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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
PHILOSOPHY: THE SCIENCE OF SIGNS. XVII. TRUTH.		THREE GEORGIAN NOVELISTS. By Douglas Goldring	134
By D. Marsden	125	ÉLÉGIE À PAUL DROUOT. By Louis Thomas	136
PASSING PARIS. By Madame Ciolkowska	129	TOWARDS A PEACE THEATRE. By Huntly Carter	136
HELLENIST SERIES. IV. SAPPHO. By Ezra Pound	130	DEATH OF GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE	137
DEATHS OF COMMON MEN. By Richard Aldington	131	AN UNACADEMIC ACADEMICIAN. II. By Ernest A. Boyd	137
STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM. II. By T. S. Eliot	131	HYMN TO DEATH, 1914 AND ON. By John Rodker	138
A CHURCH ON A HILL. By Edward Storer	133	THE GATE. By J.	138
MINSTRELS. By Edith Sitwell	133	CORRESPONDENCE	139

PHILOSOPHY: THE SCIENCE OF SIGNS

XVII. TRUTH

I. Its Objective

By D. MARSDEN

I

(1) WHEN we reach that stage of our study where we have to address ourselves to the subject of *truth*, the expression of our conception of philosophy as *the science of signs* must necessarily be approaching its culmination. At this point, if we are to achieve clearness we must be ready to present such a summary of our position as will enable the entire theory to be judged as a unit; and it will be precisely in the making explicit of conclusions implicit in the theory as a whole that we shall cause to emerge the significance we attach to the activities called the pursuit of truth. Granted the character under which we have chosen to interpret vital experience as a whole, the specific end which these activities seek must be shown to be the interpretation's obvious and inevitable culmination. Our first chapter on *truth* will therefore concern itself with truth's objective in such a way as to present it in relation to the course of vital history in general and to that of human history in particular. Our second chapter will be devoted to the elucidation (as far as our powers allow) of that crucial matter—the method of acquisition of truth as embodied in the process which informs the syllogism and all classification. Our third chapter will concern itself with that specific and piecemeal acquisition of truth which constitutes the progress of science, together with the nature of the adjustments incumbent on modern science if the latter is to ground itself upon stable and logical bases.

(2) In order to specify, as we see it, the objective of the truth-hunt it is necessary, as we have said, to summarize our theory of life and of humanity; and when we consider the vast range of fundamental ideas over which we have perforce had to travel in

order to envisage the full scope of the *power of signs*: ideas of *life, feeling, the ego, the universe, time, space, substance, mind, knowledge, memory, reality, cause, will, and destiny*: it is obvious it can be no easy matter to make decision as to which of these basic conceptions shall be chosen as starting-point from whence to render obvious the relationships in which those that remain stand in regard to it and to one another. For ourselves we make start with *feeling*, and anent this, the rock upon which we raise our subsequent philosophic structure we claim to be a piece of purest tautology, since it is in this light that we interpret the significance of the Berkeleyian formula *esse = percipi*. (For what it is worth we might here note the fact that this formula was arrived at independently, and does not need, therefore, to be presented for adoption on the strength of established authority merely.) We hold that *to be = to be perceived*, simply because the significant verbal part of *to be* has been allowed to go without saying, precisely on account of its universality. Simply because perception is the substance of every species of experience, men have fallen into the habit, as far as their speech goes, of dropping the expression for the invariably present factor of feeling in general, content to reintroduce it when they require to indicate some specific *kind* of feeling. For the rest the mere auxiliary serves. In the sequel, either through lapsed memory or—almost certainly—through man's radically imperfect apprehension of his own verbal procedure, men have awakened to that fuller consciousness which is philosophic only to find themselves in possession of a mysterious verbal form *to be*, and an equally mysterious substantival form, *being*: the two supposedly indicative of a mode of existence which feeling does not exhaust. What the Berkeleyian

formula does is to set the situation right by proclaiming the identity of the two verbal forms. The bearing of the formula can, we consider, be better indicated in the English than in the Latin, since in the former, by the simple insertion of brackets, the absolute tautologousness of the formula can be visually demonstrated. The English form, *to be (perceived) = to be perceived*, reveals the nature of the ellipsis whereby a mere auxiliary has come to possess the apparently independent status and meaning of a verb; and it shows too why the affirmation of a complete identity should have amounted to nothing less than a philosophic revolution.

(3) Since, then, *being* is simply *feeling*, we are obviously in possession of a synonym for all forms of existence. Feeling exhausts the total of all things, and equates with the last jot and tittle of all which goes to make the universe. The next step of our progress will now be to get an equation for *feeling* itself. We have provided ourselves with a synonym for *being* merely by scrutinizing the significance we permit to attach to the various terms in our vocabulary. To secure a synonym for *feeling* we have to do more. We have to scrutinize all the forms of experience in order to find out those which attach themselves to all felt experiences in that particular relationship of invariable association and concomitance which science describes as *causal*. Such forms we hold to exist in the shape of *movements in the tissues of the organism* which in any given circumstance is the feeling agent. All that is, is felt; and all that is felt is caused by, and constituted out of, the movements of the tissues of the organism which feels. Such movement apart, all being, all feeling, is less than meaningless. Its absence is the negation of all things and all being. Complete organic rigidity is nothingness and death.

(4) This being so, it follows that however deep be the differences between various forms of experience, such differences are not great enough to override this basic similarity of origin. When, therefore, an examination of experience shows that even the most elemental feelings of any organism are compounded of at least two elements, spatial and substantial respectively, we are driven to say that organic movement expresses itself only under a *dual nature* and that it can establish itself and take form only as the play of two equal and opposite forces of the kind which we are commonly familiar with as *polarized*. Organic action—or life—cannot, therefore, be logically defined except as a minimum comprising three terms: (1) the acting organism or creative motor-nucleus itself; (2) the feeling of space or possibility of the organism's moving on its external surface; and (3) the feeling, sensationally produced, of substance apparently extended in space.

Or we might say that the phenomenon called *life* is comprised of a motor-organization or generating-station, whose forces manifest themselves only under a condition of polarization, and therefore as an equilibrium of equal and opposite forces: these forces representing the spatial and substantial organic power-arms respectively, and acting and reacting upon each other in perfect sympathy. Further, that the maintenance of this disintegrity: this dualism or polarity of motor-force: is what constitutes life, while their unification is the correct paraphrase for death. To this system of force comprising generating-nucleus *plus* the effects of its equal and opposite power-arms: space and substance, we give the name of *universe* or *ego*.

II

(5) Thus far in our definition of *life* little complexity appears. When, however, we take under consideration the life-unit which manifests *mind* and *knowledge*, the scheme rapidly grows more involved. Arising out of a more intense play of the forces of the human

organism, certain effects supervene upon those of the two primary power-arms: space and substance. In the form of intellect there now emerges what amounts to a third power: not an independent arm indeed: but a manifestation of augmented force whose genius consists in its action as a mediating agency between the two primary arms, powerfully modifying both.

Now intellect or mind is, we hold, the power to create and apply *signs*. Such power is based on an augmentation of the general organic motor-force to a degree at which the latter becomes empowered with a totally new order of *grip and control* over its creations, both spatial and substantial. As for its effect upon the latter, the new access of grip results in a *new sense of saliency* by virtue of which any form created by the movements in the organic tissues can be made to stand out as an exclusive and prominent unit which for the instant renders it pre-eminently noteworthy, and as such a suitable base for the process of imitation. At the same time it enables the organism to rear its trunk erect and so free the spatially acting fore limbs for very much more extended spatial action. But above all, modifying the structure of the throat and head, it renders possible a much more facile creation of variable sounds, and these, making an amazing alliance with the salient cause and conjunctly exploiting that economy of motor-reproduction which lies at the base of all organic growth,* this new power of grip and control begets the revolutionizing power to create a *true sign*.

(6) Once established, the latter presents a veritable cornucopia of revolutionizing powers. Most outstanding amongst them is that of mental conception: the power to quicken into being by means of a sign incipient reproductions or "copies" of the forms resulting primarily as the effects of fuller spatial and sensory organic movements.

(7) An immediate consequence of the creation of these mental copies, again, is a breaking-in upon the unitary character of substantial, or sensory, action *plus* spatial reaction. Prior to the advent of the sign: on the instinctive level prior to the emergence of intellect, that is: the two great power-arms of organic creation worked together as an inseparable unit. But with the advent of the conceptual image, the organism finds itself in possession of a sphere of activity, private and immune, in which it may play upon: experiment upon: mental spatial reactions to mental sensory impressions. In this way it breaks down the old spatial reactions, habitual to the point of being inevitable, and is able to devise in a progressive measure spatial reactions which produce effects most in keeping with those which its desires hope to make transpire. That is to say, in the place of the non-stop journey from sense-impression to spatial adjustment, which is characteristic of instinct, the sign-begotten conceptual form creates a junction midway, whereat various connexions can be arranged for and picked up. The intellect thus vastly extends the range of possible spatial adjustments, and limits in like degree the power of the sensory impression to dictate them. The sign-using power thus gets its effects by creating new automatic spatial reflexes rather than by any breaking down of automatism in general.

Its power creates automatic reflexes so highly available and numerous as to make their assemblage practically simultaneous, and it is in this practical simultaneity that the power of selection and control resides, which means everything, not only in connexion with will and morals, but with science and the subsequent creation of a transfigured reality. The subject has already been treated of at length, but perhaps our present space will allow one illustration. Let us suppose an organism experiencing impressions describable as those of violent heat. On the instinctive level what would happen would be an immediate

* See chapter on Memory, THE EGOIST, December 1917.

shrinking and recoil of the whole organic body in a direction away from the point at which the impression was experienced. But suppose a man, i.e. an organism which has acquired the power to use signs and also possesses two hands, had, in the privacy and immunity of the sphere of mental creation, allowed the mental products of those signs to associate themselves with the mental images of violent heat and so had formed the conception of himself as performing spatial reactions in relation to heat quite different from the instinctive ones. Suppose him to be a philosopher who has built up in his mind a sign-scheme (a theory) that fire is the beneficent agent of life, and that inasmuch as one loves life one must love fire. Or say that he is one who, threatened with death by fire, has, on account of the common instinctive dread of fire, lent himself to a course of action which has lost him his own self-esteem, which last he conceives he can only regain by conduct which will symbolize his belittlement of the terrors of fire. Then, allowing sufficient time for the respective minds to play with these mentally conceived spatial reactions, we shall not be too greatly surprised to find that they have become so established and "automatic" as to be able to stand the test of being brought into contact with the actual sensory impressions themselves. Thus an Empedocles, in order to unite himself with life at the point where he conceives it to be intensest, will fling himself into the seething crater of Mount Etna; while a Cranmer, to prove the relative value which he sets upon his own self-respect, will walk to the stake and steadily hold the hand which has been the instrument of his lapse, to be consumed in the flames as a symbol of his own self-judgment, self-condemnation, and recovery. Such cases would, of course, be extreme, but they are perfectly true to the type of action we are considering, and which we can sum up by saying that just as the sign itself is constructed out of a new power of control over the effects of the two primary power-arms, so in the subsequent conceptual life which the action of the sign begets, does a new power of control emerge as its distinguishing feature. In the constructing of the sign itself control meant a new power of intensification of all felt phenomena, resulting in a new power of initiation, termination over them. In the resulting mental life control means the conceptually engineered command of the spatial reaction over the sensory impression, so that the latter succumbs to the action of the former *pari passu* with the growth of the body of signs and the general quality of their classifications. Obviously the direction the human organism gives to its sign-culture will be a paramount concern. Either it will follow the line of humanity's strongest desires and so command the substance of the external world into conformity with them or it will exhaust its energies along by-paths of interest but leading nowhere in particular.

