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SHORT ESSAYS
BY MODERN WRITERS

A COLLECTION FOR THE USE OF
UPPER FORMS

BY

SAMUEL CLEGG

HEADMASTER OF THE COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOL,
LONG EATON

NEW IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

THIS collection of short essays and reviews has been made with two chief ends in view.

The first is, that, for help in shaping their own essays, upper-form scholars may have before them suitable models, dealing with subjects such as are set in school or are akin to them.

There are many good collections of English essays, but of the big and classic things—a little aloof, perhaps, from to-day in form and spirit.

A schoolboy's essay must needs be comparatively short—after the study of the big essay his own often lacks proportion in its construction.

The essays here printed are typical of the best prose of to-day. Because they are short and so within the compass of what may be expected from a schoolboy, they will serve him as models for the build of his own essays.

He will enjoy them as good reading, and, though lacking their wealth of vocabulary and quotation, he may still in his own efforts catch something of

their spirit, and in some, even though remote, degree of resemblance follow after them.

The second and the more important reason for this compilation is to encourage senior scholars in the regular reading of the magazines and reviews in which these essays were first printed: they can have no better.

For kind and ready consent to the reprinting of these essays I am indebted to their authors, and also to the editors and publishers of the periodicals named in the Table of Contents.

S. C.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY	E. B. Osborn . . . *John o' London's Weekly.*	1
QUOTATION . . .	" Penguin " . . . . . *The Nation.*	6
THE SERVICE OF SCIENCE	*The Observer* . . .	11
BARHAM . . .	Arthur Symons . . . *The Bibliophile.*	16
ON CONSULTING THE DICTIONARY.	A Stalker . . . . *The Spectator.*	20
THE COMING OF THE WIRELESS TELEPHONE.	*The Spectator* . . .	26
W. E. HENLEY (POET) .	G K. Chesterton . . . *The Bibliophile.*	32
NOTES FROM A FRENCH COOKERY BOOK.	Mrs John Adams . . . *The Nation and The Athenæum.*	39
O JUNE THAT WE DESIRED SO !	P. Anderson Graham . . *Country Life.*	45
MILTON . . .	Professor Dowden . . *The Bibliophile.*	48
WHITE COAL . .	" Lens " . . . . *The New Statesman* . .	52 52
THE LETTER-WRITERS .	Maurice Hewlett . . . *The Nation and The Athenæum.*	59
HEDGEROW LIFE . .	*The Saturday Review* . .	63
THE USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES.	*The New Statesman* . .	67

		PAGE
The Preservation of Scenery.	*The Field*	75
Cats in Literature .	"Penguin" . . . . *The Nation.*	80
"Broadcast" Good and Evil.	*The Observer* . . .	86
Cheating . . .	*The New Statesman* . .	89
Beggars . .	*The New Statesman* . .	96
Jam	*The Spectator* . . .	103
Bed	V. H. Friedlaender . . *Country Life* and *Pied Piper's Street* (Arrowsmith).	108
The Perfect Ending .	Isabel Butchart . . . *Country Life.*	114

SHORT ESSAYS
BY MODERN WRITERS

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

By E. B. OSBORN, Literary Editor of the *Morning Post*

ONE of our most famous essayists, Hazlitt, tells us how he once found himself unable to get on with an important piece of writing. " I sat down to the task shortly afterwards for the twentieth time, got new pens and paper, determined to make clean work of it and stopped half-way down the second page ; and after trying in vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or observations from that gulf of abstraction in which I had plunged myself furiously, gave up the attempt as labour in vain." Afterwards, when saying, " I can write fast enough now," he consoled himself for this fit of inarticulate striving by the reflection that " one truth discovered, one pang of regret at not being able to express it, is better than all the fluency and flippancy in the world."

WRITING TO ORDER

All essayists, howsoever skilful and experienced, must have been possessed by Hazlitt's demon of dumbness often and often. When I first began to

fish up a living out of the dark depths of an inkpot, the late James Nicol Dunn, then editor of the *Morning Post*, asked me on a certain occasion to write a light gossipy article—an essay, in fact—on a topical subject. It had to be written against time, as generally happens in newspaper offices, and I soon began to be distressed by a singular poverty of ideas and words, which was only increased by hard, hard thinking. The hands of the clock in my room were soon moving visibly, yet the first sheet of paper remained a blank. After an hour I took that sheet to my editor and ruefully exhibited it, crumpled it up, and threw the ball into his waste-paper basket, and owned my utter incompetence. He lay back in his chair, that good friend of all 'prentices of literature, whose character is summed up in the line :—

> " A man he was, both loving and severe,"

and smiled gently at me. " You've been doing too much thinking," he said. " Don't think, just go on writing. It'll come. There's lots of time." I went back to my desk, relaxed my straining mind —and presently the thing began to emerge, faster and faster, until I could hardly get it down on paper fast enough. It was finished with half an hour to spare.

