

# THE EGOIST

No. 7.—VOL. V.

AUGUST 1918.

SIXPENCE.

Editor : HARRIET SHAW WEAVER  
Assistant Editor : T. S. ELIOT

Contributing Editor :  
DORA MARSDEN

## CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
PHILOSOPHY : THE SCIENCE OF SIGNS. XVI. OUR PHILOSOPHY OF THE "REAL" ( <i>continued</i> ). By D. Marsden . . . . .	89	EARLY TRANSLATORS OF HOMER. I. HUGHES SALEL. By Ezra Pound . . . . .	95
CLAUDE DEBUSSY ( <i>continued</i> ). By Arthur Symons . . . . .	93	THE ROAD. By Richard Aldington . . . . .	97
FIGHTING PARIS. By M. C. . . . .	94	THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE. XI. ALAIN-FOURNIER. By Madame Ciolkowska . . . . .	98
THE FISH. By Marianne Moore . . . . .	95	THE JAPANESE NOH PLAY. By Yone Noguchi . . . . .	99
		SHORT NOTICES. By T. S. E. . . . .	99

## XVI. OUR PHILOSOPHY OF THE "REAL" (*continued*)

### III. The Organic Determination of Our Science of Mechanics

By D. MARSDEN

V

(55) IN our last study we advanced the discarded theory of the early psychologists that the mental form was a *copy* of its related sensory form, and indicated the line of reasoning along which this view could be defended.

The success of such a defence would, of course, entail the establishment of a realistic version of phenomena with a corresponding ousting of the theories both of *idealism* and *pragmatism*. However, the particular interpretation of *reality* which we put forward as logically self-consistent and self-supporting possesses a simplicity of definition totally unlike the involved and tortuous descriptions of *reality* in older realistic theories. And not only so. Its character is such that it absorbs the best points of the ousted theories. It takes up and incorporates, for instance, the idealistic contention that the intellect (the symbol-using faculty) is fount, source, instrument and criterion of all knowledge. On the other hand, it not only allows, but shows the absolute necessity for: ascribing full value to the power insisted upon by the pragmatist: the constructive utilitarian power of the hand. The prime importance of the intellect as the means of all knowledge has been a theme running through all our studies, and we shall not need to refer to it here. We can accordingly devote this study exclusively to a consideration of the place held by the manual activity in our theory of the *real*. Let us begin by an assembling of the main facts:

(56) The ideal form is a copy of the sensory form. The sensory form itself is constituted of movements in the tissues of the organism experiencing it. Therefore, the ideal form must be this self-same movement enacted in the self-same medium, but ordinarily of a more sparing degree of intensity and fullness. The less intense form can, moreover, be conjured up by the mere enunciation of the sensory form's associated

symbol. There is therefore nothing fundamentally new in the content of the ideal form. Here, as elsewhere, experience makes no leaps and shows no unbridged gaps. What however *is* innovating in the ideal creation is the instrument which creates it and the supreme ease characteristic of the latter's employment. Now it is this innovating instrument—the symbol—which provides a relevant basis for the whole idea of *reality* and ushers in that species of activity previously non-existent, i.e. the *creation of the real*. To this stage, it is to be observed, the phenomenon of the *real* is intellectually, i.e. symbolically, determined.

(57) To proceed: Thanks to the ideal form's ease of origin, the possibility at once arises of combining together in the sphere of mind elements which, though sensorily familiar in isolation, are quite unfamiliar and new in the effected combinations. Hence, the symbol-employing organism finds himself confronted with a creation of mental forms which as far as their inter-union is concerned are not *known* forms but *imaginary* ones, and it is in relation to such forms that the practical activity of *making real* assumes its outstanding significance. Essentially, the labour of realizing is to convert an imaginary combination of known elements into a sensorily existing combination. *To make real* is to make alien and diverse sensory elements fit into and coalesce one with another. *Realizing* is therefore a matter of fitting, of dovetailing, and of coalescence. Obviously then it is an affair of measuring: a task (once the combining symbol has done its part) to be handed over to our instruments of measure.

(58) Wherefore it follows that the possibilities of building up a world of reality will be identical with the possibilities inhering in our instruments of measure.

To the character of these instruments we must now therefore turn. As is recognized, all instruments of measure reduce to a single type: *that of two solids, one superimposed upon the other and capable of moving freely upon it.* It is obvious from what sources the idea of the measuring instrument has sprung, i.e. from the bodily limbs with their possibilities of free and repetitive movements over fixed areas. Obviously a foot, an arm, the phalange of a thumb, but above all the hand with its high sensitivity and freedom constitute the archetypes, and it is via the activity of the hand that the quality which is the genius of all measuring operations, i.e. precision, has revealed infinite possibilities of attainment. By means of those creations of the hand—artificial instruments—it has become possible to present an incomparably greater susceptibility to the impress of touch and to attain in consequence an incomparably greater nicety of measure than is possible for the unaided hand. It is to be insisted that the surpassingly great refinement and heightened discrimination of artificial instruments as compared with the natural manual one resides in the greater susceptibility to displacing influences of the movable solid in the instrument in question, and it is as a function of this progressive refinement of susceptibility that there comes into being an ever deepening world of reality. Uniformly with this refined susceptibility to displacing influences of the movable solid there grows up of course a refinement in the enumerating powers of the numerical scale which forms an integral part of every instrument of measure and which indicates the amount of displacement effected in multiples or parts of fixed units of displacement. Thus a fine discriminating response to displacing influences in the measuring instrument itself, and an index-scale fine enough to correspond, represent the two parallel avenues along which our physical knowledge progresses. A *vernier* will serve as the instance of the latter; of the former we might cite that amazing instrument by which Gray and Ramsay were enabled to determine the weight of the radium emanation. This instrument embodied a method of weighing by displacement and presented results accurate to the limits of *one quarter of a millionth of a milligram!*

(59) The elements therefore upon which the mechanic relies are twofold: (i) sensory phenomena reduced to a form under which they can displace some conveniently arranged standardized body, and (ii) upon specific numbers representing the quantity of such displacement afforded by a numerical scale in integral working relationship with the measuring-instrument. "Displacements of bodies and a means of measuring such displacements with results expressible by a number" represent the nature of his requirements. We propose to express this fact by saying that he seeks his evidence in terms of two fundamental senses: the *sense of touch* and the *sense of saliency*: since these are the two senses to which displacement and number have respectively to be referred.

(60) Before developing this statement in any way, let us consider for a moment the order of rank existing among the different senses in relation to the matter of *preferred forms of evidence.*

Among the lowest forms of life the scheme of organic activity is regulated of necessity by a single undiscriminated sense of touch: this sense being the sole one organized on that basic level. On higher levels, out of this fundamental sense the more highly organized senses of sight, scent, and hearing have evolved and are in as active operation as on the human level. What claims one's notice, however, is that on the subhuman level there appears to exist among these more highly organized senses an equal rank of serviceability. Or rather, if preference is evident among them, it is not the same preference as that which prevails on the human level, where preference is for the evidence of *sight*. On the contrary, the senses of both *sound* and *scent* operate much more

actively as the motive-powers of action, the reason being doubtless that these two senses do not have their effectiveness greatly marred by the mere interpolation of a solid body. Hence, while the evidence which these senses yield is less ample and less precise than that yielded by the visual sense, it is more generally serviceable. On levels where a discreet caution is more helpful than either valour or any precise discrimination among phenomena, the fact that the evidence of these two senses usually becomes available at a point of time anterior to that of the visual sense places them at an obvious advantage, and their sensitiveness and activity is encouraged accordingly.

(61) On the human level, however, that greater power of mastery over environment which the human equipment affords makes it sound policy for the human organism to wait for and base his activity more generally upon the ampler content of the visual sensations. With his safety better guaranteed, he shows indeed a very marked preference for this species of evidence and allows it to determine his beliefs very powerfully. With Man—and particularly with non-scientific Man—seeing is believing. Primitive man will even believe in, i.e. let his actions be influenced by, his dreams because he *sees* them.

(62) We have just now allowed ourselves the use of the term "non-scientific man," but strictly speaking, Man is necessarily scientific by virtue of his specific physical endowment. All therefore which we would imply by such a term is the distinction which can be made between man so primitive that the strictly human qualities have still to struggle to make their special nature felt among the thousand other endowments which man holds in common with inferior organisms, and man of an advanced grade of humanity where the strict human endowment has defined itself and shown its true method and line of development. It is to man in the earlier human stage that we would ascribe the characteristic of reliance upon, as distinct from a preference for, the visual demonstration. With man of a more advanced grade we would associate the reliance upon (not preference for) demonstrations of the simple tactile order.