Furthermore, just as a heightened power of organic motor-control stands at the threshold of knowledge (knowledge being merely the effect produced when a primary experience is combined and subsumed in conjunction with its sign-created conceptual one) and appears again in the steady subjection of sensory forms by means of sign-inspired spatial adjustments, so, we hold, will spatial control in its fullest and completest be the synonym for that ultimate goal of truth towards which all increases of knowledge and all men's activities steadily tend.

III

(8) A better view-point for obtaining an appreciation of the significance of intellectual activity (including always the contemporaneously emerging executive power of the hand) in relation to the vital scheme can be secured by envisaging it in relation to *time*. Time we have elsewhere identified with vital duration

as a whole, as distinguished from the apparently temporary and limited duration of individual life-forms. We have held time to be the synonym for the life-tree in general, inclusive of all its leaves and branches. To our thinking, order only begins to shape itself in our conceptions of life when time is accorded this meaning. Attempts to conceive time as of co-ordinate rank with space, matter, or mind, result in the creation of antinomies in which the contradictions are irreducible and hopeless; while attempts to conceive it as an aspect of these—such, for instance, as that which holds time to be a fourth dimension of space—to us are merely a confounding of confusion. We have to take time as the great vital tree with the invisible trunk whose evidence of itself is made only in the individual organic leaves into which it fructifies. The character of these we have to seek in time (life) itself and to realize that the individual life in every case sucks up sap, and shapes its character from the very root-germ of vital history to that very point of vital development which the particular individual has reached and represents. Every individual thus heirs its entire ancestry from life's origin. Or rather, life, embodied in its individuals, endures without cessation, each form taking up the entire vital achievement preceding it, renewing its impetus, and in turn strengthening it and passing it on. Life thus merely sloughs its coat, making always slightly better shift with the new, not the least important of its characteristics being that it is normally competent to bequeath something rather more than it has inherited, life being that inverted kind of energy which actually increases its forces by the spending of them.

(9) The fact, then, which we describe as the *invisibility of the trunk* of the life-tree is that each individual form carries within it an existence and experience dating from the beginnings of life and time. Each form begins *de novo* from the most elemental life-stage and in its own lifetime passes through the experiences accumulated in the line of parent-forms which constitutes its descent. As far as the organic body is concerned the facts exist in rough outline even for the naked eye, as can be seen, for instance, in the swiftly transmuting stages of embryonic development of such an organism as that of man, whose ancestral forms show the highest degrees of modification.

(10) Now what the mind asks for and is bent on securing is knowledge of the course of time's developments, not only in respect of the organic body but also of that body's spatial and substantial forms. The mind seeks the history of these twain (which together constitute the forms of the external world) and requires that they shall be made available for that heightened consciousness which is intellectual by the salvaging power of signs. Man, as the highest crest of the tide of time, is not content merely to inherit time's activities in bulk in the shape of power in his own person. Nor is his discontent disinterested. He wants to *know* these facts because, the genius of knowledge being power of control, he, knowing them, can use them: modify them: exploit them: as he can and does in the creation of a rapidly transmuting reality. Hence it is that all his knowledge-seeking takes the form of a salvaging of enacted histories. In such sciences as biology, geology, and astronomy the resuscitating trend of science is obvious, but we hold it to be true also in respect of such sciences as mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Science revives with transforming effect the details of a story already once told. . . . But this is a matter to which we shall have to return at a later stage.

(11) We have already treated the idea of time conceived as a *present fact*, trailing with it a vast track, admitting of salvage into the *present*, together with an illimitable track opening into the future upon which forms capable of realization in a substan-

tial medium by means of hands may be imposed in advance by the power of the sign. We have shown that the first effect produced by the sign-power as far as the notion of time is concerned is to create a *present* vastly aggrandized by the enormous wings of the *past* and *future*: that *present* itself being simply a complex of organic movement elaborated by these means.

(12) Now this power of signs to refract a *simple present* into a *triune-aspected present*, swollen with the riches of a resurrected past and heavy with the projections of a schemed future, is responsible for a certain element featuring in all known experience: the idea of sequence: of order: of flow: an idea which in its turn we hold to be *the cause of the idea of cause*. This notion of cause, peculiar to man, is founded on an underlying idea of *an order of enactment*, so that every event becomes conceived as one which either is or has been a *present*, and which certainly has had an antecedent past and which will infallibly beget a resultant future. For the mind, no form is conceivable divorced from ideas of other forms constituting the specific conditions of its generation, and ideas of other forms again constituting the specific conditions of its eventuation. That is to say, no form is conceivable save as a *link in a causal chain*, and it is upon this sign-created notion of cause that the full weight of the activity of intellect has in the name of science heavily fallen. In this wise, the intellect has given itself over to the task of arraying all the details of organic life and its circumambient external world under the form of a *sequence in time*: making everything *an affair of an order of happening*, to which it gives the name of one of *cause and effect*. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, instead of serving as a finger-post pointing to a certain species of illogical inference, should, indeed, be the device worked upon every banner of science. It is certainly the sole meaning which existent science is able to attach to the notion of cause. . . . Can our own theory, indeed, suggest anything deeper? Let us inquire.

(13) The growth of organic life (hence of the external world) has followed, up to the point of the emergence of the sign, an undeviating line of progress. From little to more the whole scheme has expanded and grown in a definite direction. But with the advent of the power of the sign, bearing with it as it does an experience-salving power, we can say that progress along that primary cause of development halts. The significance of the new power would be indicated were we to say that with its advent the vital force *doubles on its own traces*; that *life reverses its engines*; that it *makes a loop*; any image whatsoever which will render clear the notion that the work of signs amounts to a traversing backwards of a furrow already marked out as time's track in that upward ascent which has culminated in the overriding of instinctive activities. The sign's power to requicken the past in the present makes it possible for the organism which has evolved it to make a return on that "dark backward and abysm of time" and to propound for itself the task of making its own dumbly achieved past articulate as knowledge. It makes it possible for man to conceive as a reasonable development of his mind's activity the complete overlaying of his total inherited experience with its adequate resurrecting sign. The process has, indeed, already begun; under our eyes it is already proceeding apace: what, then, more reasonable than the hope that this process cannot be held up at any intermediate point in its rearward travelling but is already charged and primed to follow it without break to its source? And what more reasonable than the hope, inasmuch as knowledge does not proceed vainly but is attended by that power to effect its conceptions which is embodied in man's hands, that this selfsame knowledge of the secret of life's

origin will, once it is acquired, be utilized to effect the permanence of life's individual forms. Man of a certainty knows sign-power *plus* manual power only in the guise of a scheme of control, under which by means of his spatial counter-moves he can command substance in the interest of the forms which he most desires. His spatial counter-moves, again, are inspired by intellect: the power of the sign; and it is man's belief, as evidenced by all chronicles which record, no matter with how stammering a tongue, the movements of his mind, that he can so develop the culture of the sign, making its classifications progressively better and better, so that ultimately it shall possess that full power which will enable it to instruct the power in his hands to accomplish the deepest desires of his being.

As we have seen in these records,* man has revealed his mind as conceiving the labour of his intellect as above all else religious. His religions have been inspired by and grown out of the fact that when he awakened to a higher intellectual awareness of himself he found himself saturated through and through with nothing less than a sense of destiny. Vaguely he recognized himself as wielding a power, immature indeed, which at its maturity would mean the creation of a being whose advent would be the superseding of himself. This being he has already projected in his mind, and indeed feels himself already lying under its immaterial shadow.

(14) The fact that words—the generic signs—emerged only so recently as man, and that they emerged not full-grown but at the extremest limit of incipiency, has imposed upon man inevitably the rôle of tentative groper in the growing kingdom of knowledge. Man has had to make acquaintance of knowledge in its dimmest dawns, and with all the power quickening within him "to see as the gods see," he had found himself competent to distil only that uncertain light by which he can see as through a glass darkly. From the beginning of his history, therefore, man reveals himself as aware of being in the toils of a power which he could exercise, but which, though the power's very essence was understanding, he yet could not understand. This is, indeed, the meaning of the melancholy which has never failed to settle on him when he sits resigned, with hands folded. It is the meaning, too, of that robust tireless striving: of that restlessness under stress of which, round upon round in a vermicular ascent, from the known to the more fully known, his mind has gnawed its way into the significance of *The word*. Surely but dumbly, he has felt that coiled up in *The word* the power already lived which could serve as the instrument of his master-desire. What that desire is is written large over the whole history of life. It is the desire to live: the desire to abolish death.

(15) In respect of this, man's prime desire does not differ greatly from those of subhumanity. What difference exists rather in his greater power to encompass it. As expressed in the principles of self-preservation, self-nutrition and self-reproduction, the desire to live is sufficiently speaking in all life-forms. It fails not by anything of uncertainty but *by lack of strength*. And so life makes shift as it can. It establishes *reproduction of kind* as the form of self-renewal which is second-best, and competent in its way to secure vital permanence.