The Perfect Essay

There was good advice for all would-be essayists, though it must first of all be rightly understood. You are not to think hard while writing—because,

in the first place, all your thinking should have been done beforehand, and, secondly, an essay is not a logical argument, but an expression of personal emotion. Indeed, the perfect essay is the transcript of a meditative mood which may take you, unresisting, into all sorts of byways of reading and experience. A " leader " presents a case as logically as possible, and though the earnestness of the writer must be manifest if it is to create public opinion, it should otherwise be impersonal—the " I " must be sunk in the editorial " we " !

Digressions must be avoided ; every word should be on the wicket, so to speak. But what are faults in a three-decker leader are virtues in an essay, which must exhibit the essayist's personality, fluttering as on wings over his themes, now darting off in the direction of some kindred topic that suggests itself, and anon soaring in quest of aspirations and inspirations. But you must have thought widely and felt deeply about your theme if a meditation on it is to come out thus in the course of transcription. Out of a vacant mind, an empty soul, nothing worth reading can be poured. And the half-conversational style, like that of a teacher with his subject by heart and at heart, which is the Lamb-like model the most famous literary lion must cultivate in essay-making, is only to be achieved after a mastery of the matter in hand.

The Easiest Form

On the whole, the easiest form of the essay is that which might perhaps be described as a mosaic of

quotations. This may be written round an old book (say, *Clarissa Harlowe*) or some subject of universal appeal (epitaphs, say). I have chosen these subjects at random—they just came into my mind (a thing that is always happening to the experienced essayist, who lives in a state of unconscious cerebration) as beetles occurred to the hero of *Happy Thoughts* as a subject of conversation with his Fridoline. Now, given either of these themes, how should the apprentice to essay-writing enlarge on and embroider them ?

In the first instance, the right plan is to read *Clarissa Harlowe* from beginning to end (which very few of those who criticise it have done) and mark passages and episodes which touch the springs of emotion.

Richardson's Novels

Eighteenth-century readers wept floods of tears over it, and I defy any modern reader not to feel a lump in his throat or even drop a tear at times as he follows the persecution of the hapless heroine by her selfish lover and her " Harlowe-hearted " family. Remember that Richardson's novels were read in the days of their fresh triumph for moral reasons, and that the novelist, at Dr Johnson's suggestion, made an index—you might even call it a lexicon—of the moral reflections therein. Do not look up what other people have thought about that " large still book " (a phrase applied to *Clarissa* by Tennyson in conversation with Edward FitzGerald), but let your screed be essentially a

record of your emotions upon reading it, not omitting the sudden sense of the ridiculous which will often intervene between one pang of sadness and the next. Do all this, and you will have written something that expresses a phase of your personality; that is, a true essay.

In essay-writing it is expected of you to avoid hackneyed phrases, the worn-down similitudes so common in English, and to avoid hack quotations. If, then, your theme is epitaphs, you must avoid all the stock examples given in every book on the subject.

EPITAPHS

It follows that you must have sought afar for illustrative specimens, and have for some time been collecting material either in commonplace-books (I know one essayist who has over fifty of these hoards of memorable things) or in a retentive memory. The latter plan is the best; for remembrance gives up its treasures in a curious, unexpected order, which is itself a revelation of personality. Seeking for unusual epitaphs, I at once remember some beautiful examples which cannot be widely known. Thus there is a church in Oxfordshire where may be read these lines on a thronged grave:—

> "Here in one tomb together lie
> Grey age, green youth, white infancy";

and a five-stanza one, which in the third and fourth shows the love-lorn flush of true poetry:—

"So shall I bee
  With him I loved,
And hee with me,
  And both us blessed.

Love made me Poet,
  And this I writt,
My harte did do yt,
  And not my wit."

And I know of a suburban garden where cats are buried, each under his tiny grey stone and—but I *must* reserve that for future use. It is only on tombstones (not even in *D.T.* leaders nowadays) that Johnsonian English survives. That idea might be turned to account.

. . . .

Is this helpful? It is as you think, gentle apprentice. But I have shown you how to do it, having written an essay on essay-writing, which may not be good, but might be worse.—*John o' London's Weekly, March* 25, 1922.

"QUOTATION"

"QUOTATION," wrote a schoolboy, obliged to quote from memory, "is the answer to a sum in division." In a book called *On Staying at Home and Other Essays*, published some time ago by Messrs Longmans, I find some very hard things about the habit of quotation. The man who is fond of quoting, says the writer, often becomes as great a bore as the anecdotal man in conversation. "If

the quotations are good, you have probably no need to be reminded of them, any more than you have of the good story. If they are bad, you resent having them foisted upon you, as you resent the stale chestnut." This is on a level with the argument of Caliph Omar, who ordered all the books in Alexandria to be destroyed because if they agreed with the Koran they were superfluous, while if they disagreed with it they were pernicious. After all, quotation has its uses, even its merits. It adds a flavour of literature or a touch of quaintness to writings that would otherwise be dull, and it is not altogether a reproach to say that the best part of an author is what he quotes. " The wisdom of the wise and the experience of ages," was the opinion of a wise and experienced man, " may be preserved by quotation." Not only may they be preserved by this means; by it they are often passed into general currency.