With science's advent we have to identify man's return to the dominance of evidence derived from the lowest grade of sentiency: that is of *touch*. This return is determined by and represents a tribute to the more fully defined genius of the *hand* and of those refined and perfected imitations of the manual activity: our instruments of measure. In any attempt to account for the supremacy of our mechanical form of science this is the prime fact to be taken note of, and it is in no degree minimized but merely completed and established by the secondary fact that that essential adjunct of our instruments of measure, i.e. the numerical scale, presses two other senses (those of *sight* and *saliency*) into brilliantly effective co-operation. These last two senses do not of course stand on an equal footing relative to the task of measuring. As far as *sight* is concerned, it is more of the nature of a happy accident that the numerical yield furnished by our instruments can be presented to the eye in a written form by means of which we can gratify our human preference for visual effects and at the same time make a vast saving in effort in being able to *see* instead of having to *count* the units of displacement. The importance of the other sense, that of *saliency*, is of an altogether different order of importance. It is german to the whole process: essential and indispensable to that of *touch* itself. Together these two senses form the pillars upon which the whole mechanical process rests.

(63) Our next section will be devoted to a consideration of the *saliency-sense*, and we can here confine ourselves to the motives which determine man's reversion to the tactile in his search for a base for his science of control. This reversion is accounted for by the fact that man's differentiating external feature—the hand—is at one and the same time his supreme organ of negotiation with the external world and also his supreme organ of touch. This combination of facts entails that the hand and the external forms it deals in shall speak a common language: the language of displacements. This holds good

equally for the artificial instruments of measure built upon the manual model. The essential part of all such instruments is the sensitive *movable solid* whose action corresponds to the action of a hand. Its genius lies in the fact that all solids, organic and inorganic, respond to actions of touch by reactions of touch. That is to say, they react upon any displacement of themselves by displacements of other connected bodies. Therefore, though we should address in vain to inorganic solids appeals couched in sensory form more involved than the tactile (appeals which addressed to the human organism would receive immediate response), if we approach them in terms of *touch* they will immediately answer with *like for like*. That is to say, while we might sing and dance before them, weep and groan, present the most harrowing and the most dazzling pictures, the most seductive or most appalling scents and sounds all in vain, do we but *touch* them, they promptly respond in kind. To the precise extent that we displace them they will displace other bodies. Hence in this community of reaction which the tangible sense presents in relation to all matter living and dead, we have the first condition of a language: a common medium of appeal and response.

(64) And since the *movable solid* of the measuring instruments corresponding to the action of a *hand* is made to move over a stationary area divided up and numbered to form a numerical scale, the *index-finger* which points as the result of any particular measuring operation to a given number on that scale will correspond to a *tongue*. Thus the instruments of measure will not merely effect displacements, they will speak forth the precise nature of those displacements. They will, in fact, make the external world give answers to man in terms of two senses which he uses himself. They will break down the dumbness of the dead world. They will establish an intercommunion between it and man. Anything which can be made to express itself as a displacing force can be made to utter forth its own character and this witness which it bears concerning itself will grow progressively more faithful and precise as its mouthpiece becomes more sensitive and perfect. Its evidence will be neither rich nor full, but it will be faithful and universally obtainable. These qualities of its evidence will prove ample compensation for its baldness in those special purposes which it is designed to serve.

(65) Regarding the universality of this evidence, this obviously finds guarantee in the humbleness of the sensory form in which it is couched. The tactile being the lowest and least organized of all senses, obviously, not merely solids but every other species of phenomena will be reducible to it. While there might be difficulty almost to the lengths of impossibility in raising lower grade phenomena to a higher, there will be a natural tendency for the higher to revert to the lower. Forms of evidence will be naturally weighted towards their lowest grade. There is therefore nothing mysterious in the fact that the scientist is willing for his purposes to ignore the higher sensory forms and harks back to the basic sense of touch. In pursuing a mechanical form of science his choice has not in fact been optional. Rather, because his humanity takes rise in the physical variations which it does, the science of mechanics has been laid compulsorily upon him. *His hand* has compelled him to regard the universe as an unceasing flux of displacing forces: made him see everything as movement. Modern physics is a direct product of the increasing intensification of this manually imposed influence. Rapidly the physicist is revealing all forms, those of mass equally with those of free forces, as forms of motion of which a statistical account can be rendered. All that mass of evidence recently forthcoming relative to the disintegration and constitution of the atom is to this end. All the physical facts of our existence are being explained to

us in terms of forces which we cannot see, scent, or hear, but which the skilled adept *can measure*. The explanations come to us dressed in garbs of the most disconcerting numbers representing involved statistical operations which render the novice almost giddy and faint. Hence it is that the common run of men must now needs live by faith: faith in sensory evidence simplified to its first elements to such a degree that the initiated possessing the necessary instruments are able to press it to unlimited lengths. Knowledge, in the sense in which the mechanician would have us understand knowledge, consists therefore solely of measured facts fully dressed in their individual numbers. As Lord Kelvin's dictum expresses it: "If you can measure that of which you speak and express it by a number, you know something of your subject. If you cannot measure it nor express it by a number, your knowledge is of a sorry kind."

## VI

(66) The science of mechanics is grounded then upon the conjoined phenomena of the spatial displacement of bodies and of their numerical aspects; the senses which the science involves being those of *touch* and *saliency*. In a secondary degree, in connexion with the *visible* numerical scale which forms an integral part of every measuring-instrument, the sense of *right* is likewise involved. We have just now pointed out how the tactile sense has established its sway over science, inasmuch as its low grade of differentiation guarantees its universality of application. We have now to consider its completing partner in all essentially mechanical activity: the *sense of saliency*. This sense, unlike the tactile, occupies no recognized position, and the first part of our task will be to make clear its nature and explain why its existence should have been ignored.

(67) As for the latter point, the reason seems to lie fairly obviously in the interiority of the sense's action. In sharp contradistinction to the older senses whose initiating organs lie on the periphery of the organism, this new-comer acts primarily at the centre of the organism. The normal sense-movements operate from the surface inwards, whereas the action of the new sense is outwards towards the external sense-organs themselves. It is in fact a sense-activity which the human organism can initiate independently of any stimulation in the outer sense-organs. Under what forms then is the new sense to be characterized? There are two possible aspects to the answer to this query. The sense can be described in reference to the physical changes to which its emergence is traceable, and also in reference to those new qualities of consciousness with which it invests our felt experience. (To avoid confusion let us note that the terms *conscious* and *consciousness* are used here to indicate only those heightened degrees of awareness which we associate with *attentive feeling*: that is, with purely human forms of awareness. For that large field of organic feeling which exists beneath these highly evolved forms we reserve the terms *sentient* and *sentientcy*.) From the structural point of view then, we can describe the new sense as a new power of clutch over the entire organic apparatus and bestowed by that large accession of motor-power and motor-control which confers a new poise and balance upon the entire human structure. This new human power of grip is therefore one with the constraining power which, compelling man to adopt a consistently upright attitude—thus causing his lower limbs to function exclusively as the sustainers of the vertical balance—confers upon him his "two-handed" characteristic. It thus differentiates man from the quadrumania. Also—inasmuch as the new balance is responsible for those modifications of throat and head which make speech possible—it makes one with the power of symbolization. And this not only in rendering possible the mere enunciation of linguistic forms, but also—inasmuch as it bestows *heightened objectivity* upon every sensory form upon which it grips—by furnishing a foundation for that imitative activity which provides the linguistic forms with their revolutionizing significance and makes true language possible. Also, we have already shown \* how its self-initiatory power has broken in upon that hypnotic condition under which the forms of the

\* See THE EGOIST, February 1918, "The Power of the Will."

external world impose upon subhuman organisms certain inevitable modes of reaction, and how the comparative degree of independence to which man thus attains constitutes the first step towards the human organism's progressive ascendancy over the external world. The emergence of the new sense is, in short, of a piece and coincident with that accession of motor power and control which is the great fact behind human two-handedness and power of symbolization, and hence of all the constructive and controlling genius which springs from these two working in concert.