(16) Now all these instructive principles reappear on the human level with reinforced fervour. If a certain self-sacrificial altruism appears, the new element is merely due to a quickened sense of the oneness of all life. And if, again, on this level we have to recognize the presence of a morality, we have to recognize it as the rough generalizations culled by the common intelligence of a people and articulately enjoined upon the forces called *will* to the better

* See "Definition of the Soul," THE EGOIST, July 1917.

securing of this same end.* But in those human speculations, called religions, men have shown themselves sensitive to—and in a measure articulate concerning—the potentialities of intellect to encompass life's desired end with a hitherto unprecedented power of efficiency so that even the humblest of religious literatures takes rank as an attempt to bear witness, however falteringly, to the existence of an, as yet, unspent and immanent force in intellect which is recognized as affording direction to all men's intellectual and realizing endeavours. What the religious sense of man sees is that his existing power of intellect, however immature, gives unmistakable evidence of its purpose and intent. Hence, while he accepts his immature power to apply signs as it already exists and calls it human, he conceives the same power developed to its maturity and sees that the form into which it will eventuate is that of the superhuman: the superman which he calls a god, whose power to see and to effect is commensurate and one with the scope of his desires. The culmination of the power of the sign, therefore, which is also the culmination of humanity, is one with humanity's supersession. For the sign's culmination means that in place of peering ineffectually through a dim and flawed glass, the mind will see clearly the whole order and course (which is to say the entire sequence of *cause*) of enactment of all things from end back to origin. It means the completion of the circuit. Destiny and origin merge in one and time swings into an eternity. The knowledge of the "how" of life's method has become one with the power to effect it. Knowledge of all things means power over all things: which include the enacting of both life and death. "To see as the gods see" carries with it the control of keys of life and death, and the being which grows into such knowledge and wields such power is precisely that which man's prescient mind has already shaped under the name of god.

(17) Obviously, the fact that the emergence of words coincides with the emergence of man renders the very power which makes him what he is the instrument of his supersession. The very reason of his advent is apparently that he shall pass. Thus is humanity a mere bridge: an interlude: an overture: an intermediate form between forms heavily differentiated on either side. A form inoculated with the power of the sign which lodges in his blood and tissue, he begets and nourishes that quickening spirit which is engaged in the achieving of his own supersedure. The entire human period has, indeed, to be viewed as transitional, during which the corporate human race, itself having heired the ages and turned all forms lower than itself to purposes of its own ministration, is struggling in the birth-throes of the superhuman. The pursuit of truth is thus one with the travail of humanity in suffering the birth of the gods.

(18) Thus it is that the pursuit of truth and its ancillary manual activity of the creation of reality is the sole human activity which is stranger to the disgust of satiation. Food, sex, war: and all activities which embody the "desire to live" principle on a lower level: here can very readily pall, but the pursuit of truth can absorb all the maturest energies a man has, and more. It is in this respect that man's span of life wholly fails to suffice, and death is an intolerable interruption: a mockery and reproach of man's laggardliness and ineptitude, which everything within him which constitutes his unique worth informs him must be overcome. Thus does all human dignity show itself one with human intellect: the power to use a sign. All which is distinctively human: knowledge, morality, religion: all that which makes man salver of his past and discoverer of his origin, architect of his destiny and moulder of the real climax of all time enduring hitherto, and pivot of the new time

in which life shall know how to draw effective renewal from within itself and so ensure its permanency: all these things man owes to the intellect: power of the sign.

PASSING PARIS

A QUINTET: A DUET: A SOLO:

ANDRÉ MAUROIS: *Les Silences du Colonel Bramble* (Grasset, 3 fr. 50); LUCIE PAUL-MARGUERITTE: *Le Singe et son Violon* (Albin Michel, 4 fr. 50); GILBERT DE VOISINS: *Les Moments perdus de John Shag* (Crès, 1 fr. 95); MARIE LENÉRU; ANNIE DE PÈNE.

COLONEL BRAMBLE'S silences are his share in the very cleverly rendered talk of a Major Parker (English), a Dr. O'Grady (Irish), and the regimental chaplain (a Scotsman) with their *agent de liaison*. M. René Benjamin has been doing something of the kind in a similar way in the French papers. M. André Maurois is one of those Frenchmen who love such English characteristics as may appear commonplace to an Englishman, but which strike a Frenchman who is sensible to them as picturesque novelties, with a significance naturally escaping an Englishman. With this sensibility M. Maurois combines a wonderful faculty for assimilating the British sense of humour and a knack for translating the laconicisms of English thought and speech into his own language, preserving the turn of the one without deforming the other. He does it so well that, though reading French, one seems to hear English. The book is witty, wise, true; and the author's occasional rhymes charming little *intermèdes*. The chapter describing the attack as seen, chiefly, from Staff quarters is a piece of documentary evidence of real interest. Nothing is ridiculed; what might have been so is, by the dexterous twist of a sympathetic hand, made simply curious and, therefore, in its way, arresting.

* * * *

Mme. Lucie Paul-Margueritte deserves praise for what she has not done as well as for what she has done. Her dialogue intercalated with soliloquy succeeds by sheer skill in keeping the attention to a little epic about conjugal misfortune which, undertaken by a writer with a heavier touch, might have been tedious. As it is the book's aspirations to literature are distinctly warranted.

M. Charles Martin's abundant and equally epigrammatic pictorial comments give the volume a certain boudoir look. They are not without feeling. In this, as in other respects, writer and artist are well matched, and the form taken by their collaboration will, no doubt, set a fashion: creditable because an improvement on the general run of magazine literature.

Mme. Margueritte has a gift for condensation which should make her an excellent reviewer—the ideal modern reviewer, in three lines. See her impressionism:

Elle le plaint de ne pas aimer lire.

La lecture est pour elle une consolation: Voltaire, sec et mordant, la grise comme un vin dépouillé; Michelet l'élève en l'important par delà les siècles. Que de philosophie dans l'histoire!

This might have been absurd: it is not:

Dickens fait surgir tout un monde de fantoches: la tante Trotwood, maniaque et bonne; Micawber, l'illusionniste; Mrs. Merdle, sociale et représentative, une poitrine en devanture d'orfèvre où s'étale, aux feux des bijoux, le snobisme des riches; des scélérats justement chatiés: le hideux Uriah Heep aux mains visqueuses, Ralph Nickleby, Pecksniff,

and so on, and so on.

* See chapter on Will, THE EGOIST, February 1918.

Les auteurs russes : Dostoievsky, Tolstoi exaltent en elle un appétit de sacrifice.

Gracieuse nature de femme, Natacha se consacre à ses enfants ; . . . que de beautés dans ces renoncements.

Balzac peuple Paris de vivantes figures ; pas un quartier qui n'en ressuscite une.

Au Palais Royal, Rubempré sort de chez Dauriat ; Coralie dans sa calèche descend les Champs-Élysées. . . .

A vivre mille romans, elle oublie sa médiocre vie.

O les chers amis que sont les livres !

The whole galaxy is covered in two or three airy pages. There is something childlike in this brevity.

The book made me think of *Scenes of Clerical Life*. Strange reminiscence. I compared the troubles of the little, misunderstood, Parisian bride with those of George Eliot's heroine who would light her candle before daybreak to darn her children's socks in bed before rising-time. The Parisian lady has no children—children and novels are antagonistic ; the more there are of children the less of novels. It is true she expresses a not too-convincing regret at this absence, desired, as we are informed, by her partner ; but if she had children they would of course play in the Champs-Élysées in sandals. How many years it takes to simplify life ! From shoes and stockings to sandals and bare feet ; from sandals to no little feet at all to wear them ; from George Eliot to Mme. Lucie Paul-Margueritte.

* * * *

Nothing in the literary form needs so much tact as the form Baudelaire baptized "poems in prose." Therefore M. Gilbert de Voisins, who cannot commit a mistake in taste, has chosen a title of pure fancy without epithet. The publication is a reissue and it will endure many another. It is a collection of exquisite patterns, but complete, not fragmentary : like so many butterflies pinned in a case, one specimen of every kind, yet all butterflies, though they resemble flowers or shells or birds or dead leaves. A specimen :

LE PRIX DE LA JEUNESSE

La grande précaution est de ne jamais renoncer au rêve que l'on fit à vingt ans.

Si le roi de Chine t'offre ses plus beaux trésors, donne en échange ton sang, mais ne lui donne pas ce rêve-là.

Si la reine de Saba t'offre son baiser, donne en échange ta raison, mais ne lui donne pas ce rêve-là.

Malgré les orages et la boue qui les suit, malgré nos frères les hommes, malgré l'horreur des cauchemars et l'ennui des veilles, il faut garder toujours vivant cet ancien rêve, le visiter chaque matin, le reconforter, lui parler avec douceur, lui parler encore avant de s'endormir, et, quelquefois, s'interrompre de vivre pour le surprendre à l'improviste.

La jeunesse qui nous fait mourir, un sourire sur les lèvres, un immortel espoir au fond des yeux, la jeunesse que ne s'auraient toucher les heures ni les larmes, la vraie jeunesse est à ce prix.

Les dieux eux-mêmes ne meurent que d'avoir renoncé à leur premier rêve.

Many of these attractive pages were written in North Africa and though often vehement in feeling are subdued in sound and seem to have been whispered passionately between blinds. John Shag is more like Elia than any one else I can think of.

* * * *

Marie Lenéru, who in a very different manner achieved the greatest success as a playwright which has accrued to a Frenchwoman since Mme. de Girardin, has just died. A new play, her third in all, and the second to be given by her at that house, was about to be produced at the Comédie Française.

Mlle. Lenéru was spared those experimental stages which are the lot of most artists at the beginning of their career. Her value was known and recognized before her work was made public. Celebrity was the only advantage she had not to struggle for : a select celebrity among her peers. For Marie Lenéru, whose works investigate psychological problems and

notably the relations between man and woman and the complications of married life, and who had a clear and broad comprehension of politics and sociological questions, was a deaf-mute additionally afflicted with partial blindness. This suffering being, with her outwardly very attenuated and inwardly extremely vivid life-power, was surprised by death when barely forty.

* * * *

As I am about to seal these notes I hear of the death, from the ubiquitous complaint, of another French authoress of note : Annie de Pène, one of whose novels was recently appearing in *L'Œuvre*, an "organ" which has a very high opinion of itself and its contributors. Mme. de Pène was an agreeable, graceful writer, unpedantic but not uncultured. She, also, dies too young.

M. C.

HELLENIST SERIES

By EZRA POUND

IV. SAPPHO

THERE is no use reploughing the ground covered by Wharton. Aldington's version of the Atthis poem, from J. M. Edmond's conjectural restoration, will, I think, take its place in any "complete" English "Sappho" of the future.

I can suggest no other additions to Wharton save the Spanish text of Castillo y Ayensa (published 1832) and possibly the version of the "Hymn" by the American (or Irish?) O'Hara. Here and elsewhere he has shown no inconsiderable talent for the sapphic strophe, but he has small power of selection and the bad work in his books is likely to take from him the credit he might have for the good.