Classical quotation, like treating, has now become a thing of the past. Outside the Universities, few regret its departure. Boswell tells us that when Wilkes condemned quotation as pedantry, Johnson was prompt in its defence, " No, sir, it is a good thing; there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world." That community of mind no longer exists. Nobody now is of the opinion of Cardinal du Perron that the happy application of a verse from Virgil is worth a talent. In Parliament, Gladstone was one of the last to whom that talent belonged. One of his most felicitous applications of Virgil

was in a speech on Parliamentary reform, when, turning to the Liberal Party, he said :—

> "I came amongst you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in formâ pauperis.* I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honourable service ; you received me as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas,
>
> 'ejectum litore, egentem,
Excepi.'
>
> And I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me,
>
> 'Et regni, demens, in parte locavi.'"

Dr Pusey once declared that the shield of the spirit was the great protection against German Biblical criticism. To this Dr Martineau rejoined that ignorance of the German language was another auxiliary not to be despised. I fancy that some people are deterred from classical quotation less by the fear of pedantry than by an imperfect acquaintance with the classical tongues.

One of the commonest objections to quotations is that their use shows want of originality. This, I think, is quite unfair. The art of quotation, at least in the opinion of one of its practitioners, requires more skill and delicacy than is suspected by those who see nothing more in a quotation than an extract. There can be originality even in the choice of quotations. Montaigne was original, yet he is full of quotations. Hazlitt was original, yet

he was a great quoter, and Mr Birrell—to whom among our contemporary writers I would give the palm for quotation—praises Hazlitt for being one of the most quotable authors in the language. No doubt quotation can be carried too far, and I quote Macaulay as an authority on the subject :—

> "I feel," he wrote to a friend from Calcutta, "a habit of quotation growing on me ; but I resist that devil, for such it is, and it flees from me. The danger is that I may become a mere pedant. It is all that I can do to keep Greek and Latin out of my letters. Wise sayings of Euripides are even now at my fingers' ends. If I did not maintain a constant struggle against this propensity, my correspondence would resemble the notes to the *Pursuits of Literature*. It is a dangerous thing for a man with a strong memory to read very much. I could give you three or four quotations this moment in support of that proposition ; but I will bring the vicious propensity under subjection, if I can."

Talleyrand said of an acquaintance who was always repeating the sayings of others : "That man has a mind of inverted commas." A commoner and a worse crime is to dispense with these marks of borrowing. For quotation has its ethics as well as its æsthetics, and one of its laws is broken when inverted commas, like distinguished speakers at some public meetings, are undistinguishable because they are not present. Mr Herbert Paul

has expressed the opinion that originality is only undetected plagiarism. A good deal of it is. But even if we take this gloomy view, to "convey" a writer's words without acknowledgment is a crime. Another law is that quotations ought to be accurate. We all know lines that have become deformed through second-hand quotation. Milton's

> "To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new,"

and Prior's

> "Fine by degrees, and beautifully less,"

are rarely quoted as they were written. Whether a man is bound to acknowledge the source of his quotations is an open question. I am inclined to support the negative side of the argument. If you have discovered a useful quarry, why should you be forced to make it known to all comers?

When a quotation has by long and frequent service become a mere *cliché*, it has outlived its usefulness, and deserves all the blame it may get. Macaulay's schoolboy and New Zealander, Pelion heaped on Ossa, the eyes of Argus, the arms of Morpheus, and their fellows, together with such old acquaintances as "nous avons changé tout cela," and "conspicuous by their absence" ought to be consigned to a museum of antiquities. One of the worst things about these semi-quotations is their horrible insistence in offering themselves. There is a story by O. Henry which shows how it might be possible to turn even *clichés* to account. A newspaper correspondent in the Russo-Japanese War

managed to construct a code which tricked the Censor and informed his editor of a Japanese movement by sending the following message :—

> "Foregone preconcerted rash witching goes muffled rumour mine dark silent unfortunate richmond hotly brute select mooted parlous beggars ye angel incontrovertible."

Interpreted, the message read :—

> "Concluded arrangement to act at hour of midnight without saying. Report hath it that a large body of cavalry and an overwhelming force of infantry will be thrown into the field. Contested by only a small force. Question the *Times* description. Its correspondent is unaware of the fact."

Those who have not read the story need only be reminded that "foregone" and "preconcerted" are, in a not unfamiliar style of writing, always followed by "conclusion" and "arrangement," in order to see how it was done.—PENGUIN, *The Nation, October* 16, 1915.

THE SERVICE OF SCIENCE

SOME TRUTHS AND HALF-TRUTHS

NOTHING connected with the current meeting of the British Association has quite the same claim upon reflection as the circumstances that the directors of our public traffic declined to give any

special facilities for those attending it. It packs many things into a nutshell, this spectacle of the seeker for knowledge denied the facilities bestowed so profusely upon the seeker for pleasure. It is an automatic record of how little progress we have yet made towards a conviction of the importance of brain-power, or an understanding of how far our destiny depends upon knowledge. It is far more true of ourselves than it was of Prussia after Jena that brains must recover for us what war has cost. We are handicapped by a narrow site, by expensive habits and traditions, by enormous inherited responsibilities, by the expiration of a lucrative industrial monopoly, and by dependence on a commerce whose foundations of peace and order have been profoundly disturbed. We are in many respects making a fresh start in competition with peoples at least equal to us in capacity, sometimes more energetic in temperament, and several of them more systematically trained in the requirements of modern economics. If we are to keep our place amid this rivalry and transmit to the future even that standard of life which we have received from the past, it can only be by the fullest employment of whatever resources our national mind may contain. Our industry must be brought to the highest efficiency of equipment. It must bring all that science can offer into its operations, and—what is not nearly so well understood—it must nurture the inherent energies and native spirit of science apart altogether from its day-by-day contribution to dividends.