(68) The recital of these facts (already considered) is an entirely relevant and necessary part of our task. However, our immediate object, i.e. the elucidation of the numerical aspect of things, requires us to concentrate upon one particular aspect which the play of these facts immediately introduces into the realm of feeling. This aspect is the unitary character of those intensified items of feeling whose sum goes to make up consciousness. Apparently the increased human measure of motor-force is not fully expended on the maintenance of the erect posture of the body and the more obvious physical developments which flow from that. There exists apparently a reserve of force which the organism can employ spontaneously so as to reinforce the strengths in which any form of organic experience—sensory or ideal—is held, and the effect of this reinforcement is to “polarize” the movement thus concentrated upon into a form so positive that all co-existing forms are reduced to a negative condition under which no record is rendered in forms of feeling.

(69) When we come to a close observation of the mode of action of this reserve force we find this remarkable feature, i.e. that the force tends to exhaust itself upon every concentration which it makes. Its form of application might therefore be likened to the action presented in the winding up of the spring of a watch. The winding-force finds and runs to the limits to which it can go in any given turn and then relaxes in order to renew itself for the next. So with the force which transforms items of feeling into items of consciousness. Every fresh grip, clutch, “turn of the screw” which constitutes the “set” of attention upon any item, concentrates to its utmost upon every single effort. The result is the emergence of a form of feeling heightened to the level of the conscious as an *object*, a *unit* so monopolizing the entire field of consciousness that, while the “grip” holds good, no other item can come into co-existence and rivalry.

(70) This clutching concentration of energy which the human organism can lend out at will to any of its feeling forms is therefore the antecedent condition of any form becoming conscious, and whatever the form be upon which the concentration falls, that form becomes unified into a single object. An object is any form which becomes the recipient of this grip. The latter makes it into a unit no matter what its form. One clutch results in one unit and no more. The unitary character is therefore determined by the incidence of the clutch, which falls as readily upon a complex object as a simple one. Thus a wide-spreading landscape under these conditions unifies just as readily as a single featureless block; a bouquet as readily as a single flower, a petal, a stamen, a molecule, an atom, or an ordinary counter, and when so unified the simplest unit is as much an exclusive autocrat of consciousness as the completest.

(71) This fact that a unit of consciousness tolerates no competitor is not dependent for proof solely upon introspection. Experiment shows that not even the most intimately connected items of experience can be attended to simultaneously. One must precede and one must follow. We cannot, for instance, take note of the beat of the heart and feel the pulse at the same moment. It is not possible to estimate the distance of a star from the cross-thread in a transit-instrument and to note the beat of the pendulum with which the

estimation of distance should be coincident. The incident of the Astronomer Royal, Maskelyne, who dismissed an assistant because the latter's observations differed from his own, is well known. It was afterwards found that the discrepancy was due to the difference caused by the two observers attending to the two facts in question in different orders.

(72) It is from such considerations that one would judge the comparing of the narrow, single-file thread of our conscious life to a *stream* to be misleading. The chain of consciousness does not present the unbroken flow of a river where volume swells into volume in unbroken sequence. Rather it has a motion more comparable to that of the piston-rod of an engine, proceeding by a procession of throbs corresponding to the continuous grip and relaxation upon successive units. That this succession is so sustained and continuous as to present the appearance of a continuous flow does not alter the essential character of the movement.

## VII

(73) These facts concerning the mode of activity of the saliency-sense are just sufficient to carry us to the threshold of the mathematical operations. They are the facts which precondition the phenomena of enumeration, inasmuch as they render possible the operation of *addition* independently even of the numerical symbols. The precise fact upon which the process of *addition* rests is that which makes it possible to reduce *any* form to a unit regardless of its content. We can thus have a unit of *one*; a unit of *two*; a unit of *three* and so on, the power of the clutch being competent in itself to effect the summing operation. We can thus consider the power to add to be an immediate consequence of the set of the angle at which the human head rests upon its shoulders! Once this power is established it is a comparatively easy task to create and attach numerical symbols which shall differentiate between units according to their content and thus enlarge the power to add with the power to count. And since the typical arithmetic operations are merely variations of the basic operation of addition—subtraction being its inverse and multiplication and division being short cuts to the results of addition and subtraction respectively—when we have arrived at these we find ourselves equipped with everything essential for that subjection of the numerical symbols to that unifying discipline which constitutes the art and science of mathematics.

(74) If we state at the outset the purpose of this mathematical discipline it will tend to make much clearer any account of all mathematical development. The purpose is to economize the concentrative energy of the mind. Its procedure effects this in two ways: (i) by reducing the objects with which it deals to a common denomination, and thus by guaranteeing a homogeneous result from the outset making it possible to ignore the *content* of its units; (ii) by reducing its own operations to a typical form which, as embodied in its formula, can be seized by a single clutch of the attention. The operations themselves will be objectified into a unit, that is. (This power to reduce complex forms or operations to a formula which can be apprehended in one effort of the mind is, one might point out, the precise meaning of every process of generalization—mathematical or other.) The first form of procedure applies more essentially to arithmetic; the second form to algebra.

(75) To instance the first: If we take a number of objects of attention, say a sunset, an epidemic of influenza, beatitude, a counter, the cry of a child, we have, according as we take them (i) as an individual unit or (ii) as a collective unit illustrative of the diversity possible in the content of units, respectively *four units* or *one*. In the latter case, apart from the very specialized significance we have just now ascribed to it, the summed total is of very little use owing to its heterogeneity.

Hence emerges the bearing of that first discipline of arithmetic, i.e. that all units which its symbols operate on shall first be reduced to a common denomination: to a common standard content that is. Then will the results of its operations be fore-determined homogeneous and the arithmetician can proceed with his calculations without again needing to let attention fall upon the content of the units he is dealing with.

(76) While arithmetic generalizes the *content of the unit*, algebra generalizes the *operations of arithmetic* after the latter has been relieved of all concern regarding its unitary contents. Hence algebra reduces the specific processes of arithmetic in relation to specific numbers to formulas which apply to and hold good for all numbers. The arithmetical reduction of the multiplicity and particularism of unitary form is followed by the algebraic reduction of the multiplicity and particularism of arithmetical procedure. Generalization, i.e. unification, follows hard upon itself.

(77) And, because the generalizing mind does not live and work in a featureless vacuum but in a world presenting geometrical forms and motor-forces of very pronouncedly individualized character, the formulæ generalizing the specific numerical processes are such as apply with almost startling pertinence to our geometry and our mechanical operations generally.

(78) This pursuit of mental economy represented by the generalization of calculating processes is finally capped by a trend of activity which can be regarded as a natural development of the first arithmetical principle: that objects submitted for calculating operations must first be reduced to the same kind. Arithmetic does not, however, reach out to the great generalization that all objects, however varied in seeming, are actually homogeneous in nature. Arithmetic accepts objects as they *seem*. It is left for physics to show that objects, however diversified in appearance, are "in reality" all of a common stock: all modes of motion capable of doing "work": that is to say, capable of touching or displacing other bodies by amounts quantitatively measurable. Some forms will reduce more readily to one of the great types of motion and some to others. Still is there forthcoming means of transmuting these basic forms one into another. Hence while each will have its own typical standardized units as well as units held in common, there emerges also a unit *standard of equivalence* of which Joule's mechanical equivalent of heat is a type. In short, we begin to apprehend the full course of the circuit formed by the union of hand and mind. The creations of the imaginary world created by the symbol at last are given promise of unlimited realization. The power to present the world as displacing agents capable of receiving numerical descriptions, yoked to the power of computing numbers in any sort of new combination or degree of intricacy is precisely what the fitting, dovetailing, coalescing task of making the imaginary *real* was in need of. Any imaginary combination which is not symbolically contradictory possesses a means at least possible of realization. And the individual elements constituting that means all offer the prospect of unlimited development.

\* \* \* \*

(79) To what issue then do we come? This: That man, fabricator by right of his physical endowment and urged on by that endowment, has set out to manufacture in his own image *a machine*: an instrument of measure embodying in elemental form just those powers which are most exclusively his own. First he takes the power of which his hand, free and acutely sensitive to touch as it is, is the organ and model. This he allies with a power of symbolic expression of which his power of speech is the model. Conjointly he impresses them upon his machine which so equipped can in an elemental sense now both feel and speak. The sentiency is of the simplest and the import of the speech is likewise. They could not be less so if they are to exist at all, but both are quite competent and true within their straitened limits. Outside these limits the forces of his machine cannot step, but within them they admit of unlimited perfecting. To this task of perfecting man has set himself and succeeded vastly. Meanwhile he has continued to insinuate his creation into intimate relationship with every form of matter, there to function like some elemental intelligent soul. He

has commanded it to utter forth the secret workings of the forces with which it has been made to ally. And it has obeyed: to such purpose indeed that the modes of action and reaction of inert matter have begun to spread out before man like a clearly written page. For it is to be noticed this humanly modelled soul which man has infiltrated into the activities of the dead world does not play a game in the interests of the forces with which it has become allied but in those of the organism which has forged it: to the end that more and more the formidable forces of the inorganic world have fallen helpless under man's hand and become submissive to his behests.