HYMN TO APHRODITE

O'HARA (1910)

Aphrodite subtle of soul and deathless,
Daughter of God, weaver of wiles, I pray thee
Neither with care, dread Mistress, nor with anguish
Slay thou my spirit.

But in pity hasten, come now if ever !
From afar, of old, when my voice implored thee,
Thou hast deigned to listen leaving the golden
House of thy father

With thy chariot yoked, and with doves that drew thee
Fair and fleet around the dark earth from heaven,
Dipping vibrant wings down the azure distance
Through the mid ether :

Very swift they came ; and thou gracious Vision
Leaned with face that smiled in immortal beauty,
Leaned to me and asked, "What misfortune
threatened ?
Why I had called thee ?"

"What my frenzied heart craved in utter yearning,
Whom its wild desire would persuade to passion ?
What disdainful charms madly worshipped, slight thee?
Who wrongs thee, Sappho ?

"She that fain would fly, she shall quickly follow
She that now rejects, yet with gifts shall woo thee,
She that heeds thee not, soon shall love to madness,
Love thee, the loth one."

Come to me now thus Goddess and release me
From distress and pain ; and all my distracted
Heart would seek, do thou, once again fulfilling
Still be my ally !

Ποικιλόθρον', ἀθάνατ' Ἀφρόδιτα

CASTILLO Y AYENÇA, 1832

Hija de Jove, sempiterna Cipria,
Varia y artera, veneranda Diosa
Oye mi ruego ; con letabas ansias
Non me atormentes.

Antes descende como en otro tiempo
Ya descendiste, la mansion del Padre
Por mi defando, mis amantes votos
Placida oyendo

Tu al aureo carro presurosa uncias
Tus eves bellas, y a traerte luego,
De sus alitas con batir frecuente,
Prestas tiraban.

Ellas del cielo por el eter vago
Randas llegaban a la tierra oscura ;
Y tu, banando tu inmortal semblante
Dulce sourisa,

“ Cual es tu pena ? tu mayor deseo
“ Cual ? preguntabas : para que me invocas ?
“ A quien tus redes, oh mi Safo, buscan ?
“ Quien te desprecia ?

“ Huyete alguno ? seguirate presto.
“ Dones desdena ? Te dara sus dones.
“ Besos no quere ? cuando tu le esquives
“ Ha de besarte.”

Ven, y me libra del afan penoso ;
Ven, cuanto el alma conseguir anhela
Tu se lo alcanza, y a mi lado siempre
Siempre combate.

DEATHS OF COMMON MEN

NOW, while the sun is hot
And they gather the grape-harvest,
And the leaves are gold, and life splendid,
Let me speak once more of the end, the parting—
How simple it is, how natural.

People in cities, perturbed, neurasthenic,
Rushing like futile hogs helter-skelter,
Living as if they would live for ever.
Dread death, shrink and shiver and mumble,
Start at the spectre, evade, palaver,
Till shoved ignominiously
Into the greasy grave.

More of my friends now are dead than living.
I have seen the strong body crumble and wither,
Give at the knees, stumble, crash in the mud,
Groan a little, lie still ;
I have seen the good flesh cut, the white bone
shattered,
Seen the red face turn like a yellow leaf,
The firm mouth wobble ;
Watched it all, taken it in.

I have slept side by side with men
Who are now green corpses
Or bundles of dirty bones.
All of them, dozens, gone, and I only
Left above ground in the hot sun,
Tasting wine, wooing lips, laughing,
Watching the harvest, joking, sweating,
Alive.

Take earth in your hands, common earth,
Moist crumbly loam, dark, odorous—
This is the bodies of our forefathers,

Of long-ago mothers, beasts, insects ;
See that you love the common earth,
Press it close in your hands
And murmur : “ This is my body.”

We are made of the infinite dead,
And, dead, we make the infinite living.
Have no fear of the subtle man,
The man of affected speech and brains ;
You and I will make just as good corpses,
Our clay is sweeter.

Have no fear, I say, death is nothing ;
I see dead men every week,
Give them a last keen look,
Affectionate, valedictory,
Then cover the face
And turn again to my life,
Serious, but tranquil and cheerful.

Again I say to you, simple folk,
Who, like me, are afraid of the great
And ill at ease with subtle men,
Have no fear ;
We are—not the salt—
But the earth of the earth, earth itself,
And we die that life may be richer.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

September 1918

STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

II

THERE are different purposes, motives, and methods possible in criticism. For the reading public some classification of these varieties would be useful : a classification which would enable the reader to determine immediately whether a critic fulfils any of the legitimate critical functions or fulfils more than one without confusion. I propose at some future date a convenient encheiridion, *A Guide to Useless Books*, prepared in such an order that it will be possible at once to refer any new book to its category. Not only are there many books which need not have been written, and many which might have been written very differently if writers and readers had clearly in mind the several proper and improper kinds of criticism, but a great deal of waste by overlapping might be spared. It is desirable that men of letters should be more scholarly, and that scholars should acquire more lively literary perceptions ; but it is also desirable that the *work* of scholarship and literature should be distinct. I shall return to this classification presently, after examining two more specimens of contemporary criticism.

It has been a commonplace since, I suppose, the time of Arnold's *Essays* that the French surpass us in every kind of critical writing. They are assumed to have developed standards and the skill in dissociation to a degree quite unknown in this country. Here, in the book of M. Mockel,* is an essay which can reasonably be compared with that of Mr. Crees. M. Mockel admired the work of Verhaeren and wanted to write a book about him ; his impulse has so much in common with that of Mr. Crees. Verhaeren, like Meredith, is sufficiently well known, and is also dead ; in neither case is there question of introducing a new or unaccepted author. As for Verhaeren, he is certainly a considerable enough poet to deserve a study ; his origins, influences, the ideas of his society and epoch, his relation as a Fleming to French verse,

* Albert Mockel : *Emile Verhaeren*. Paris, La Renaissance du Livre, 2 fr. 50. Mr. Crees's *George Meredith*, reviewed last month.

to the Parnassians, to the symbolists—to the group of which M. Mockel was a distinguished member. M. Mockel is also a poet of reputation. He is thus well equipped. The sequence of his essay is biographical; both in form and in style it is superior to Mr. Crees's; his dedication (addressed, it must be admitted, to Mr. Gosse) declares an attempt to "study the man through the work, and the work through the man," and to this declaration he has consistently adhered. He has tried with considerable success to present the temperament and its environment; and some of the generalizations which he extracts in the course of the essay are more just and precise than what we usually find in English criticism. Pp. 22–25 dissolve the myth of Flemish mysticism ("Emile Verhaeren est peu fait pour le mysticisme"); and the distinction of "art de sérénité" and "art égoïste" on pp. 60–63 is interesting. The book contains many pieces of excellent criticism and interpretation. The question is, however, whether the central structure of the essay ("studying the man through the work and the work through the man") is right; whether the result is not that the book is either too biographical or not biographical enough; whether there are not too few facts, documents, pictures for a biography and too many impressions of Verhaeren's scenery, external and internal, for a sober study of his art. For example, the young Emile:

Tous les mauvais gars de l'endroit le connaissaient bien; il avait noué commerce d'amitié avec eux et c'est lui, à présent, qui entraînait leur bande. . . .

A Saint-Amand, l'Escaut n'a certes pas encore l'ampleur majestueuse . . . le planteureux pays de Waes . . . des bateaux passent. . . . Beau decor pour l'enfance d'un poète. . . .

But especially M. Mockel is led into the sterile ways of ethnology. There is no end of the Flamand and the Wallon, though we should gladly have a further analysis of the "art maladif" mode (cf. Maeterlinck and Rodenbach) in Belgium, and its relation to the actual "physical crisis" which produced *les Soirs*, *les Débâcles*, and *les Flambaux noirs*. The fact mentioned (p. 51) that Verhaeren was "physiquement transformé" is of interest.

The definition at the end is not instructive: "Verhaeren est le poète héroïque de l'énergie." If Verhaeren was energetic it is important, but it is part of his physiological biography. If he was an admirer of energy there is no great merit in it. I think that M. Mockel misapplies his words in saying (p. 47) that "almost the only law (of Verhaeren's art) is the search for intensity"; there are a great many ways of getting intensity, and Verhaeren is too often seeking only violence. He was an imagist who wrote some remarkable pages of Flemish scenery, but who disappeared later in a verbiage of Hugo. Verhaeren was not an important innovator in verse-technique.

The book is a competent work of the second class. It is deficient in comparison and only at times successful in analysis, and does not by any means speak the last word on Verhaeren's place in literature. Its radical fault is in mixing biography and study of Verhaeren's art. The type, however, is popular, and is, in fact, more ably practised in France than in England.

Another and quite different critical method is that of Mr. Pound.* Whether we agree or not with his opinions, we may be always sure that in his brief and fugitive utterances he is not to be diverted on any pretext from the essential literary problem, that he is always concerned with the work of art, never with incidental fancies. This is a very uncommon merit. His critical writings are the comments of a practitioner upon his own and related arts; and in this type we

have very little since Dryden's Prefaces of any permanent value. No one could be farther from the archæological interest, or farther from the destructive interest: he reserves his attention for the works which he considers good, and for that part of them which he considers permanent. But much more pronounced than his enthusiasm for particular writers is his enthusiasm for good writing. And the breadth of his taste is a justification of his insistence upon technique: it is only study of technique which can widen our understanding of different types of art, for excellence of technique (often utterly dissimilar technique) is the only thing that all types of art have in common.

Mr. Pound observes: "All that the critic can do for the reader, or audience or spectator, is to focus his gaze or audition." It is true that if the critic does not do this he does nothing, but even Mr. Pound attempts a good deal more. The reader should be led to see for himself, and at the end one can only lead him to the masterpiece and point to it, but there are many stages at which the critic may stop or continue. But the most valuable of Mr. Pound's criticisms are his notes on the practice of the various arts themselves.

The workman's notes on the work form one of the most precious types of criticism. Very few creative writers have anything interesting to say about writing or about their predecessors, but they ought to have the sense of what is actually important in older works. We may classify other possible varieties of critical writing as follows:

(1) Biography. The biographer ought to know a good deal about the art of his subject, if the subject is an artist; but his main purpose is to present facts and to deal with his subject's attitude toward his art. This is work of scholarship.

(2) Historical criticism, e.g. the work of Sainte-Beuve. This may be largely dissociative and destructive, and traces the development and realization of ideas. It is not of *direct* significance for the living worker, nor is it directly concerned with æsthetic problems.

(3) Philosophical criticism, e.g. Aristotle, Coleridge. Dangerous, but sometimes useful schematization of principles, etc. The only excuse for attempting it is very unusual intelligence.