The public has got hold of only a half-truth in its tardy envisagement of this connection. Science is not a slot-machine that will turn out packets of discovery under the stimulating pence of salary or endowment. It is an organism with its own life and spirit, which will serve only at its own leisure and in its own way, but must have its life and freedom if it is to serve at all. That the intelligent manufacturer should be ready to use its fruits is a necessary link in that service, but only a link. The first thing is that the fruits shall be there to use—that the increase of knowledge shall proceed with vigour and abundance. Science will not flourish except after its own genius and under its own direction. It will not live as a wage-dependent of industrialism who has to " make good " to the day and hour. The whole history of knowledge reveals the barrenness of the utilitarian motive. All through the Middle Ages the world besieged its gates for something which could be turned to account—for the Philosopher's Stone, for the Elixir of Youth, for the " tips " of astrology. It only made the scientist a charlatan, and his erudition a vain thing. It was not until the Renaissance liberated the spirit of pure curiosity that science as we know it sprang to life and began to transform existence by its benefactions.

As Sir Richard Gregory has put it, " Nature must be loved for herself and not for her dowry." Knowledge expands with all the prodigality of organic instinct, unearthing a thousand truths for one that can be turned directly to practical use.

Even where they are to have such a value there may be years and even centuries to wait for its consummation. The ultimate industrial synthesis may be dependent on a dozen scattered discoveries that seemed mutually irrelevant and trivial in themselves. Fifty years separated Faraday's magnetised coil from the electric dynamo. Twice as long intervened between Priestley's discovery of oxygen and its application to metallurgy. So humdrum a commodity as saccharin was not found because somebody was looking for it; it came as an accidental revelation to a chemist whose line of research pointed neither to that nor to anything else of practical significance.

To realise that industry requires science, is all to the good. To imagine that it can secure the whole-time service of science by shrewd negotiation, is just as distinctly to the bad. The relationship must be one of status, and not of contract. The capacity of applied science in the factory will steadily wither up if pure science is not functioning in the background in its own autonomous sphere. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but it is not the mother of discovery. That proceeds only from the desire to know for the sake of knowing. Science, like religion, demands a pure love, not a mere attachment to its loaves and fishes. If it became the thrall of money, its ministers would eventually sink to the level of the alchemist and the astrologer. It is regrettable that no great interpreter has brought home to democracy the moral economy of the scientific world, for it would show

that gospel of service made flesh which is the only remedy for our stagnation and schism. It has its faithful saints and its glorious martyrs. And in its diffused singleness of mind and constancy to the ideal it preserves one continuity of " increasing purpose " for a distracted age.

What the community has to do for science is not to conscript or hire it, but simply to make the scientific life possible by the necessary conditions and atmosphere. Those who follow it are not esurient, but they must live. There is no question of levelling up their rewards to the mercantile standard, but simply of preventing the pursuit of knowledge from being crushed out by poverty, discouragement, and incomprehension. Wherever research is brought to a standstill for lack of money, wherever a fine brain is diverted from it because its owner can see no prospect of subsistence, a national loss is incurred of far greater moment than those of fire or shipwreck. There is material and moral loss in one. It was not an Englishman who said that " the Republic had no use for savants " but it is Englishmen who have practised that error with most reproachful consistency. They have lived secure in the confidence of other endowments which are now exhausted, and of happy conjunctures which no longer exist. We had a flying start in the first lap of the industrial race. We are running now on our merits, and we shall require the utmost of that brain-craft without which neither hand-craft nor change-craft can hold the day. Room must be made for the intellectual life to

pursue its instinctive activities, to enlist its chosen recruits, to develop according to the law of its own being.

> "The times have been
> That, when the brains were out, the man would die."

And it is even upon such times that we are launching the barque of State and Empire.—*The Observer, September* 10, 1922.