(80) What then is the bearing of this jealousy existing between the mechanician and the rest of his kind? Simply that the latter in excusable enthusiasm over the exploits of his offspring has claimed for the very basic elements which are the sole ones in which it can react, superiority over those more highly organized sensory and symbolic elements from which its own have been abstracted. What in fine he claims is that the science of control which his creation has made possible for him is conterminous with the science of experience. The knowledge which does not bear directly upon control is not knowledge at all or only knowledge "of a sorry kind." The world of intellectual satisfaction and enjoyment he places in a secondary category. As regards the ship of life, he is all for the activities of the stokehold and the captain's room. Of the fact that these activities would never have had being save to serve the mere desire to sail the seas he takes no account. We need not, however, labour the position here. This is the point where if anywhere we have to celebrate the triumph of the mechanician.

(This chapter to be continued)

## CLAUDE DEBUSSY

### III

THE name of Claude Debussy has been known in England for several years, but little of his music had been given here until the composer came over to conduct the *Après-midi* and another later orchestral work, *La Mer*. *Pelléas et Mélisande* still remains to be heard in London, and until that has been given, with its due scenic effects, it is scarcely possible to come to a final conclusion in regard to this "new music," which at the moment seems quite likely to become a fashion.

Debussy is the Mallarmé of music, not because he has set *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* to sound, but because the music has all the qualities of the poem, and none, for instance, of Verlaine. Verlaine is a purely lyrical poet, quite simple, instinctively a singer: no effort is visible in his work, nothing is made, everything is born. He evokes, through sheer genius; Mallarmé suggests, through a genius which has something in it of the artificial. Mallarmé has a beauty of his own, calculated, new, alluring; and Debussy is not less original, aloof, deliberately an artist. He has made for himself a new art which is like no other music, but which it is impossible to call anything but music. It is thin, remote, a gossamer web; it is diaphanous, frolicsome, fantastic; it plays with sounds, bringing new colour out of them; he gives us melody without fixed tunes, he uses his orchestra to do certain feats, not big, unpleasant ones, as Strauss does, but small, delicate, acrobatic ones. It is personal, yet intensely French, for all the influences, Russian, German, Eastern; it has the typical French qualities of lightness, brilliance, agility; it requires little material for its purpose. To play the Overture to *Egmont* at the beginning of the concert was a kind of criticism, for there we got the great conception, together with the large, simple,

satisfying development. But to put into the same programme a tedious Concerto of a Saxon musician of the name of Volkmann was a mere irrelevance, unless it was there to show that music can be written according to the rules, giving opportunity to the showy executant to please an indiscriminating public, and yet can remain meaningless to the mind, irritating to the intelligent ear. It came as a jar between Beethoven and Schubert, intensifying, perhaps by the contrast, one's pleasure in what was insubstantial but genuine in Debussy.

Of the two pieces chosen to represent the earlier and later work *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* remains the most delicately perfect. It is a lovely, individual, exquisitely skilful composition; it has precisely the same beauty as the poem, and it is in no sense programme music. It matches the poem because the art of making is the same in poet and musician. A rare, learned beauty comes into the world; it brings us new sensations, delights our senses with new appeals; but it does not transfix us with the sharpness of delight which the great vital things carry in their hands like arrows.

*La Mer*, which consists of "three symphonic sketches," is a work of ten years later date. Its method is the same, its harmonies the same; it is perhaps slightly more imitative of natural sounds. The first movement was disappointing, and seemed to have been made with great pains for the purpose. On a first hearing it left no impression except that of unsuccessful effort. With the second movement the real Debussy appeared suddenly. Here he was spontaneous and himself, a dancer, a singer of strange songs, a companion in the luminous *Jeux de Vagues*. The music was elfin, with some of the daintiness of the earlier work, and a new gaiety. The last movement, where the wind and the sea talk together, was finer still; it was like a drama of elements, it convinced the mind as well as the senses; it had deeper meaning than anything of Debussy's music which I have heard. The music was still, in a sense, imitative, but again it was not programme music. What it aimed at was a representation, through the suggestion of sounds, of a mood of nature; and I can see no objection to the imitation on strings and harps of the swish and crying of waves, done as Debussy does it, in subordination to what I have called a mood of nature. There is none of the crude realism of Strauss in *Don Quixote*, or of his sensationalism in *Salome*; there is suggestion, which passes, fluid as water, with the cadence of wind.

It is not easy, nor indeed very profitable, to compare the music of Debussy with any other contemporary or even earlier music. He stands alone, certainly the most individual and the most interesting and the most skilful of recent French composers. To compare him, as the brilliant and paradoxical Jean Marnold amuses himself by doing, with Beethoven and with Wagner; to look upon him as a great discoverer; to mistake his personal originality for any sort of "music of the future," is beside the question, an irrelevance of admiration. This music has the conscious and lovely eccentricities of Poe, the secret glitter in the jewels of Mallarmé, but it is not, so far as one can judge without having heard *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a large or powerful creation. It is a world of thin clouds, faint colours, a mysterious wood where birds sing, and there is twilight at noonday. A magic circle surrounds the wood, and the wizard lives there, solitary with his phantoms. He is Merlin, and no Vivien has taught him to be human.

The face of Debussy has a singular likeness to the later portraits of Rossetti; there is the same brooding meditation in eyes and forehead. A certain heaviness of aspect is characteristic of most artists of extreme delicacy: Gautier, Renan, Pater, Maeterlinck, among writers; languor was a part of their genius, and Debussy's music is defined beforehand in the first four lines of Verlaine's *Langueur*:

*Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence,  
Qui regarde passer les grands Barbares blancs  
En composant des acrostiches indolents  
D'un style d'or où la langueur du soleil danse.*

Is not that miraculous in its anticipation of a music which is one golden web of indolent acrostics? There is the piano music attenuated, ingenious, made up of minute fairy sounds; there is the harp music, with its tiny throbbings; there are the songs, chosen perfectly from the best of Verlaine's and of Baudelaire's, and aiming at the same heights in the air, but with smaller wings. The very titles: *Pagodes*, *Jardins sous la Pluie*, *Masques*: how they characterize the artificial paradise of this music! *La langueur du soleil* dances over it, through the leaves of the mysterious wood.

The wood, as I have said, is solitary; no human being enters it. The phantoms have unearthly voices; they express neither love nor hate, hardly desire; but for the most part dreams that have no outset nor conclusion, and when they are awake they play indolently at acrostics. Beardsley would have recognized his perverse elegance in these wandering outlines, in which sound plays pranks in the brain. He would have collected them in visible outlines; he would have shown them to us, in fancy dress, playing indolently at acrostics.

ARTHUR SYMONS

## FIGHTING PARIS

[The events of 1914 finding an echo at the present time, the heading which this chronicle then assumed becomes once again more appropriate than the one, now of all too ominous augury, which followed and has endured since.]

IF *Vie des Martyrs* had not preceded it, *Civilisation* (Editions du *Mercure*) signed Denis Thévenin, would be the war's crowning contribution to the literature of France. *Vie des Martyrs* was chiefly a record of pathetically picturesque soldiers' hospital utterances, interpreted with an artistry unsurpassed. In *Civilisation* there enters more of fancy, more of criticism; a novel element also: the sense of humour which, when coupled to such tragic force, is the emphasis of genius.

Sketches, dramas, short stories, farce, in which the soldiers of fighting France are the generally suffering heroes: sometimes (as in *Sur la Somme*) plain description of scenes and places: anon (as in the monologue which lends its title to the volume) opinions—of such elements this book is constituted, great in its stern pathos, great in its significant comedy.

And behind the characters who, heroic, noble, touching, comic, pass through these pages with the fitting but affecting swiftness of figures in a Dance of Death, is realized the individuality of the author, more present, because less of a participator, than in *Vie des Martyrs*, purified, by four years of daily contact and personal experience with suffering, overwhelming and unconceived, to a complete state of perfect grace. Behind the skill of the writer—a skill which might, if it chose, be a publisher's goldmine—we discern, as behind Shakespeare, behind Beethoven, a giant presence of which the work is but the lesser reflection: a man who has exalted friendship, friendship at once general and particular, friendship in an aspect new to literature, a man who has created a novel variety of sentiment and with it, therefore, a new beauty.