There is also the criticism which uses the work or author in question only as a point of departure, and this is justified by an interesting vision of the world. I have not listed the type of criticism of Mr. Pound and Dryden, etc. *Vide supra*.

Lastly, there are miscellaneous works of scholarship, commentaries, recensions, histories of "genres"; which I mention because their writers often think it necessary to interpolate a large amount of unskilful literary criticism. Very often this "criticism" is merely a substitute for the reader's reading the original work. I have lately had occasion to examine a number of books dealing with Elizabethan literature, and the majority of these appeared either superfluous or grossly inflated. I offer as evidence comments on a few of the better known of these books in our own language:

Swinburne, *Age of Shakespeare*: contains no information and conveys no clear impression of the dramatists discussed. A few notable quotations. Neither scholarship nor criticism.

Symonds, *Predecessors of Shakespeare*: absurdly long. Contains a fair amount of popularized information about the period, but the author thought it desirable to relate the story of every play that interested him.

Boas: *Shakespeare's Predecessors* exhibits the same loquacious vice. Dr. Boas is one of the most accomplished of living scholars in this period, but the facts in this book could have been condensed into a small handbook; the literary criticism is negligible.

Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*: the most painful book of all. It should have been written in tabular form, as a list of plays with dates, etc.

Swinburne, of course, ought to have known better; the other writers ought to have done good scholarship

* Ezra Pound: *Pavannes and Divisions*. New York, Knopf, \$2.50 net.

without criticism, and the critical sense would have been imputed them. Perhaps the great blunder is that nearly every one who criticises preserves some official ideal of "criticism" instead of writing simply and conversationally what they think.

T. S. ELIOT

A CHURCH ON A HILL

THE juicy figs of Orvieto, icy cold with the morning dew, tasted deliciously. The peasant girl took them one by one from a basket balanced on her head and covered with a snowy cloth. It seemed indeed from their taste and coolness as if she took them from a layer of snow which she had gathered from the mountain-tops.

In the Piazza the tepid sun poured a cool light on the cathedral, rich in its colours, its gold and crimson. It did not flame up yet. It was too early. It seemed enveloped in an invisible mist. It looked cool and smiling like a youth stepping from a bath.

What a fantasy of joy of beauty crowning this hill. Old Etruria lies buried in the sweeping plain below: cities sleeping in their dust, hives of cinerary urns tightly packed away in hill-sides, bones of those Minoan men crushed in a rich confusion into the earth resplendent with trees.

The cathedral stands there like a very ark of joy, like some enormous Greek vase painted with dancing figures, golden with the faces of gods, traced with the supple limbs of heroes.

The Madonna, the saints—*aureate* or rosy red, or limned in some splendid coppery tone or burnt into the marble in delicate violets and blacks—have passed through the noonday flames of thousands of suns, and in the morning they awake ever fresh and cool like flowers full of the chill vitality of dawn.

The cathedral seems like a re-evocation of the old world of the glorious plain below, of the life of the buried cities of Volci and Tuscania, a vast ceramic ornamented with pagan Mænads wearing thin Christian masks over their laughing eyes, disposing their purple dancing robes in stiff and saint-like folds.

There is no gloom in the religion of this cathedral, barely the memory of it. Those old Christian architects came near to building a Greek temple on the summit of Orvieto, not meaning to. The *allegria* of this *terra santa* of the Etruscan plain below, an *allegria* odorous and vivid still in the Orvieto wine, was in their blood, and they fashioned for beauty, for the joy of the world, a Christian temple like an enormous antique vase, a re-evocation of the scattered world of Minos.

A reliquary of the gone centuries, it conserves them for us, holding in its loveliness not only the life of the 13th and 14th hundreds of our era, but enclosing too the assailing perfume of the pagan world, a perfume of the spirit, odourless actually as a flame, yet with a perfume's magic on the senses.

A Christianity so beautiful as this, so wise, so happy, so young and so old must charm all hearts. Apollo himself could not condemn such a shrine, and Bakhos would see in its long striped columns, its frond-like arches, a memory of the waving palms of India and the long cool groves of Thrace.

Such a cathedral as this of Orvieto is wonderfully atune with the art of our time, which is delicate, compromising, harp-like in its notes, Botticellian in its colours.

The extraordinary churches and chapels which our age produces in England and America have no relation at all with the art or the true architecture of our time. They are merely the sterile works of contractors and business men who make business of a fine art.

It would be such cathedrals as that of Orvieto

that would be architectural counterparts of the music of our Debussys, the poetry of our Maeterlincks and our Mallarmés.

But modern architecture has unfortunately lost all connexion with the artistic life of our day. Buildings are erected with cold hearts and warm stomachs. Our successful architects are *canaille*; our unsuccessful ones had better be dead.

In the narrow street of Orvieto the black-hatted peasants throng, chatting in little groups of two or three, moving to and fro. It is Sunday, and the little town is full. The fat, well-fed donkeys which every one rides in this district stand saddled in shady corners. The peasant girls offer the luscious green figs in great baskets. Most of the men are middle-aged or old, for war lays its hand on *la gioventù*.

Here, too, we have the surrogates, the make-shifts which war, greedy and pitiless, impels. A little dark-eyed woman in a black dress with red tabs distributes the Sunday morning's post in the high narrow streets. Most of this correspondence will be from *là-su*, up there, where to tell the truth most of the virtue of the land lies, most of its adventurousness, its carelessness, its idealism. The old or oldish fellows that remain behind have a shrewd cold eye to profit in these days. They are not the kind to build cathedrals like that of Orvieto.

In the plain below flows the Paglia, looking like a twisted current of melted blue steel with yellow sandy banks, sizzling and odorous in the sun.

The dust lies half a foot deep on the road to the plain—a dust fine as cypria.

Let us sit in an angle of this old brown-curtained wine-shop with a glass of wine before us like any brown Etruscan. We have not his coppery arms nor sane Egyptian profile. We are nervous moderns, always a little sick of spirit, and as artists in the modern world branded wanderers and exiles. But with a sip or two of this rare wine our hearts beat to a new measure. Such fragrance of the soil refreshes our dreams! Even we, lovers of the lost beauty, are rooted in reality. Or so here, it seems, where the earth reveals herself to our gaze so voluptuously, with such divine abandon. EDWARD STORER

MINSTRELS

BESIDE the sea, metallic-bright
And sequined with the noisy light,
Duennas slowly promenade—
Each like a patch of sudden shade.

While in the purring greenery
The crowd moves like a tropic sea—
The people, sparkles from the heat
That dies of ennui at our feet.

The gowns as white as innocence
With sudden sweetness take the sense,
And colours like a parakeet
Shrill loudly to the giddy heat.

Those crested paladins the waves
Are sighing to their tawny slaves
The sands, where, orange-turbann'd stand—
Opaque black gems, the negro band;

"A thousand years seem but a day!
Time waits for no man, yet he'll stay
Bewildered when we cross this bar
Into the Unknown. There we are!"

Eternity and Time commence
To merge amid the somnolence
Of winding circles, bend on bend
With no beginning and no end,

Down which they chase queer tunes that gape
Till they come close—then just escape !
But though Time's barriers are defied
They never seem quite satisfied.

The instruments that snore like flies
Seem mourners at Time's obsequies ;
The sun, a pulse's beat, inflates
And with the band coagulates.

And crowds, bright sparks struck out by Time
Pass, touch each other, never chime :
Each soul, a separate entity—
Some past, some present, some to be :

But now, an empty blot of white
Beneath the senseless shocks of light
Flashed by these tunes that cannot thrill
Our nerves. Oh ! Time is hard to kill !

EDITH SITWELL

THREE GEORGIAN NOVELISTS

I

IF the ordinary circulating library subscriber were asked for the names of the three English novelists still in the early thirties who have most definitely "arrived," ten to one he (or she) would mention Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Mr. Hugh Walpole, and Mr. Gilbert Cannan. The success of this triumvirate when—their apprenticeship served—they assembled under the banner of Mr. Martin Secker to make their respective bids for fame, was immediate and in some ways perhaps unprecedented. For theirs was not merely a success of vulgar popularity, it was a *succès d'estime* as well. Novel readers who borrowed the works of these writers from their libraries felt that they were not quite as other novel readers—they were displaying Kultur. And whether by their eminent dining qualities or by their publisher's skill and tact as a booster of reputations, or by their own voyant gifts these men came, for the careless great, to stand for the "younger generation" whenever the "older generation" wished to patronize their juniors or to pontificate about them. Even Mr. Henry James spun a stately web of words around them in *The Times Literary Supplement*. It was not necessary to read what he had written to feel that since he had actually read and discussed their works they must be of astounding merit. Where the high august ones had pronounced, it was not for the mere press men to do anything but echo and enlarge. Thus like a snowball, the prestige of these three novelists increased from year to year until the disruptive influence of the war intervened to break the spell and to impose a reconsideration of every opinion, whether æsthetic or political, which we entertained before its outbreak. The war has hung up all literary careers, those of the successful and of the unknown, and it is hard to believe that any novelist will emerge from it with his pre-war reputation untouched. For the war has provided a rough-and-ready test for true metal. The popularity of the work which can pass this test should be enhanced, and the popularity of that which fails to pass it must wither.