BARHAM

ARTHUR SYMONS

THE art of humour in metre has come and gone among English writers of verse in all ages, as if something in the language clamoured for a more or less illicit freedom, for leave to leap the bounds, if it could be done without a fall. We get it in the form of high spirits, of agile mockery, of delicious or delirious nonsense. In every instance comic substance and novel forms or contortions of meter go together, the rhyme and rhythm being the bearing-reins on folly. Perhaps the most certain tight-rope dancer on the thin and swaying wire of comic metre, was the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. The Rev. Richard Harris Barham was a great creator of nonsense, and he had a prodigious faculty for versifying. He wrote entirely for his own amusement; or, as a friend said of him: "the same relaxation which some men seek in music, pictures, cards, or newspapers, he sought in verse." Most of

his rhymes were written down at odd moments, often after midnight, and with a facility, his son tells us, "which not only surprised himself, but which he actually viewed with distrust; and he would not unfrequently lay down his pen from an apprehension that what was so fluent must of necessity be feeble." In all this helter-skelter of "mirth and marvels," begun for Bentley's *Miscellany* in 1837, when he was nearly fifty years of age, there is nothing feeble in all the fluency. No verse that has been written in English goes so fast or turns so many somersaults on the way. He said once, of a poem which he did not care for, "that the only chance to make it effective was to strike out something newish in the stanza, to make people stare." If that was ever his aim, he attained it, and not in his rhymes only. The rhymes are marvellous, and if they are not the strictest have the most spontaneous sound of any in English. The clatter of "atmosphere" and "that must fear," the gabble of

> "And so like a dragon he
> Looked in his agony,"

with even the more elaborately manufactured

> "twisting dom-
> estic and foreign necks all over Christendom,"

have so easy a jingle as they go galloping over the page, that we are hardly conscious how artificial they really are. With the rhymes go rhythms, so bold, swift, and irreverent, and with pauses so

alarming, that one is never able, if one has read them as a child, to get out of one's head the solemn thrill of

> " Open lock
> To the Deadman's knock ! "

or the ghastly gaiety in the sound of

> " Hairy-faced Dick at once lets fly,
> And knocks off the head of young Hamilton Tighe "

Under all the extravagance, like a light through a lantern, there is meaning, let widely loose, but with something macabre, grim, ghastly, above all haunted, in it. Barham's material came to him partly out of old books, which he read to catch from them a harsh Protestant laughter against Catholics; but for the better part from legends which he found in his own neighbourhood. A scholar revels throughout these unclerical rhymes, drawing wicked and harmless imps out of book and bottle as he pores, past midnight, over his black-letter folios and his port. And so we find, in these poems made up of fear, fun, and suspense, a kind of burlesque which is not quite like any other, so jolly is it as it fumbles with death, murder, tortures, and terrors of the mind. Here is burlesque of that excessive kind which foreigners see in the tragic laughing white clown in the arena, with his touch of mortal colour in the cheeks. And it is full of queer ornament, as in this interior of Bluebeard's castle, furnished as if by Beardsley :—

> " It boasts not stool, table, or chair,
> Bloudie Jacke !

But one Cabinet, costly and grand,
Which has little gold figures
Of little gold niggers,
With fishing-rods stuck in each hand ;
It's japanned,
And it's placed on a splendid buhl stand."

Was there ever a gayer and ghastlier farce than in this very poem, *Bloudie Jacke of Shrewsberrie*, which goes to the jingling of bells, in a metre invented as if to fit into an interval between Poe and Browning ? To be so successfully vulgar in *Misadventures at Margate*, is to challenge the lesser feats of Hood, and the prose of a narrative like *The Leech of Folkestone* (part of what the writer called "prose material to serve as sewing-silk and buckram"), is, for all its oddity, almost as chilling to the blood as Sheridan Lefanu's in his book of vampires, *In a Glass Darkly*. But where Barham is most himself and wonderful in his way, is in the cascading of cadences rhymed after this fashion :—

" There's Setebos, storming because Mephistopheles
Gave him the lie,
Said he'd blacken his eye,
And dashed in his face a whole cup of hot coffee-lees."

Not Butler, nor Byron, nor Browning, the three best makers of comic rhyme, has ever shown so supreme an inventiveness in the art.—*The Bibliophile, April*, 1908.

ON CONSULTING THE DICTIONARY

At seventeen one does it by stealth, ashamed of being ignorant of anything; at twenty-seven and for ever after, if one is sincere, one keeps one's dictionary at one's elbow and lets pass no occasion of consulting it. The young monarch disdains advice and rules with only his magnificent desire for the right to guide him; the mature despot discovers that what is wrong with himself and every one else is lack of knowledge or judgment, and slowly he realises that the scarred and dowdy counsellor, whose painful methods and apparently childish reasoning and reiteration repelled his fresh, joyous spirit, is his indispensable choice. Being a Queen, she makes Leicester and Raleigh stand in her presence, but calls for a chair for Burleigh; being a King, he accepts Pitt and victory with reluctance and tears.

This is a counsellor that inevitably grows on his master. If one has the habit of consulting the dictionary, he is even inclined, in the midst of conversation with a friend or an acquaintance, to reach for it in order to get the exact meaning of a word that has raised doubts in his mind. This is a compliment to a tried friend because it adds the confidential thoughts of a third, but it may appear to a visitor or a casual acquaintance to be merely bad manners, interrupting the attention that he considers his due as a guest; accordingly it is necessary at times to hesitate and consider whether

Smith is to go away thinking his host ill-bred, or whether, by the act of introducing him to your dictionary, he is to be sacramentally admitted to friendship.