This view of friendship is the outcome of a sympathy for his fellow-creatures which has never before found expression so keen, and surpasses itself in the chapter on a *Conseil de Réforme* ("Les Maquignons"):

"Et toujours la chair humaine afflue; toujours, du même coin de la pièce, arrive la file ininterrompue des corps blêmes qui avancent à pas mous sur le

parquet." [The epithet *mous* brings the whole lugubrious scene before the eyes.]

"Sainte chair humaine," the horrible-vision causes him to exclaim, "substance sacrée qui sert à la pensée, à l'art, à l'amour, à tout ce qu'il y a de grand dans la vie, tu n'es plus qu'une pâte vile et malodorante que l'on prend entre les mains avec dégoût pour évaluer si, oui ou non elle est bonne à tuer."

The magic sympathy has not been permitted to absorb the Frenchman's faculties of criticism. It leaves room in plenty for fits of sarcasm and irony, directed at life and the world, at incompetence, red tape, stupidity, snobbishness; sarcasm for what can be avoided and irony for what cannot. The Christian charity of the author of *Civilisation* is not a capitulation, and the opinions expressed with humility and the ridicule (with disdainful *hauteur*) explain the adoption of a disguise which the author of *Vie des Martyrs*, less openly critical and controversial, could more easily dispense with.

Ah! Doctor Georges Duhamel, poet Denis Thévenin, one has not enough of admiration for you because, though you of all have created the best art out of it, to you, least of all, the war has appeared as material for "copy." While you have served it, it has not served you. Though it has moved your inspiration it has not supplied it. You owe nothing to each other, you and the war, for you were matched to its tragedy.

\* \* \* \*

In an illustrated magazine of the class dealing with "war fashions" and "war parties," I recently noticed a list of publications singularly marked with asterisks and other printers' symbols. On reference I found that one sign stood for "can be put into all hands"; that another was a warning that circumspection should be used; while the third was an emphatic danger signal. *L'Incertaine*, Edmond Jaloux's last novel (La Renaissance du Livre) had been branded with the last sign. The young girls whose secret curiosities will in consequence be led to it will, however, be at futile pains to discern that for which the mysterious code is supposed to stand. An intricate and delicately sentimental Shakespearean frolicsomeness, a faint Shakespearean melancholy, a languid Shakespearean wisdom, a lyrically Shakespearean imbroglio, the reins of which are handled with quite Shakespearean skill, characterize this graceful nominally modern fantasy of an adventure in an old French town—which a slight transposition could place in the sixteenth century—between two very Rosalind- and Celia-like girls, several worldly-wise men and one evil spirit, a slighter because modern Iago. Exquisitely written (M. Jaloux has shaken off the last Régnier influence), ingeniously contrived, the work of a most gifted creator of romance.

\* \* \* \*

The first number of the revived *Marges* contained an hitherto unpublished letter from Gauguin to a friend explaining his admiration for Ingres. THE EGOIST readers and correspondents who have expressed some impatience with the *Mercur*e should try this little tabloid review (now in its second number) which excels at condensation. It had, before the war, earned the support of excellent writers and numerous readers. (Subscription, 18 fr. per annum, at 5 Rue Chaptal, Paris, IX<sup>e</sup>.)

\* \* \* \*

"A true realist will ever seem a witness, even though he have been an actor," writes M. Marcel Coulon in the *Revue de Hollande*, in his essay on Eugène Montfort, the author of that masterpiece *La Turquie*.

\* \* \* \*

The æsthete-occultist Josephin Péladan, France's Ruskin, is dead. He was the subject of a monograph in these pages a couple of years ago. Many of his

books, comprising several novels, were theories. A certain confusion of form served somewhat inadequately a fine and exceptional idealism and very remarkable erudition. He was widely versed in the Hellenic tradition and an enthusiast of the Renaissance. He had translated Leonardo's treatise on painting, and leaves an extensive and varied bibliography. He marked a period, exercised an influence, and his vogue will return some day.

M. C.

## THE FISH

WADE through black jade.  
Of the crow-blue mussel-shells, one  
Keeps adjusting the ash-heaps;  
Opening and shutting itself like

An injured fan.  
The barnacles undermine the  
Side of the wave—trained to hide  
There—but the submerged shafts of the

Sun, split like spun  
Glass, move themselves with spotlight swift-  
Ness into the crevices—  
In and out, illuminating

The turquoise sea  
Of bodies. The water drives a  
Wedge of iron into the edge  
Of the cliff, whereupon the stars,

Pink rice grains, ink  
Bespattered jelly-fish, crabs like  
Green lilies and submarine  
Toadstools, slide each on the other.

All external  
Marks of abuse are present on  
This defiant edifice—  
All the physical features of

Accident—lack  
Of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns  
And hatchet strokes, these things stand  
Out on it; the chasm side is

Dead. Repeated  
Evidence has proved that it can  
Live on what cannot revive  
Its youth. The sea grows old in it.

MARIANNE MOORE

## EARLY TRANSLATORS OF HOMER

By EZRA POUND

### I. HUGHES SALEL

THE dilection of Greek poets has waned during the last pestilent century, and this decline has, I think, kept pace with a decline in the use of Latin cribs to Greek authors. The classics have more and more become a baton exclusively for the cudgelling of schoolboys, and less and less a diversion for the mature.

I do not imagine I am the sole creature who has been well taught his Latin and very ill-taught his Greek (beginning at the age, say, of twelve, when one is unready to discriminate matters of style, and when the economy of the adjective cannot be wholly absorbing). A child may be bulldozed into learning almost anything, but man accustomed to some degree of freedom is loath to approach a masterpiece through five hundred pages of grammar. Even a

scholar like Porson may confer with former translators.

We have drifted out of touch with the Latin authors as well, and we have mislaid the fine English versions: Golding's *Metamorphoses*; Gavin Douglas' *Aeneids*; Marlowe's *Eclogues* from Ovid, in each of which books a great poet has compensated, by his own skill, any loss in transition; a new beauty has in each case been created. Greek in English remains almost wholly unsuccessful, or rather, there are glorious passages but no long or whole satisfaction. Chapman remains the best English "Homer," marred though he may be by excess of added ornament, and rather more marred by parentheses and inversions, to the point of being very hard to read in many places.

Grant even that if one turn to Chapman for almost any favourite passage one is almost sure to be disappointed, on the other hand I think no one will excel the plainer passages of narrative, as of Priam's going to Achilles in the XXIVth Iliad. Note, however, that he breaks down in Priam's prayer at just the point where the language should be the simplest and austerest.

Pope is perhaps easier reading, and out of fashion though he is, he has at least the merit of translating Homer into *something*. The nadir of Homeric translation is reached by the Leaf-Lang prose; Victorian faddism having persuaded these gentlemen into a belief in King James fustian; their alleged prose having neither the concision of verse nor the virtues of direct motion. In their preface they grumble about Chapman's "mannerisms," yet their version is full of "Now behold I" and "yea even as" and "even as when," tushery possible only to an affected age bent on propaganda. For, having, despite the exclusion of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* from the island, finally found that the Bible couldn't be retained either as history or as private Reuter from J'hvh's Hebrew Press bureau, the Victorians tried to boom it, and even its wilfully bowdlerized translations, as literature.

"So spake he, and roused Athene that already was set thereon. . . . Even as the son of . . . even in such guise. . . ."

perhaps no worse than

"With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving" \* but bad enough anyway.

Of Homer two qualities remain untranslated: the magnificent onomatopœia, as of the rush of the waves on the sea-beach and their recession in:

παρά θίνα πολὺ φλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης

untranslated and untranslatable; and secondly the authentic cadence of speech; the absolute conviction that the words used, let us say by Achilles to the "dog-faced" chicken-hearted Agamemnon, are in the actual swing of words spoken. This quality of actual speaking is *not* untranslatable. Note how Pope fails to translate it

"There sat the seniors of the Trojan race  
(Old Priam's chiefs, and most in Priam's grace):  
The king, the first; Thymœtes at his side;  
Lampus and Clytius, long in counsel try'd;  
Panthus and Hicetaon, once the strong;  
And next, the wisest of the reverend throng,  
Antenor grave, and sage Ucalegon,  
Lean'd on the walls, and bask'd before the sun.  
Chiefs, who no more in bloody fights engage,  
But wise through time, and narrative with age,  
In summer days like grasshoppers rejoice,  
A bloodless race, that send a feeble voice.

\* Milton, of course, whom my detractors say I condemn without due circumspection.