Of the three writers here grouped together, the one who has hitherto been most successful will, in my view, suffer most in critical esteem. It is too early yet to say what effect the great upheaval has had on Mr. Mackenzie's mentality ; but a study of his work up to the present does not induce hope. The great deficiency in Mr. Mackenzie's make-up is fire, passion, spontaneity. The war may provide him with vivid copy which he will no doubt use with his accustomed skill ; but it is hard to believe that it will in any way affect the springs of his being sufficiently to

give his work a fresh orientation. For, interposed like a thick veil between Mr. Mackenzie's mind and life in the raw is "Oxford College." Hitherto this fact has helped Mr. Mackenzie in his career : it is hard to believe that it will help him any longer. In spite of the attempt by the circulating libraries to ban *Sinister Street* on the ground of immorality, Mr. Mackenzie had come, by August 1914, to be "the dear Dean's" favourite novelist. "The Dean" (and he is typical of the intellectual outlook of a large section of the English upper-middle class) considered that Mr. Mackenzie's highly coloured photographs of Leicester Square were real *tranches de vie*—horrible, pitiful, but oh, so true ! For the Dean and his like, the fact that Mr. Mackenzie when at Oxford belonged clearly to a "good set" in a good college is of great importance. His Oxford career has indeed been invaluable to him—up to a point—in his career as a novelist. He was a dazzling figure in the days when he used to walk hatless down the "Corn"—the cynosure of every eye—with a romantic cloak over his shoulder, his hair brushed back in Byronic disorder and the blue cover of *The Oxford Point of View* just visible under his arm. His reputation in that university circle, which forms an influential part of literary London, was made even before he published his first book, and proved sufficiently robust to stand that shock. For bad as the sheaf of "early poems" with which most writers begin their literary lives usually is, the paper-bound volume of *Poems*, with which Mr. Mackenzie became author, with Mr. Blackwell's aid, was more empty and more pretentious than anything of the kind which I can recall. Early poems usually have at least the faculty of revealing the main tendencies of an author's mind, its texture, its possibilities. Mr. Mackenzie's were a casket of most artistic design, filled with nothing save the dust of libraries. But any ground he may have lost by his poems was soon regained on the publication of *The Passionate Elopement*. Few first novels have been more brilliantly launched or more abundantly advertised than this. It was "costume drama," intentionally artificial, with no serious attempt at psychology or characterization ; but it was much better done than this sort of thing usually is, and it proved that Mr. Mackenzie was at all events capable of a job of work and had no intention of becoming a mere dilettante. This capacity for work was shown in a still more striking way in *Carnival*, Mr. Mackenzie's first effort at depicting the life of his own time. It was evident at once that the setting of the story had been studied with minute care. The same indefatigable accumulation of detail which characterizes Mr. Arnold Bennett's long novels about his native Five Towns was here applied to subjects selected deliberately for their romantic interest. No one would choose to read about the Five Towns if Mr. Bennett did not force them to do it by appealing to the public's love of photography in literature. Mr. Mackenzie adopted the photographic method, and instead of applying it to a drab provincial life, applied it to the kind of life most likely to interest the largest number of persons. He was thus to some extent the fore-runner of the cinema. He brought the more highly coloured portions of the world before his readers' eyes ; and eschewed "drabness" like the plague. His mean streets, his low life, had the specious glamour of what is Metropolitan, and were relieved with bright splashes of garish illumination from Leicester Square, with the rich greens and greys of the Cornish landscape.

The whole setting of *Carnival* had evidently been studied at first hand and with the greatest care. When the author described a room he might have been actually sitting in it, in such detail were its contents recorded ; when he wrote of the appearance of a street or of the outside of a house, the amazed reader felt that street or that house must actually

have been before him. His description of the outward and physical characteristics of his human puppets was no less complete than his description of their environment. To the hearts of many of his struggling fellow-craftsmen *Carnival* simply struck consternation. Here was a new-comer who was prepared to take unheard-of pains. The public would be sure to gobble up his work, and would expect the same kind of thing in all the other novels they read. Thus the whole wretched job of turning out commercial fiction would be made more difficult. Notebooks were brought out, or shirt-cuffs were pulled down, and those writers who were too jaded to set their imaginations in motion started busily to make elaborate notes in the hope of keeping up.

The success which followed the publication of *Carnival*, in spite of the book's "inward and spiritual" emptiness, was certainly deserved, and Mr. Mackenzie's fellow-novelists will be the first to admit that it is in many ways an astonishing performance. The colour is piled on with a lavish hand, and so long as the author is describing the exteriors of places and of people, or recording their conversations with a gramophone's fidelity, he is admirable. It is only when the story cannot move ahead without the exercise of imagination, when the characters are forced to reveal their very essence, when the appeal is not to the eye or to the brain, but to the centres of emotion, that he breaks down. For Mr. Mackenzie's ideas of expressing any kind of human feeling are of the theatre, theatrical. The *dénouement* of *Carnival*, and several of the more important situations in the book, leave the critical reader sceptical and unconvinced at the very moment when the story demands that he should be most moved. The defect of Mr. Mackenzie's qualities is that he is so absorbed in giving a vivid presentation of his characters *from the outside*, that he usually omits to explore their minds and hearts and motives. When he does make an attempt to get below the surface, his psychology is all at sea, except when he is dealing with his favourite type of empty Oxford prig, who is all surface and indeed at best only a human being in embryo. Thus the general effect of *Carnival* is that, with all its skill, vivacity, and colour it is a brilliantly superficial piece of work, devoid of sincerity and depth of feeling.

In Mr. Mackenzie's astounding *magnum opus*, *Sinister Street*, the good qualities of *Carnival* are brought to their highest conceivable pitch, its deficiencies correspondingly exaggerated. *Sinister Street* has all the subsidiary qualities of a work of genius—without the genius. Everything is there, colour, vigour, detail, skill in handling a crowded canvas, capacity to hold attention—everything except those essential qualities of human feeling, insight, intuition, wisdom, imaginative sympathy, and capacity to see people and things in just perspective, without which the most brilliant novel that ever was written is nothing worth. To go from *Sinister Street* to one of Turgenyev's short stories, such as *First Love* or *The Torrents of Spring*, or to a novel like Mr. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, is like passing from an airless theatre, where the eye is dazzled with light and bright colours, and the ears filled with singing and with music, into the sparkling air of a winter's night with no roof to shut one in save the immeasurable expanses of the starry sky. And yet as a "document," as a chapter of the social history of Edwardian England, *Sinister Street* has undoubted importance. It embalms a period of Oxford life which will always be interesting to the student of manners. The prigs whose romantic decadence Mr. Mackenzie described with such affectionate care will explain to the historian of the future much that has happened during the past four years. (Indeed if the war succeeds in blotting out of English life for ever young men of the type of Michael Fane, if it succeeds in changing the average Englishman's

attitude towards this type from admiration into one of contempt, it will not have been fought for nothing.) To reread this immense chronicle of Michael's Oxford days, and of his subsequent patronage of the London underworld, in 1918, is to see the whole world-struggle in a new light. Nature had to devise some means of purging the world of its living dead, of its elderly schoolboys who refuse to grow to man's stature and yet were never young. Michael Fane, Guy Hazlewood, and the others of their circle to whom Mr. Mackenzie introduces us, are all of the same type, but Michael easily surpasses them all, the consummate prig. His jejune sexual self-importance, his snobbishness, his airs of the intellectual coxcomb, his imperviousness to the spiritual side of life, infect nearly all the hundreds and hundreds of pages which the author has devoted to his portrayal. The educational reformer—any kind of reformer—who seeks material for destructive criticism of our Public Schools and Universities, could have no more valuable textbook than Mr. Mackenzie's later novels. They are veracious chronicles—at least so far as the Oxford characters are concerned—and horrible as it may seem, they do faithfully hold up the mirror to Oxford life before the war. It was just as empty, as pretentious, as unreal, as snobbish, and as decadent as Mr. Mackenzie makes out. Its attitude towards "Life," towards the larger world of London, was such as Mr. Mackenzie has described it. And in *Sinister Street* is to be found perhaps one of the most perfect unconscious revelations of a snob which exists in our literature. None of our satirists, not even Thackeray, has achieved what Mr. Mackenzie, in his passion for accuracy, accomplishes apparently by accident. The passage occurs in the second volume of *Sinister Street*, in the chapter called "Ostia Ditis." Michael Fane meets in a music-hall a coarse, good-natured individual called Drake, with whom he was at school, and whose family lived at one time next door to the Fanes. They have not met for four years, during which time Drake has gone into the city, and Fane has been at Oxford. Drake stands his friend a drink, and in a moment of expansiveness—sublimely unconscious of the great gulf which now yawns between them—suggests that Fane might like to join his club.

"Aren't you coming up West a bit?" asked Drake in disappointment. "The night's still young."

"But Michael was not to be persuaded."

"Well, don't let's lose sight of each other now we've met. What's your club? I've just joined the Primrose myself. Not a bad little place. You get a rare good one-and-sixpenny lunch. You ought to join. Or perhaps you're already suited?"

"I belong to the Bath," said Michael.

"Oh, of course, if you're suited that's all right. But any time you want to join the Primrose just let me know and I'll put you up. The sub. isn't really very much. Guinea a year."

Drake, who after four years in the city is probably doing quite well, and knows possibly more about London than Michael, has already been made to ask if Cheyne Walk (whither the Fanes have gone to live) isn't "somewhere out Hampstead way." It is impossible not to feel that Mr. Mackenzie has strained the probabilities to bursting-point in thus making him the foil to Michael's vulgarity. It is only Drake's side of the exquisite dialogue I have quoted which is incredible. Michael, as Mr. Mackenzie has already proved to the hilt, is capable of anything.

Guy and Pauline, which shows young Oxford after it has "gone down," making a feeble attempt at love and life in a country village, draws a more grisly picture of our upper-middle class in pre-war days even than *Sinister Street*. *Sinister Street* merely forewarns us of the tragic fiasco which in *Guy and Pauline* is described in detail. Guy is shown us in the grip of his own artificiality, unable to shake himself free from the effects of his shoddy education, unable to

live, and without even that saving Russian pessimism which might have spurred him to salutary self-destruction. It is a grey story, concerning itself at portentous length with the make-believe emotions, the philanderings of two people who simply do not matter. And since there is nothing to dazzle the eye, no massing of bright colours, nothing in the way of a divertisement for the unfortunate reader, it is by far the most tedious of Mr. Mackenzie's works. There is nothing in the book to distract the attention from the inner emptiness of its author's mind. Poetic epithets, such as "nacreous," "crepuscular," "ombre," and so on—coined in the Wardour Street of 1895—glitter like glass emeralds in a sandy desert of fine writing, and serve only to emphasize the book's vacuity.

Mr. Mackenzie, at the time I write, has published nothing since *Guy and Pauline*. In the tragic years which have intervened his knowledge of human nature may have grown wider and deeper, so that when he publishes again his books may concern themselves with the lives and passions of men and women. Up to the present, in spite of all its cleverness, his work has shown no breadth of vision, no "beyond," and none of that reality which is by no means to be confounded with realism. Prophecy is always dangerous, but I think that if the war has the effect of making the public look in their novels for something vital, fiery, and sincere—for a genuine reflection and criticism of life as it is, not of life as it appears to an opulent and priggish set—Mr. Mackenzie is not likely to retain the hold on his readers' attention, which he gained with *Sinister Street*, unless he himself strikes out new paths. Up to the present, by occupying himself too successfully with little things, he has bred doubts of his ultimate capacity for tackling big.

DOUGLAS GOLDRING

(To be continued)

ÉLÉGIE À PAUL DROUOT

MON ami, vous êtes jeune,
Vous n'avez pas pleuré comme pleurent les
hommes :

Laissez couler les heures,
Un jour vous les direz
Douce et bonnes
Les heures du passé.

