, the circumstance of being in love determine a sequence of thoughts in connexion with these facts in a manner which is not mere facts, etc., and it is these thoughts that M. Giraudoux pictures in the terms of these thoughts without any attempt to make them more explicit. At least, so I understand, for he is not always absolutely decipherable. The patching and cross-patching of the mind's dynamic workings obscure the main thread, and a bold is not easy on their immaterialized tenuity.

Superficially viewed he might be classed as an extremely "artistic" writer, but in his case the epithet must not be read for polite weak praise, a use to which it is too often put. He helps the critic in that passage in L'Ecole des Indifférents ("Jacques l'Egoïste") where he prays God he will never write a word but what he would have written in the United States—of which country he is the only writer I know, except Miss Amy Lowell, to convey a poetic impression—because it is the atmosphere of his own mind.
the diminutive. “To me,” he writes, “the leaves seem stuck in a palm-tree as parsimoniously as the feathers in an ostrich; a lady’s initialled handkerchief is like wreckage from a ship whose name has been nearly washed out.”

His manner is youthful, dilatory, hedonistic. We know perfectly we have to deal with a man young, though not raw. “Don Manuel le Paraseux (L’École des Indifférents), for instance, reminds one of harlequinades, for this work has the fleetingness, the expressiveness, the elliptical swiftness and the airiness of dumb-show. The youthfulness is due, also, to the weight given to the slightest events—the weight they assume in our thoughts and not their relative weight in reality: “La nuit où mon amie me prit la main va s’achever.” And in the importance of every fancy: “Hier, dans la salle à manger, au moment de massacrer tous les passagers et son mari.”

The effect is achieved with the strict and constant application of elimination, albeit at times the style is a little minute. There are no blanks. The text is as full as a tightly corked receptacle can be of air. Occasionally it is a little close-packed (Provinciales, his first book; L’École est libre); the metaphor at times strained and in excess.

A typical extract:

“Pour des blessés. Heureux encore quand ils ne nous regardent pas, entêtés, sans vouloir nous répondre. Heureux aussi quand ils ne nous appellent pas, comme celui-là, par notre nom, car notre nom, ce soir, est plus sensible et plus douloureux encore que notre cœur.”

Space forbids quotation from the exquisite Allégories in Provinciales with the transatlantic voyage—incomparable. From the magnificent frieze, Les Cinq Soir et les Cinq Éveillés de la Marne, in Lectures pour une ombre, which I should like to quote entirely, and from which the following must do:

“...deux vieux mendians, auxquels nous demandons des allumettes et qui, rouges de confusion et de joie, font pour la première fois, avec maladresse, le geste de donner.”

And this, more especially:

“Vous avez eu des blessés?”

“Oui.”

“Et des tués?”

“Oui.”

Elles n’osent pas nous demander le nombre exact. Elles sentent en elles augmenter peu à peu le chiffre de ceux qu’elles sacrifient; il y en a peut-être eu dix, quinze, vingt, mon Dieu peut-être trente.

“Cinq cents,” dit Bergeot.

Elles sont atterrées. Bergeot dit qu’il exagère peut-être et encore qu’elles auraient acceptés comme morts. Ah! si seulement il pouvait s’en sauver trente.

And how I want to quote at length from “De ma Fenêtre” (in Provinciales), a tapestry of soliloquies like this:

“La mort est si ancienne qu’on lui parle latin.

C’est l’heure où le drap ne fait plus partie de votre corps, et ce souffle, douillet, avec de petits courants d’air; c’est l’heure où le regard se pose sur les consoles, où l’on verrait embrasser quelqu’un qui ne vous embrasserait pas; c’est l’heure des heures menues que notre âme ne divise plus en secondes, et où la pendule bat, pour son plaisir, à la mesure de notre cœur.

This is Giraudoux the intimente, but there is a Giraudoux of wider horizon, the Giraudoux who attributes new values to values, who has discovered new laws in perspective, a new reason for literature in prose.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA

short notices

On Heaven, and Other Poems. By Ford Madox Hueffer. John Lane. 3s. 6d. net.

The fact that On Heaven is obtainable in a book should not escape mention; we can now throw away the number of Poetry for July 1914. The rest of the book will not much “add to the author’s reputation.”

Dunich. By Susan Miles. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford. 2s. 6d. net.

Dunich really deserves the quite favourable reviews which it has had from the majority of the side-whiskered weeklies. Miss (or Mrs) Miles is a genre writer, i.e. the subject has contributed as much as the writer, and she knows her subject well. Her subject is Cranford size and shape, but the world has changed. Her presentation of the village is more a reaction than pure observation, but a vigorous and entertaining reaction. There are possibilities of a larger size satire than Minnie Rolls and the curates and imbeciles in such lines as these which I have not seen quoted by the reviewers:

I want to sing the psalms very loud indeed...

I want to tell the brethren

What Jesus has done for me.

And I want to tell it out among the heathen.

I want to be a minister in the Church of Christ Jesus.

I want to baptize His babies,

And teach His little ones.

Exiles of the Snow, and Other Poems. By Launcelot Hogben. A. C. Filfield. 2s. net.

The dedication “to my comrades of the Stepney Herald League” does not arouse confidence, the form is reminiscent and the content mostly meditative; but there is a simple sincerity which strikes out a good line here and there (“When I am old and quite worn out”) and which would stand the author in good stead if he would read the right things and work hard.

The Savings of the Children. Written down by their mother, Pamela Glenconner. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford. 3s. 6d. net.

The Times says: “With little graphic touches and light suggestions of the children’s unconscious humour she gives these sayings something of their first freshness, and here and there opens a dizzy glimpse into the shining fairy world of the childish mind.” To this account there is nothing to add, except, why did the Times devote only one column to this book?

Pen Amica Silentia Lune. By W. B. Yeats. Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.

Notice later.

Our contemporaries

M. Claudel’s work reminds one of the religious origin of the drama.—The Nation.

At a moment like this we should try to think clearly.—The Times.

The chief pillars of Shakespeare’s fame are not his English historical plays.—The Times.

John Milton was a great poet.—The Times.

(Mr. Gellert’s) verse is often what the Australian critics have noticed later.

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