These, when the Spartan queen approach'd the tower,

In secret own'd resistless beauty's power:  
They cried, No wonder, such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms!  
What winning graces! What majestic mien!  
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen!  
Yet hence, oh Heaven, convey that fatal face,  
And from destruction save the Trojan race.

This is anything but the "surge and thunder," on the other hand it is a definite idiom, within the limits of the rhymed pentameter couplet it is even musical in parts; there is imbecility in the antithesis, and bathos in "she looks a queen," but there is fine accomplishment in:

"Wise through time, and narrative with age,"

Mr. Pope's own invention, and excellent. What we definitely can *not* hear is the voice of the old men speaking. The simile of the grasshoppers is well rendered, but the old voices do not ring in the ear.

Homer (iii. 156-160) reports their conversation:

Ὀὐ νέμεσις, Τρῶας καὶ εὐκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
Τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν  
Αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὅπα ἔοικεν.  
'Ἄλλὰ καὶ ὡς, τοιῆ περ' εὐδῆς, ἐν νηυσὶ νεέεσθω,  
Μηδ' ἤμιν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λιποῖτο.

Which is given in Sam. Clark's *ad verbum* translation:

"Non est indigne ferendum, Trojanos et bene-ocreatos Achivos

Tali de muliere longum tempus dolores pati:  
Omnino immortalibus deabus ad vultum similis est.  
Sed et sic, talis quamvis sit, in navibus redeat,  
Neque nobis liberisque in posterum detrimentum relinquitur."

Mr. Pope has given six short lines for five long ones, but he has added "fatal" to face (or perhaps only lifted it from *νέμεσις*), he has added "winning graces," "majestic," "looks a queen." As for owning beauty's resistless power secretly or in the open, the Greek is:

Τοιοῖ ἄρα Τρῶων ἡγήτορες ἦντ' ἐπὶ πύργῳ.  
Οἱ δ' ὡς οὖν εἶδον Ἑλένην ἐπὶ πύργῳ ἰούσαν,  
'Ἦκα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον.

and Sam. Clark as follows:

"Tales utique Trojanorum proceres sedebant in turri.  
Hi autem ut viderunt Helenam ad turrin venientem,  
Submissee inter se verbis alatis dixerunt";

'Ἦκα is an adjective of sound, it is purely objective, even *submissee* \* is an addition; though 'Ἦκα might, by a slight strain, be taken to mean that the speech of the old men came little by little, a phrase from each of the elders. Still it would be purely objective. It does not even say they spoke humbly or with resignation.

Chapman is no closer than his successor. He is so *galant* in fact, that I thought I had found his description in Rochefort. The passage is splendid, but splendidly unhomeric:

"All grave old men, and soldiërs they had been, but for age  
Now left the wars; yet counsellors they were exceedingly sage.  
And as in well-grown woods, on trees, cold spiny grasshoppers  
Sit chirping, and send voices out, that scarce can pierce our ears  
For softness, and their weak faint sounds; so, talking on the tow'r,  
These seniors of the people sat; who when they saw the pow'r

\* I.e. Clark is "correct," but the words shade differently. 'Ἦκα means low, quiet, with a secondary meaning of little by little. *Submissee* means low, quiet, with a secondary meaning of modestly, humbly.



Of beauty, in the queen, ascend, ev'n those cold-spirited peers,  
 Those wise and almost wither'd men, found this heat in their years,  
 That they were forc'd (though whisp'ring) to say :  
 'What man can blame  
 The Greeks and Trojans to endure, for so admir'd a dame,  
 So many mis'ries, and so long? In her sweet count'nance shine  
 Looks like the Goddesses. And yet (though never so divine)  
 Before we boast, unjustly still, of her enforcéd prise,  
 And justly suffer for her sake, with all our progenies,  
 Labour and ruin, let her go; the profit of our land  
 Must pass the beauty.' Thus, though these could bear so fit a hand  
 On their affections, yet, when all their gravest powers were us'd,  
 They could not choose but welcome her, and rather they accus'd  
 The Gods than beauty; for thus spake the most-fam'd king of Troy : "

The last sentence representing mostly "Ὠς ἄρ' ἔφαν in the line :

Ὠς ἄρ' ἔφαν Πρίαμος δ' Ἑλένην ἐκαλέσσατο φωνῇ

"Sic dixerunt : Priamus autem Helenam vocavit voce."

Chapman is nearer Swinburne's ballad with :

"But those three following men," etc.

than to his alleged original.

Rochefort is as follows (*Illiade*, Livre iii, M. de Rochefort, 1772) :

"Hélène à ce discours sentit naître en son âme  
 Un doux ressouvenir de sa première flamme ;  
 Le désir de revoir les lieux qu'elle a quittés  
 Jette un trouble inconnu dans ses sens agités.  
 Tremblante elle se lève et les yeux pleins de larmes,  
 D'un voile éblouissant elle couvre ses charmes ;  
 De deux femmes suivie elle vole aux remparts.  
 La s'étaient assemblés ces illustres vieillards  
 Qui courbés sous le faix des travaux et de l'âge  
 N'alloient plus au combat signaler leur courage,  
 Mais qui, près de leur Roi, par de sages avis,  
 Mieux qu'en leurs jeunes ans défendoient leur païs.  
 Dans leurs doux entretiens, leur voix toujours égale  
 Ressembloit aux accents que forme la cigale,  
 Lorsqu'aux longs jours d'été cachée en un buisson,  
 Elle vient dans les champs annoncer la moisson.  
 Une tendre surprise enflamma leurs visages ;  
 Frappés de ses appas, ils se disoient entre eux :  
 'Qui pourroit s'étonner que tant de Rois fameux,  
 Depuis neuf ans entiers aient combattu pour elle ?  
 Sur le trône des cieus Vénus n'est pas plus belle.  
 Mais quelque soit l'amour qu'inspirent ses attraits,  
 Puisse Illion enfin la perdre pour jamais,  
 Puisse-t-elle bientôt à son époux rendue,  
 Conjurer l'infortune en ces lieux attendue.' "

Hughes Salel (1545) praised by Ronsard, is more pleasing :

"Le Roi Priam, et avec luy bon nombre  
 De grandz Seigneurs estoient à l'ombre  
 Sur les Creneaulx, Tymoetes et Panthus,  
 Lampus, Clytus, excellentz en vertus,  
 Hictaon renomme en bataille,  
 Ucalegon iadis de fort taille,  
 Et Antenor aux armes nompareil  
 Mais pour alors ne seruantz qu'en conseil.

La, ces Vieillards assis de peur du Hasle  
 Causoyent ensemble ainsi que la Cigalle  
 Ou deux ou trois, entre les vertes feuilles,  
 En temps d'Esté gazouillant à merveilles ;

Lesquelz voyans la diuine Gregeoise,  
 Disoient entre eux que si la grande noise  
 De ces deux camps duroit longue saison,  
 Certainement ce n'estoit sans raison :  
 Veu la Beaulté, et plus que humain outrage,  
 Qui reluysoit en son diuin visaige.  
 Ce neantmoins il vauldrait mieulx la rendre,  
 (Ce disoyent ilz) sans guères plus attendre,  
 Pour éviter le mal qui peult venir,  
 Qui la voudra encores retenir."

Salel is a most delightful approach to the Iliads ; he is still absorbed in the subject-matter, as Douglas and Golding were absorbed in their subject-matter. Note how exact he is in the rendering of the old men's mental attitude. Note also that he is right in his era. I mean simply that Homer *is* a little *rustre*, a little, or perhaps a good deal, mediæval, he has not the dovetailing of Ovid. He has onomatopœia, as of poetry sung out ; he has authenticity of conversation as would be demanded by an intelligent audience not yet laminated with æsthetics ; capable of recognizing reality. He has the repetitions of the *chanson de geste*. Of all the French and English versions I think Salel alone gives any hint of some of these characteristics. Too obviously he is not onomatopœic, no. But he is charming, and readable, and "Briseis Fleur des Demoiselles" has her reality.

Nicolo Valla is, for him who runs, closer :

"Consili virtus, summis de rebus habebant  
 Sermones, et multa inter se et magna loquentes,  
 Arboribus quales gracili stridere cicadæ  
 Sæpe solent cantu, postquam sub moenibus altis  
 Tyndarida aspiciunt, procerum tum quisque fremebat,  
 Mutuasque exorsi, Decuit tot funera Teucros  
 Argolicasque pati. longique in tempore bellum  
 Tantus in ore decor cui non mortalis in artus  
 Est honor et vultu divina efflagrat imago.  
 Diva licet facies, Danaum cun classe recedat  
 Longius excido ne nos aut nostra fatiget  
 Pignora . sic illi tantis de rebus agebant.