Que ne puis-je avec vous rejouer mon enfance
Et tous ses jeux fluets,
Chanter la vieille ronde et rentrer dans la danse
Avec un cœur mué.

Ma jeunesse est partie au parfum de la robe
De mon aimée,
Et comme passe au soir le vent qui se dérobe
Quand Phœbé apparaît,
Argentée et divine au milieu de nuées.

Près de vous, mon ami, laissez-moi m'en aller,
Et répéter
Qu'il est dur de savoir que l'on n'est pas aimé.

Le jour viendra peut-être où je serai plus gai ;
Mais avant de partir
Vers d'autres horizons, plus joyeux ou plus tristes,
Que je ne puis choisir,
Ah ! laissez-moi vous rappeler qu'un soir,
Près du grand fleuve où nous penchions nos têtes,
Mon front fut rafraîchi par vos mots d'amitié,
Et que vous fûtes doux
Comme un enfant très tendre auprès d'un frère ainé.

D'autres diront un jour, lorsque je serai grand,
Que j'eus un cœur comme un cratère,
Tout ruisselant ;

Mais vous avez séché les pleurs à ma paupière,
O mon ami, ô mon enfant,
Et quand vous marcherez dessus la route austère
Des vrais amants,
Puissiez-vous retrouver un ami ou un frère
Qui, comme vous pour moi, se penche à votre front
Pour essuyer la face
Et rafraîchir le masque
De larmes et de sang,
Et de poussière obscure,
Et d'infini tourment.

LOUIS THOMAS

[Taken by permission from the volume entitled *Les Cris du Solitaire*.]

TOWARDS A PEACE THEATRE

By HUNTLY CARTER

I. THE NEED

FOR many years I have been devoting time and energy to work which at last is about to take the practical form of a theatre prepared for putting my ideas of a new dramatic technique in action. It will, perhaps, be remembered that in an article in THE EGOIST of May 1918, I said many things had brought me to the opinion that the moment had arrived for a start at a house for an intelligent form of drama. There was the reappearance of Mr. Gordon Craig's *Mask*, accompanied by his no less important new-comer *The Marionette*, to prove that not only is he as keenly interested as ever in a fine work which he has always had so much at heart, but that one live mind at least is turning towards a theatrical renewal. Since then, I have found a good deal of further evidence to support my opinion.

Some of us recollect that five or six months ago an article and some correspondence appeared in the *Nation* on the subject of an "After-War Theatre." The article was by the editor, Mr. W. H. Massingham, who, after floundering about amongst pre-war literary theatre doings, came to the conclusion that the pre-war reform theatre was dead, the war had buried it, and really there was a doubt whether it had ever existed. A clear case of injustice to Shaw the Obscure. Still, he felt that its bones might be disinterred, and he inquired what little worldlings are left to come to its rescue. "The State," it seems, must not be expected to do anything, for it has become so closely mixed up with the awful business of the war that some years must pass before it will recover its financial breath. Moreover, it will have cause to be terribly afraid of the after-war critical attitude of the theatre. Indeed, has it not already shown signs of this fear by forbidding the performance of certain war-time moralities? In any case it will have no money to spare for intelligent purposes after the war. So the reform theatre must wait or take its empty pockets elsewhere. Perhaps it might succeed in getting something to go on with by inviting several thousand persons to subscribe two guineas apiece. One can picture a theatre with ten thousand two-guinea controllers. It looks like England at war-time. But one ought not to laugh too much at Mr. Massingham's kind regards for a new theatre. If they embrace no hope of the resurrection of the activities of the old gang, Messrs. Archer-Barker-Shaw and Co., they imply that a path of renewal is to be found in the aspirations of explorers and missionaries of another type. The humble, unobtrusive folk, "The People," will, Mr. Massingham thinks, help us through the dreadful ordeal of putting the reform theatre on its legs. But one might reasonably inquire, who on earth are "The People"?

The mention of "The People" served to bring to light a number of correspondents who are actively

engaged forming groups in this country for the purpose of establishing new theatres on co-operative or democratic lines. I have not a file of the *Nation* before me, but I remember fairly well what these enthusiasts said and the impression I got that they are thoroughly in earnest about the theatre business, and really do wish to introduce to us a form of theatre that will make us less ashamed of being alive. And though their plans are far from being those with which I agree, they are so designed to make a strong appeal to a wide body of playgoers that one feels there would be no great harm if they were realized, provided they embrace a suitable form of drama. I think all these plans are concerned with a working-class theatre. Mr. Norman Macdermott, for instance, wants a "People's" theatre. He believes that the assistance and influence of the Labour Party would be of the highest service to his particular theatrical cause. Then there are Messrs. Herman Ould, Scott and Shipp, who want something in the nature of a popular art and craft theatre. Their "theatre" is to be launched on a start-as-you-can principle. Apparently no existing buildings are to be considered unsuitable, no scenery, costumes or properties inappropriate for the opening stage. Finally there is Mr. Miles Malleson, with a prayer for a shower of little theatres and the proposal to hook on the Workers' Educational Association and convert it into a Limited Liability Little Theatre Company. It is not clear how it is to be converted into Treasury notes.

My chief objection to all these proposals is that they do not reveal a fundamental vision of Drama. They ask for a theatre, but they do not tell us what they propose to put in the theatre. Of course it is an advantage to have a set of tools in readiness for a dramatic form which may eventually develop by their help into a perfect form. But suppose when the form comes the tools are unsuitable to develop it? Some one may say that the form is already here. It was born before the war. In that case I have nothing more to say, except that the pre-war dramatic baby was so intellectually stupid that it is a sheer waste of time to propose to make a new perambulator for it. What it requires is a Bath chair. There is, I believe, an intelligent form of drama waiting to be born which I will discuss in another article.

DEATH OF GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

MR. HUNTLY CARTER sends the following note received by him from M. Gino Severini:

"J'ai la douleur de vous annoncer la mort de notre ami Guillaume Apollinaire. Vous me feriez le plus grand plaisir en la faisant connaître aux lecteurs de la belle revue L'EGOIST en lui rendant honneur, ainsi que sa grande valeur lui en donne le droit. Nous perdons un grand poète, et notre défenseur le plus averti et le plus autorisé. Aussi les artistes d'avant-garde à Paris sont en deuil profond.

"Paris: le 12 novembre."

AN UNACADEMIC ACADEMICIAN

FRANÇOIS DE CUREL

II

THE savant has become a stock figure in the French theatre, where his literary or scientific attainments serve to enhance the attractions of the sympathetic hero. In *La Nouvelle Idole*, François de Curel has portrayed the savant pure and simple; not the familiar *cabotin de la science*, but one in whom everything is subordinated to the pursuit of knowledge. Albert Donnat's researches have been

devoted to obtaining a cure for cancer, and when a young consumptive girl, whose death is imminent, comes to him for treatment, he resolves to make her the subject of experiment. He inoculates Antoinette in order to procure a vaccine which he believes will prove effective in combating the dreadful disease. But she recovers, not as a result of scientific treatment, but, as she believes, owing to the miraculous intervention of Lourdes, and Donnat finds himself in the presence of a force which he has denied. In the meantime, Antoinette realizes that she has only been saved from tuberculosis for the more awful death of cancer. She resolves to sacrifice her life cheerfully, not guided by the material logic of the scientist, but in obedience to some inner force which he is now obliged to recognize as a more powerful factor in human life. This girl is a mystic: her faith in the spiritual shakes Donnat's confidence in the self-sufficiency of his scientific materialism. Impressed by the grandeur of her sacrifice, he determines to end his life by subjecting his own body to experiment, so that he too may die having contributed something to the advancement of human happiness. Such is the conflict of faith and science as it appears to the author of *La Nouvelle Idole*. It is essentially a *pièce à thèse*, as witness the long speeches in which Antoinette and Donnat explain their respective philosophy. It is apparently the only play of the author's that has been presented in this country, having been performed without success by the Stage Society some years ago.

In *Le Repas du Lion* the dramatist returns to the subject of the conflict between feudal ideals and the conditions of modern democracy. Jean de Sancy's solitary youth has been spent on the family estates, whose very earth seems a sacred inheritance. With dismay he sees this seclusion invaded by the progress of modern industrialism. Georges Boussard, his brother-in-law, is an engineer, a capitalist who has no sympathy with the prejudices of the landed aristocracy. Jean regards his proposal to work for minerals on the de Sancy estate as a violation of tradition, and one night he floods the mines, unwittingly drowning a miner. Full of remorse, he resolves to consecrate his life to the working classes, and in time he becomes a famous socialist orator. But he feels there is something unreal in his eloquence, which he enjoys like an actor playing a successful part. His doubts are confirmed by Boussard, who points out that the only way to help the men is "to open up new fields to human activity." De Sancy is convinced that his efforts at reparation have been in vain, that modern feudalism is the exploitation of labour by capitalism, and the feudal aristocrat that is in him responds to the arguments of Boussard. In a violently reactionary speech he proclaims his new faith, explaining that the employers are the natural leaders of the people, all that they have being the result of their superior ability and enterprise. It is right that they should have the lion's share of the product; the jackals should be only too glad to eat what remains when the lions are fed. This metaphorical flight so exasperates the workers that one of them shoots de Sancy, while the others declare a strike, and proceed to devastate all before them. This is the reply of the jackals, who have sometimes been known to fall upon the lions and devour them.

La Fille Sauvage is probably the most genuine drama of abstract ideas on the modern stage; an attempt to express in dramatic form the clash of barbarism and civilization. The characters are not living people but symbolic abstractions. Psychology, action, and all the essentials of drama, are subordinated to the exposition of ideas. In the course of four acts a rudimentary being is transformed and passes through all the stages of civilization which have taken thousands of years to accomplish. Marie, the savage, is little better than an animal when she is

brought in a cage to France by Pierre Moncel, the explorer who has undertaken to civilize her. Placed in a convent, she is educated as a Christian. Then Moncel takes her in his charge, familiarizes her with the art, literature, and philosophy of modern Europe, but gradually destroys her faith in the supernatural. The only thing that still upholds Marie is her love for Moncel, and this is taken from her when he urges her to return to Africa. She then sees that she is nothing more to him than the subject of an interesting experiment, whose complete success demands that she shall sacrifice herself to the spread of civilization in Africa. She returns and becomes Queen of the tribe that first captured her, gradually reverting to her primitive animality. Having nothing to sustain it, her veneer of civilization wears off, until at last the natural barbarism triumphs, rendered a thousand times more fierce by the disappointed hunger of her newly awakened intellect. There is a poignancy in *La Fille Sauvage*, where the absence of action and the evident abstractions which the characters represent, throw into relief the dramatic evolution of the human soul. It is with a sense of tragedy that we witness the final catastrophe, when Marie's ideals have been destroyed and her illusions shattered.