The love of books is intensest in youth and almost invariably cools with the passage of winters, but the love of words is a mild passion that is seldom present in youth and seldom absent in maturity and age. There is a year in the life of all intelligent men and reading women when they make up their minds that they must have a dictionary. In the case of the humble-minded it may be eighteen, and the proud may fight against his necessity till he is thirty, but in the end he surrenders and loves it the better when he finally realises that he did not know all its heart by reading and by common conversation.

One can do without an encyclopædia; the persuasive advertisements prove it. But in the long run one cannot be without a dictionary; not in the big bookcase but in the revolving one, or in the small bookcase by the side of one's chair. Who ever saw a flamboyant advertisement of a dictionary? If it is advertised at all, there is no inducement to purchase, nothing insidious in the description, no argument showing that you require to be cajoled. The thing is described and you buy it or you stick to your well-thumbed friend, as you will. I am not a disciple of the big, many-volumed dictionary. Neither purse not bookcase has the dimensions that match folios: the article I cherish is a three-and-sixpenny thing that is little and good, comparatively little and really good. It is no

trouble to handle, just the right weight and size to throw at anyone. This is a test that no book-lover would hastily apply, but it occurs reasonably enough. If a volume is too light to hurl with effect, it is not ponderous enough for a dictionary; if you have to lift it with both hands, it is a work of reference rather than a book, and the trouble of getting up often from a chair in order to pay homage to it at its own shelf is enough to generate in time the disregard which is the second greatest insult that can be rendered to a book.

While the publisher does not make any personal appeal to you to purchase, he is wary in regard to some points. In his eyes the age of a dictionary is as important a matter to the possible purchaser as the age of a lady who thinks of matrimony is to herself. Accordingly the year of birth of my dictionary is not told, but as it appears from a short preface that it is based on a larger edition of 1898, it cannot yet be too old for marriage with a true mind. Thousands of words have been added to the language since it appeared, however, and possibly scores have really died, though nothing in creation dies as slowly and silently and obscurely as a living word. The speed at which important events develop is indicated by the fact that such words as aeroplane, aerodrome, dirigible, and all that series, agar-agar, aspirin, chassis, rag-time, and teddy-bear are to be found in an appendix. There is already room for another large appendix in which a multitude of such words as butter-ticket, meat-days, *poilu*, Anzac, and such phrases as "William the Weed" and

" scrap of paper " will require to be defined. Some words such as frightfulness, bulletin,non-combatant, neutral, and culture, or rather, *Kultur*, will as certainly require redefinition

Occasionally I find omissions, sometimes of quite common words, and I take pleasure in writing them neatly in the margin. Perhaps there is more satisfaction in finding the dictionary lacking than there would have been in finding the desired word in its place ; in any case it serves small purpose to make these rubrics, but the inclination is irresistible. It is the only one of my books that I feel free to marginise. Talking of faults recalls the anger of the autocratic Scottish parson who, when his meanings were disputed by reference to the first of dictionary-makers, asked his argumentative parishioner the despotic question : " Am *I* not as good an authority as Dr Johnson ? " This was merely an extreme way of expressing dissatisfaction with one definition or accent. How often we are inclined to rebel against our own dictionary, even though consultation of half a dozen others corroborates it ! As a small instance of this may be adduced the pronunciation of the word " curlew." My dictionary gives the accent as falling on the former syllable. I disagree with this both because I have always heard the accent placed on the latter syllable, and because this accent far better reproduces the phonetics of the cry.

On what principle do dictionary-makers provide illustrations ? I find pictures of the most simple things, and have puzzled for a long time over

intricate definitions that would have been much clearer if there had been a design to serve as illustration. I suspect that there is a tradition in these things. Dictionary-makers are probably human beings, and remember the fascination that the quaint pictures of old-fashioned dictionaries provided for their own childhood, for that these pictures are added for the attraction and delectation of children I have little doubt. Witness the pictures in my dictionary of an abacus (that is, the counting-frame), a poleaxe, ratlines, a retort, a belaying-pin, a sextant, the sheepshank knot—what boy has not marvelled at the number and beauty of sailors' knots?—a Highland target, a cutter, and many other boyish delights.

The grim humour to which Dr Johnson gave full rein in his dictionary is in my volume only to be discovered in one instance. Hackwork is defined as "literary drudgery for which a person is hired by a publisher, as making dictionaries, etc." So the compiler on a sunny morning looked out of his window at the high scurrying clouds, smiled at the unimportance of all things done indoors, and turned again to his task.

One of the pleasantest uses of the dictionary is to dip into it without aim except to discover and enjoy new words and meanings, as the elder Pitt was accustomed to do while preparing a speech. If one does this while suffering from depression or from some obscure pain, it is astonishing how malignant the dictionary becomes. It desires our company only when we are at ease. When we are

troubled it drives us away, or distresses us by directing our eyes almost entirely to definitions of disease, obscure words that in our moments of comfort might have no existence, so little are we capable of perceiving them. On occasion one opens the dictionary in quest of interesting words, and succeeds in discovering nothing of permanent interest. On other occasions the finds are abundant. On a single page, for instance, I have found these enticing words with which I have hitherto been quite unfamiliar :—

ruelle—the space between the bed and the wall.

ruff—the act of trumping when one has none of a suit left.

ruddoc—the redbreast, a word of Spenser's and Shakespeare's.

rudenture—the figure of a rope with which the flutings of columns are sometimes filled.

rudge—a provincial word for a partridge. Probably Partridge and Rudge, as in Barnaby Rudge, have the same significance as a surname.