This hexameter is rather heavily accented. It shows, perhaps, the source of various "ornaments" in later English and French translations. It has indubitable sonority even though monotonous.

It is the earliest Latin verse rendering I have yet come upon, and is bound in with Raphael of Volterra's first two Iliads, and some further renderings by Obsopoeo. My impression is that I saw an Iliad by Andreas Divus on the Quais in Paris, at the time I found his version of the Odyssey, but an impression of this sort is, after eight years, untrustworthy, it may have been only a Latin Iliad in similar binding.

(To be continued)

## THE ROAD

TO have watched all night at the feast where Socrates spoke of love, letting fall from tranquil fingers white violets in the cold black wine ; or to have listened while some friend of Bembo talked of the groves of Academe and made golden flesh for us the ghosts of dead Greece—who would shrink from so exquisite a vigil ? Then indeed not to sleep would be divine, and dawn—the first birds among the trees in the misty park, the first gold flush—would fill us perhaps with regret, certainly with exultation.

But there is no exultation for those who watch beside the Road, the road some know too bitterly and some will never know, the road which is the Place of Skulls—for it starts from a graveyard and passes through graveyards and ends in a graveyard.

By day the road is empty and desolate ; no boot

or wheel marks its mud, no human figure is reflected in its deep shell-pools. By day the road is silent. But by night it is alive with a harsh monotonous epic. Along that muddy trail move the rattling transport limbers, the field-guns, the ammunition wagons; the Red Cross cars lurch and sway on their springs over its deep ruts. Down that road come the weary battalions, platoon after platoon, heroic in their mud and silence; up that road go the fresh battalions, platoon after platoon, heroic in their cleanliness and silence. Down that road come the dead men on their silent wheeled stretchers. All that goes up that road is young and strong and alive; all that comes down is weary and old or dead. Over that road shriek and crash the shells; the sharp bullets strike gold sparks from its stones; the mortars tear craters in it. And just before dawn when the last limber rattles away and the last stretcher has gone back to the line, then the ghosts of the dead armies march down, heroic in their silence, battalion after battalion, brigade after brigade, division after division; the immeasurable forces of the dead youth of Europe march down the road past the silent sentry by the ruined house, march back, march home.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

## THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE

### XI. ALAIN-FOURNIER: *Le Grand Meaulnes*

THIS, the only work of one who has been missing since the autumn of 1914, is called by the French critics a return to the *roman d'aventures*. It came into the world miraculously, having no immediate antecedents. Its success was not due to any inherent glamour. No quieter book was ever written, and its originality is absolutely free from sensational devices.

There is a something divine in the spirit of this beautiful work, for beautiful is the epithet it deserves. It partakes of the sublime candour of youth and of its perfection. It is not in vain that the age of childhood is called "Golden" (the title of a book I read many a year ago, and which Alain-Fournier's brought back to my memory). The narrative is as even as a child's gestures are harmonious. There is not a trace of self-consciousness or even of self in it. It is the work of an experienced writer who had preserved the heart of a child. The only mistake is a "grown-up" mistake: the coincidence of the meeting of Meaulnes with Frantz's fiancée committed in a desire to enlarge on the "plot." Otherwise no error, no weakness can be traced.

On retrouve à chaque page [wrote M. Georges Le Cardonnell] ce souci de la besogne de l'écrivain loyalement accomplie, que possédaient au plus haut point les écrivains et les artisans français d'autrefois, que ne cessait de louer Péguy. Ce jeune écrivain, d'une si grande probité, qui ne pensait pas qu'il y eût de petits événements négligeables ne croyait pas non plus qu'il y eût de petites besognes. . . . Ce jeune écrivain avait au plus haut point cette conscience, cette loyauté d'esprit, cet ensemble de qualités qui donnent à un être sa valeur morale, et sans lesquelles il est certes possible de montrer une certaine habileté littéraire mais impossible de dépasser une hauteur en somme moyenne. . . . J'imagine le Lieutenant Alain-Fournier tenant tête à l'ennemi avec la même conscience qu'il apportait, écrivain, à écrire une page, la même passion lucide, le même enthousiasme réfléchi.

But this insists a little too much perhaps on the qualities of conscience and *métier*. Alain-Fournier possessed a gift which these qualities served: a sense of the miraculous and wonderful which makes itself apparent in his use of certain words, like *adventure*, *fête*, *fiancée*, *lost*, *meeting*, *gipsy*, *bonheur*,

*étrange*, news, etc. To Alain-Fournier all adventure was "wonderful adventure." He attributes to these words a peculiar, mysterious meaning, and adds to them terms one is not accustomed to meeting outside Stevenson's boy-stories. The adventures are adventures of the imagination. They are not sought by the adventurous, but seek these out and then pursue them logically, rationally.

The narrative is overshadowed by an uninterrupted melancholy, which is, perhaps, borrowed from the character of the country in which the story is placed and had its gestation. You feel here that "un paysage est un état d'âme" may be reversed. Both thought and style bear the imprint of a calm landscape, with tree-grown, gently coursing streams, vast blank plains veined with paths leading one knows not where, long distances separating towns and villages and farmsteads and sky, sky, sky.

At one moment I thought there might be some link between this author and Barrie, but on investigation the latter appears much thinner, much more diluted. Like all Frenchmen, and like so few Englishmen, Alain-Fournier makes no effort to evade reality. You feel the foothold is sounder while the naturalness is never self-conscious, and this is how it proceeds:

Puis le journal reprenait.

Il avait noté des souvenirs sur un séjour qu'ils avaient fait tous deux à la campagne, je ne sais où. Mais, chose étrange, à partir de cet instant, peut-être par un sentiment de pudeur secrète, le journal était redigé de façon si hachée, si informe, griffonné si hâtivement aussi, que j'ai dû reprendre moi-même et reconstituer toute cette partie de son histoire.

Millie frotta ses souliers devant la porte et rentra dans la froide salle à manger, remettre en ordre ce qui avait été dérangé. Quant à moi je me trouvais, pour la première fois depuis de longs mois, seul en face d'une longue soirée de Jeudi avec l'impression que, dans cette vieille voiture, mon adolescence venait de s'en aller pour toujours.

He had a concise, easy way of situating a scene or sketching a portrait:

Il paraissait très troublé de me voir. D'un bond j'étais monté sur l'estrade. Mais, chose étrange à dire, il ne songea pas même à me tendre la main. Il s'était tourné vers moi, les mains derrière le dos, appuyé contre la table, renversé en arrière, et l'air profondément gêné. Déjà, me regardant sans me voir, il était absorbé par ce qu'il allait me dire. Comme autrefois et comme toujours, homme lent à commencer de parler, ainsi que sont les solitaires, les chasseurs et les hommes d'aventures, il avait pris une décision sans se soucier des mots qu'il faudrait pour l'expliquer. Et maintenant que j'étais devant lui, il commençait seulement à ruminer péniblement les paroles nécessaires.

This direct allusion to Meaulnes' characteristics comes at the end of the book, and is the only one.

One of the most remarkable chapters is the visit to the widow-aunt whose confidences release the *dénouement*, and the long description of the "fête marvellous" in the *domaine perdu*, the keystone of the intrigue, is a unique achievement. The picnic party is also a feat.

People who seek in French books "forbidden fruit" will be disappointed, for the fruit in this book is rare, but not forbidden. It will bear reading several times, and gain on acquaintance. At a first reading its familiar dilatoriness, scenes and circumstances unusual in novels, and an unwonted manner of approaching the reader, take him by surprise and estrange him. He is so occupied in seeking his way that he misses enjoying the prospect. For the qualities of Alain-Fournier are not surface qualities: they are like the shy virtues of rustics, reserved and proof to deep tests, cumulative too, and, like the lost domain, are found only after some journeying.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA

## THE JAPANESE NOH PLAY

THE aim of the Noh play, I have no hesitation to say, is to express a desire or yearning, not for beauty, but for the beauty we dream; therefore the worth of the play depends, not upon the truth or humanity treated, but upon the total effect of the beauty, which is poetry. When I see the Noh play with my particular mood, beautifully freed from any obligation toward reason or fact, I often think that Edgar Allan Poe's poetical principles are not alien; for instance, in the following: "We struggle by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of time to attain a portion of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to Eternity alone." The purpose of these combinations and rearrangements in the case of the Noh play is, of course, to make the expression of eternal order more distinct and beautiful. And the Noh play is pleased, simply by virtue of being emotional, to understand this eternal order not as truth or morality, but as beauty which includes all others; the elements of stories in the plays are valuable only because they are the means of approach to the final great end, which is to excite or elevate the soul by the demonstration of that eternal order. Shortly, the stories themselves are secondary matters. It is seldom that a Noh play forgets the poetical effect which it is its first and last concern to create; it would be clear that the actors must protect themselves from falling into the bathos of reality which would, in nine cases out of ten, alienate them from the rhythmical creation of beauty. Poe said somewhere: "And in regard to Truth—if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect: but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest." In such language Poe might have spoken of the Noh plays, which, at their best, are poignant desire after the ideal or effect.