Le Coup d'Aile has been the subject of much embarrassed commentary, for it could not be described as patriotic, while the author's reputation made the accusation of anti-militarism ridiculous. It is, in fact, an impartial analysis of the motives of those who seem stirred to great enterprises by the sentiment of patriotism. Michel Prinson, an officer in the Colonial army, has done great work on behalf of his country. The official and almost national recognition of his services has infected him with the *mal de la gloire*, and he does not scruple to fire on the French flag when its authority interferes with his adventurous ambition. As a result of the ensuing scandal Prinson disappears. It is popularly believed that he has been massacred in a native rising, whereas he has really been living as a social outcast, at the expense of his brother Bernard. He subsequently returns to France and urges his brother to enable him to set out again for Africa, where he hopes to redeem his former disgrace. It is the time of the manoeuvres, and a Colonel Hérouard is quartered in Bernard's house, where he and Prinson meet. This gives the dramatist his opportunity to set forth the real thesis of the play, the motives of different men's attachment to the flag of their country.

Hérouard is the traditional blunt old soldier; to him the Tricolour is the symbol of France. To Michel, on the other hand, it is a symbol of glory. He argues that it is absurd to pretend that native troops, or the outcasts of the Foreign Legion, have any sense of military honour or devotion to France. They act from a sense of necessity, or out of a mechanical obedience. When they do experience any personal emotion it is merely the consciousness that in the flag they have a chance of achieving fame for themselves. This is sufficient to spur to action men who care nothing for all that a flag represents. Prinson admits that never once was patriotism the motive of his actions: all that he did "for France" was the outcome of a purely personal desire for glory. When the interests of his country were incidentally served with his own, his deeds were patriotic, when both interests clashed he was a traitor. In *Arms and the Man* Bernard Shaw has analysed the conception of military glory and discovered that it does not exist, but the French dramatist is more subtle. For Shaw's logic, de Curel has substituted the weakness and diversity of human passion.

In his desire to exalt the idea at the expense of characterization, François de Curel has been led to idealize all the male characters in his later work. They become, in their intellectual plenitude, the personification of the ideas for which they live. By

contrast, therefore, the women appear weak and evoke sympathy. They seek in emotions what the men find in ideas, creating, incidentally, a bond of feeling between the dramatist and his audience. The unromantic realism of his early work and the absence of dramatic action in his later plays indicate de Curel as a dramatist to be read rather than to be seen in the theatre. There is, it is true, something of the classical tragedy in *Les Fossiles*, but the motives of the de Chantemelle, the atmosphere in which they live, are too remote from modern conditions to command sympathy.

François de Curel is an intellectual aristocrat, out of touch with his age. Jean de Sancy, in *Le Repas du Lion*, is to some degree the expression of his creator, with his distrust of present-day ideals and his antipathy to industrial democracy. De Curel's secluded life has preserved him from any trace of Parisianism; he regards modern problems with detachment, to the irritation of many who mistake his impartiality for obscurity. He resembles Bernard Shaw in his analysis of emotion and his belief in the efficacy of human motives, stripped of all the glamour of false idealism. But de Curel is grave and restrained, aristocratic in his sympathies and incapable of paradox, while Shaw never fails to treat serious subjects with becoming levity.

ERNEST A. BOYD

HYMN TO DEATH, 1914 AND ON

"DANSE MACABRE" death—
"Dried-guts" death.

They clatter, girn, mow—
femur rattles skull—
epiphyses shriek, grate—
Brain

a shrunk pea,
quintessential lusts—
rattles,
rattles, rattles,
rattles.

O the "bones," the wonderful "bones"
(Gods the "darkey").

Toes out, click heels—March!
Evert backbone—March!
Breast-bone out—March!
Shoulder-blades well drawn back—
Thumbs to trouser-seams—
hold chins firm—March!
March! March!
March!

"Danse macabre" death—
"Dried-guts" death.

"Hi there—
take your wired toes out o' me ribs."

They clatter, girn, mow—
pea-brains rattle,
rattle, rattle,
rattle.

* * * *

My sweetheart's bouquet at this ball
the sweet skull of this lover—
(he went to the war).

JOHN RODKER

THE GATE

HE leaned on the gate, smoking. On one side of the gate was the main road, and on the other side was a cart-track leading down the hill to a square, unbeautiful farmhouse in the valley. It was a bright, dry Sunday of April.

Suddenly the idea came to him that she was walking across the fields and would be at the gate in five minutes. And then he made haste to cover up on the sand of thought the traces of where this hope had passed. For he had a superstitious belief that nothing happens unless it is unexpected. If he wanted a thing to happen very much, he made elaborate plans of what to do if it did not happen, and tried to create in himself an expectation that it would not happen. . . .

And so now he straightened himself away from the gate, and knocked out his pipe . . . and could not resist looking hard and long into the distance. An obstinate hope would survive. . . .

And then she came, just as he had imagined, except that she was carrying a great bunch of Lent lilies.

He could not say anything, but smiled stupidly and looked for the latch of the gate. But the latch was broken and the gate had been nailed up.

"I am afraid," said he, "that you'll have to climb."

"Oh, I can get over a gate," said she, "if you'll hold these. . . ."

"I'm going to jump," said she.

"Wait," said he with unusual presence of mind, "your dress has caught on this nail. Sit still a minute; I'll undo it."

She gave her rather deep laugh. She laughed from her lungs, not with a silly little head-laugh. "All right, I'll sit here"; and she sat on the top bar of the gate while he fumbled with the dress caught on the nail. . . .

"Now jump!" said he, and held out his hand to steady her. She took his hand, and then, thinking that his shoulder would be steadier, put a hand on it and stood on the third bar above the ground.

Then he looked up at her. She was looking down at him and smiling; and he dropped the Lent lilies and put his right hand on her left hand—the one that rested on his shoulder—and his left arm round her, drew her to him and kissed her again and again. She slipped down to the ground, with his arm still round her. "That . . . was . . . not . . . at . . . all . . . a good . . . jump!" she said, flushed and panting a little and laughing a little.

In about half an hour he was walking slowly and alone past the gate. He remembered exactly where her left foot had rested as she sat on the gate . . . and he felt a wish, which he saw at once was both foolish and uncontrollable, that no other foot should ever tread where hers had been. He would feel a wave of sad anger go over him when he saw the practically changeless face of a wall or gate, or even some things in nature looking with the unseeing eyes and passive countenance of a dead person on things that would never happen again. . . . And he tried to break away that bar from the gate. It seemed necessary to him just then to put out all his strength to break something. And so he strained at the bar, without moving it at first; and then the breaking of it loomed up as the most important thing in life, and he shut his eyes and held his breath, and the hot blood sang in his ears, and then there was a sudden loud crack. . . . Then he came back to normal life again, and stretched out his numbed fingers, and twisted off the broken bar rather carelessly, and got a splinter in his hand, and pulled the splinter out, and came back to the gate and leaned on it, and filled his pipe and smoked.

Then he saw the old farmer who lived in the valley slowly mounting the hill and coming towards him.

"Been doing damage to your gate, I'm afraid . . . for . . . for fun," he called out to the farmer; "I'll have to buy you a new gate now!"

The farmer looked long at him, smiling curiously. "Us won't quar'l 'bout that," he said.

"That's true!" with a burst of laughter.

The farmer slowly came a little nearer. "Nice weather," he said after a time. Then he paused again and said: "My missus, her've been watching

you; and her told I to come out to zee. Her thought you was off."

"Off?" queried the other.

The farmer smiled and tapped his head: "Off!" he repeated.

J.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE EGOIST has pleasure in printing the following letter from Miss Harriet Monroe, the distinguished editress of *Poetry*. THE EGOIST offers no opinion on the merits of the controversy, but readers who are interested may refer to the original article by Mr. Jepson in the *English Review* for May, which has been reprinted in condensed form in the September issue of the *Little Review*. Correspondence on the subject is invited from Mr. Jepson, Mr. Harrison, or the editors of the *Little Review*.

To the Editor of THE EGOIST

MADAM,—I am left in a painfully unresponsive attitude toward the readers of the *English Review* by my enforced silence after Mr. Edgar Jepson's onslaught of last May upon *Poetry* and some of its prize-winners. So perhaps you will be interested to learn, through the following correspondence, that I made a humble effort to reply to him, to "demonstrate"—if I may quote from one of his letters—"that the punk [he] said was punk is not punk."—Yours sincerely,

Chicago, September 12, 1918.

HARRIET MONROE

Austin Harrison, Esquire, to Miss Harriet Monroe, enclosing the latter's article, "Mr. Jepson and United States Poetry," offered to the *English Review*.

DEAR MRS. MONROE,—I really think it is hardly necessary to enter into a controversy over Jepson's article. We are very full at this moment and I could not in any case find room now.—Yours sincerely,

July 9, 1918.

(Signed) AUSTIN HARRISON, Editor.

Miss Harriet Monroe to Austin Harrison, Esquire.

MY DEAR MR. HARRISON,—Your letter of July 9, returning my comments on Mr. Jepson, reminds me of the Kaiser's reply to Belgium. You invade our province, quite uninvited and undesired, and kill off its most prominent citizens. Then, when I protest, you inform me that "it is hardly necessary to enter into a controversy."

It would have been more in accordance with the British tradition of fair play if this consideration had caused you to decline Mr. Jepson's article.—Yours sincerely,

September 12, 1918.

(Signed) HARRIET MONROE

NOTICE

In this joint November–December issue THE EGOIST reverts to its sixteen-page size. This size will be maintained, but on account of heavily increased printing expenses the price per issue in 1919 will be 9d. and the subscription for twelve numbers, post free, 10s. (foreign subscription, 11s.).

As our efforts to find a British printer willing to print the complete text of Mr. James Joyce's new novel *Ulysses* have been unsuccessful, we regretfully abandon the proposal to bring out that work as a separately printed supplement.

In February the series "Philosophy: the Science of Signs" will terminate. During the time these articles are being remodelled for publication in book form Miss Marsden will contribute to THE EGOIST a short series of articles aiming at the analysis of the factors in the existing social situation. Later, she will begin a new philosophic series: "The Logic of Morals."

"THE WORK OF MISS REBECCA WEST": CORRECTION

Miss West writes to say that the pseudonym "Regina Block"—rather doubtfully ascribed to her in the above-named article in our last issue—is an error. The writer of the article offers very sincere apologies, and begs to withdraw the name.—EDITOR.

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