The appendices are full of interest. The More (why more ?) Common English Christian Names are given in one of these. The first column includes Aaron, Abiathar, Abigail, Abihu, Abijah, Abner, Absalom, and Amaziah. This is a staggering survey of the more common English Christian names, especially when one finds that there is a separate appendix devoted entirely to Scripture Proper Names, in which Aaron and Abner do not appear, though the others do. One of my pleasantest recollections is the pronunciation by a Cumberland

family of girls of the name of their four-year-old sister Abigail. I was taught to pronounce that name Abbigāl, a fearful cacophony. They were continually shouting A-bikl, as nearly as possible a word of two syllables, almost disjoined, and with a very long *a*. With that pronunciation the name became one of the pleasantest imaginable.

A whim of the dictionary's is to attract the eye to some new word when one opens it in search of the accent or meaning of another. On occasion one indulges this whim of a tried friend so far that one ends up by forgetting the word that one is in pursuit of, and has to ferret it out of the backwoods of the brain again. Recognition of such small perversities in inanimate things is more than a fancy.—*The Spectator, July* 29, 1916.

THE COMING OF THE WIRELESS TELEPHONE

THE wireless telephone which has been talked of so long is coming at last, and appears to be coming like an epidemic. The craze for it is a fever in America, and it has already spread to Canada. We read in the *Manchester Guardian* a vivid account of how the factories in Canada are working day and night to turn out the instruments, and how even so they cannot keep pace with the demand. When Mr Kellaway made his announcement about Post Office affairs in the House of Commons on Thursday, 4th May, our temperature rose a little,

for he announced that everything was prepared for the invasion of the wireless telephone. The administration and control of the whole system of wireless telephony had been thought out. On second thoughts, however, we fancy we ought to say that perhaps our preliminary rise of temperature and quickened pulse were caused by gratification at finding that the Post Office was on the alert. Indeed, the whole thing does require thinking out most carefully, or we shall have a mess.

There is undoubtedly a mess in America. No State system of control was arranged before the market was flooded with instruments and the ether became filled with a multitude of messages which jammed one another. Many unhappy owners of instruments found that they could receive nothing but odds and ends of messages, and they listened for the most part to a perfect Babel of unintelligible sounds. Enthusiasts sat up at night in order to have the pleasure of listening to something intelligible in the small hours of the morning, when few messages were being sent. It is necessary to explain that so far it has not been possible in wireless telephony to make the numerous distinct wave-lengths which are possible in wireless telegraphy. The number of wave-lengths in telephony which can be used without mutual destruction is strictly limited. Therefore, if those who send out wireless telephonic messages and those who have receiving instruments get to work in advance of a State-imposed system of control there is bound to be trouble and disappointment. In providing for the

use of privately owned wireless telephones, the only way is for the State to recognise a certain number of commercial companies which shall be allowed to use the remaining number of wave-lengths when the needs of the public services have been satisfied. The mischief in America was that several competing private companies used the same wave-lengths and cancelled one another's messages.

Sir Henry Norman has stated in the *Times* that there are about 750,000 receiving sets now in use in America, and that one firm alone is said to be selling instruments at the rate of 25,000 a month. It is proposed to place all wireless telephony in America under the Minister of Commerce, and to allocate the wave-lengths first to the Federal authorities, secondly to the State authorities, thirdly to the city authorities, and lastly to commercial broadcasting stations. Fortunately, Great Britain has profited by this lesson and will be ready, or nearly ready, for the epidemic when it bursts upon us. It will be gathered from what has already been said that the dream of millions of persons owning their own wireless telephones and being able to call up their friends whenever they like is nothing but a dream. It is conceivable that in the distant future it will be possible to refine upon the present distinctions in wave-length, and that wireless telephony will be put on a footing with wireless telegraphy. But men of science see no prospect of that at present. The wireless telephone, so far as one can see ahead, will in

no sense be a substitute for the ordinary wire telephone which now indifferently helps us and plagues us.

When all reservations have been made, however, the coming invasion will be remarkable enough. Within a few years there will probably be as many wireless telephones as there are now gramophones. Although people will not be able to use them to telephone to their friends they will use them to receive the messages from the Stations of the broadcasting companies. They will be able to listen to speeches, concerts, dance music, to the announcement of news and so forth. Sir Henry Norman estimates that at present a satisfactory instrument for receiving messages over moderate distances should cost between £10 and £15. A more sensitive instrument, capable of receiving all Morse telegraphy and telephony at home and of hearing the European stations, including, of course, the telephony of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, ought to cost about £30. It is said that the best instruments under good conditions give results which are free from any of the disagreeable metallic harshness of most gramophones. We have read of a large number of people in America dancing with complete satisfaction to the strains of a band which was playing some fifty miles away. The telephone was, of course, fitted with an intensifier.