When I say that I am always happy to see the Noh plays on the stage, I mean that the actors beautifully succeed in developing that poetical yearning; it is their best art, as it seems to me that they make the expression of humanity, if there is any humanity in the plays, gracefully subordinate to the poetical harmony. The lines which the actors sing or, more proper to say, recite loudly, with the alternation of the chorus, are, of course, the main part in creating the beautiful effect of the scene. Under their passionate intensity the characters break rhythmically the statuesque stillness. Although the actors express almost flexible delicacy to its utmost degree, I cannot help observing, on the other hand, some strange pervading power which makes one feel overwhelmed, uncomfortable, indeed scarcely able to breathe; that might be from the too serious nature of the plays which always demand the most honest, cautious interpretation, and makes the actors too afraid of breaking their effect or atmosphere.

It is seldom that, when they are good, the actors make a rupture of the general harmony of the plays, suddenly falling into the bathos to expose shabbily their own selves; their acting might be compared with an old brocade rich and luxurious. You will be surprised to see what a dynamic power they have not only to reveal their art, but also to conceal it.

Some well-known actors, like, for instance, Mr. Manzaburo Umewaka, are blessed with a remarkable voice, remarkable at any time and in any place, which might make us recall an old phrase, the rolling jewels upon a glass board; their command over their large, round, deeply vibrating voice is both spontaneous and well calculated. Their vocal training that begins in their boyhood days is founded on

their energetic and sensitive emotion of life; to hear them on the stage, at least to us Japanese, is a treat at such a time as to-day when actors of any school are only little more than human phonographs. Some critic writes on the way actors treat verse as a slightly more stilted kind of prose: "When they come to a passage of purely lyric quality they give it as if it were a quotation, having nothing to do with the rest of the speech." In all the rendering of the lines of Noh plays, I am sure that the actors are taught not to forget they are at the same time the direct expression of the characters, and also poetry, that is a thing with its own reasons for existence; they might give, I often think, many a valuable suggestion to the poets of the West who are eager to invent some vocal manner between speaking and singing. Strictly speaking, the rendering of words of the Noh plays should be called speaking, not singing; therefore there is the danger of overemphasizing the meaning. But when the actors fall sometimes into the danger of overemphasizing the sound, it is at the time when their natural wealth of vocalism runs wild and careless; it goes without saying that they are superb when their gift is well regulated.

YONE NOGUCHI

## SHORT NOTICES

IN THE VALLEY OF VISION. Poems by Geoffrey Faber. 3s. net.  
SONNETS AND POEMS. By Eleanor Farjeon. 3s. net.  
—ESQUES. By E. F. A. Geach and D. E. A. Wallace. 2s. net.  
All Blackwell, Oxford.  
RESENTMENT. Poems by Alec Waugh. Grant Richards, Ltd. 3s. 6d. net.

Miss Farjeon writes sonnets with Rossetian echoes, but looser in form, more Mrs. Browning. She is most agreeable in the lighter Christina style:

Dying leaf and dead leaf,  
Yellow leaf and red leaf  
And white-backed beam,  
Lay along the woodland road  
As quiet as a dream.

The authors of *—Esques* trickle down a fine broad page in a pantoum, a roundel, a villanelle, occasionally pagan, mode of thirty years ago:

Why then, O foolish Christ  
Didst thou keep tryst  
With maudlin harlots wan  
With glad things gone?

To which the obvious answer is, Why did you? Young poets ought to be made to be cheaply printed; such sumptuous pages deceive many innocent critics.

Captain Faber did not observe very much of importance *In the Valley of Vision*, but he has a fine heroic note, and should apply to Mr. St. L. Strachey:

Sublime! Oh, 'tis the very word of the age. (P. 63.)

Mr. Waugh is more modern, and would appear to have been influenced by some older person who admired Rupert Brooke. He is stark realism:

Route march . . . field day . . . church parade . . .  
Wondering would it ever end,  
Wondering what the hell it meant.  
Picking girls up in the street  
Rather than face the empty tent.

Mr. Waugh is said to be very young, and to have written a novel. That is a bad beginning, but something might be made of him.

In retrospect, I believe Miss Farjeon is the least insupportable of this lot.

T. S. E.

[The above note on Mr. Waugh, written as one of this set of four, was printed by mistake in the June-July issue of *THE EGOIST*, with the result that the first and last sentences, taken out of their intended context, become nonsense.—EDITOR.]

# TARR

BY P. WYNDHAM LEWIS

NOW READY

Price 6/- net ; by post, 6/4

THE EGOIST, LIMITED

## Peasant Pottery Shop

41 Devonshire Street, Theobald's Road, W.C.  
(Close to Southampton Row)

Interesting British and Continental  
: Peasant Pottery on sale :  
Brightly coloured plaited felt Rugs

### EDITORIAL

Letters, etc., intended for the Editor of THE EGOIST should be addressed to 23 Adelphi Terrace House, Robert Street, London, W.C.2.

### TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

Yearly, Great Britain 7/- ; Foreign, 8/-  
Six months, " 3/6 ; " 4/-  
Three months, " 1/9 ; " 2/-  
Single copies 7d., post free to all countries.  
Cheques, postal and money orders, etc., should be payable to THE EGOIST, LIMITED, and crossed "Parr's Bank, Bloomsbury Branch."

### ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Per page £4. Quarter page £1 1s. 0d. Per inch single column, 4s.

## A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

By JAMES JOYCE (Second edition, 4s. 6d. net ; by post, 4s. 9d.)

## TARR

By P. WYNDHAM LEWIS. (6s. net ; by post, 6s. 4d.)

## PRUFROCK

By T. S. ELIOT (1s. 6d. net ; by post, 1s. 7½d.)

## DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

Translated by EZRA POUND (1s. 6d. net ; by post, 1s. 7½d.)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ for which I enclose \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

ORDERS, ACCOMPANIED BY REMITTANCE, SHOULD BE SENT TO THE PUBLISHERS,  
THE EGOIST, LIMITED.

## THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT

Is Might Right? Why Do the Ungodly Prosper? Can Altruism Save the World? These questions are answered with astonishing lucidity in the journal *The Eagle and the Serpent*. The same journal also gives you the boiled-down wisdom and wit and wickedness of Stirner, Nietzsche, Montaigne, Rochefoucauld, Chamfort, Emerson, and Thoreau.

There are only a very few left of the bound file containing the two volumes of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. It will cost you £1.

## WALKER'S PHILOSOPHY OF EGOISM

Was published 25 years ago: is scholarly and well reasoned, and a classic in its line. Price 4s.

## HUMANITY FIRST

A new Periodical whose object is to convince the allied nations that to abolish interest is the most urgent war measure. Price 8s. a year.

**ECONOMICS OF LIBERTY.** By J. B. ROBERTSON. A brief statement of the system of social organization enunciated by Proudhon a century ago. Price 1s. 6d.

All published by the Editor of "Humanity First," 318 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Orders, accompanied by remittance, can be received by  
**THE EGOIST, Ltd.**

23 ADELPHI TERRACE HOUSE, ROBERT STREET, W.C.2

# The Little Review

"THE MAGAZINE THAT IS READ BY THOSE WHO WRITE THE OTHERS"

The following Authors contributed to the volume begun May 1917:

- W. B. YEATS (14 poems)
- LADY GREGORY (complete play)
- FORD MADOX HUEFFER (prose series)
- ARTHUR SYMONS (complete play)
- WYNDHAM LEWIS (regularly)
- T. S. ELIOT
- EZRA POUND (London Editor)
- ARTHUR WALEY (translations from the Chinese "jh.")

**MARGARET ANDERSON, Editor**

Yearly Subscription: England, 12/- ; U.S.A., \$2.50

## THE LITTLE REVIEW

24 West 16th Street, New York City, U.S.A.  
5 Holland Place Chambers, London, W.8

Enclosed please find Twelve Shillings for one year's subscription.....

Name.....

Address.....