One of the services supplied by the broadcasting companies which seems to be becoming popular in America is that of telling stories to children at night. This rather gives us pause. Do we really

want to mechanise the whole life to such a point that the place of fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts who have the gift of telling stories and of enjoying conversations which become progressively drowsy and disconnected, will be taken by the professional raconteur appointed and paid by a broadcasting company? And doubts are raised by much else besides the telling of stories to children. We shall all be at the mercy of the broadcasting companies. They will have to provide a service of entertainment and information which will appeal to the greatest number. They will try to hit the average taste as the theatres and the film companies do. We are afraid that for the person whose taste is not represented by the greatest common measure there is not going to be a great deal of joy added to life by the wireless telephone. Let us hope that some broadcasting company will manage to keep its head financially above water by broadcasting a really intelligent service. That will depend upon whether it can find enough people to buy instruments tuned to its particular wave-length. If it cannot do so it will go under—as many excellent magazines and newspapers and authors have gone under—for want of support. The companies, of course, will get their revenue from the sale of their instruments. They can no more demand payment for the messages which they discharge into the air than anyone can demand payment for the breezes which roam about the earth. For our part we think that before we buy a wireless telephone we shall inquire rather carefully into the

nature of the entertainment and the information we are likely to get from the sellers.

Lord Northcliffe has suggested that wireless telephones will compete with the Press. The extent of the competition may very easily be exaggerated. It is obvious that if you want to get a particular piece of news by wireless telephone you must be waiting for it about the time when it is likely to be sent. There is this advantage about printed words that you can put your newspaper aside till you have time to read it, but you have to catch your wireless message on the wing or miss it altogether. Nevertheless, many people living in isolated places will find it well worth while to take some trouble to get the news they want—say, the result of a race, or a match, or an election, or a division in the House of Commons. It seems that the broadcasting companies in America are already following the practice of newspapers in drawing a revenue from advertisements. Interlarded between the music and the news and stories for children there are the discreet announcements of trading firms. This, too, may become a little trying, for if you are waiting for something else which you want to hear you will be bound to listen to the advertisements, whereas on a printed sheet you can skip what you don't want to read. Many people, again, like to meditate upon what they read. These certainly will not ask the telephone to read aloud to them. They will accept a bare fact from the telephone, but would regard a long expression of opinion as intolerable.

But, after all, the wireless telephone with its advantages and its faults is coming for certain; the epidemic is very near. Its merits and demerits will depend upon the taste of the public who support the various broadcasting services. In the end we shall get the wireless telephone that we deserve.—*The Spectator, May* 13, 1922.

W. E. HENLEY (POET)

By G. K. CHESTERTON

THE changes that pass over great societies are often too big to be seen. That is, they are too big to be summarised under a public name; but it is a gross mistake to suppose that each of them is not felt as a private fact. Every man feels the faith or the sin; but every man feels it as something peculiar to himself. It is the most secret part of every separate man that makes up a real social movement. The general philosophy is drawn not from what everybody says, but rather from what everybody does not say, but feels the more. Public opinion is made up of all the most peculiarly private opinions. Hence we always find a paradox in the fashion of speech and thought. The changes which men in any age are always talking about are never the changes that are really going on. The changes that are really going on are not those which men pompously applaud when they get together, but those which they vigorously promote when they get by themselves. For

instance, England was turned from an agricultural to a commercial country, while people were talking publicly about things quite different; chiefly about whether Charles I.'s head ought to have been cut off. Lord John Manners and his Young England company, when they tried to revive agricultural England were like that other Nobleman, Lord Tomnoddy and his Young England company, who woke up after the man had been hanged. But because the change came privately do not suppose that it came unconsciously. On the contrary, it was quite specially conscious because it was quite specially private. Every man was publicly interested in Charles I.'s head; but every man was privately interested in making money at any cost. And the mad factory chimneys we see rising everywhere, and the monstrous cities in which we walk have been created, not by men's public speeches, but by their private thoughts.

Now in the whole literature in the later nineteenth century there was an analogous process; a process which every man felt inside himself and which was yet not much mentioned in the many open debates about art. The change I think was this; that every literary man began consciously to consider himself as a character in a play. He exaggerated his own oddities because he had to conflict with other and opposite oddities. He was the black spot in the picture; someone else was the white. In all the most striking writers of our own time one can feel this picturesque and partisan quality, this quality which assumes the

existence of dialogue and of different figures. One can feel it, for instance, in Mr Rudyard Kipling and Mr Bernard Shaw; one can feel the footlights at their feet. Nothing could be more different from this than the old, especially the mediæval conception of the function of a man. The mediævals believed that one man should have in his head the balance of the whole Universe; a smaller cosmos, but still a cosmos. The mediævals thought that a man should have inside his skull a little sun and a little moon, and yet littler stars, all drawn justly and to scale. Every man should have the equipoise of everything. There must be no conscious pitting of red against green according to the mediævals; every man as far as his intellect went must be perfect even as his Father in heaven was perfect. The last of the mediævals in England was Herbert Spencer.

This modern literary method, that of exaggerating one's own peculiarities as if one were playing in a farce, gave the world a number of arresting and exciting personalities. Its great defect however was this; that it tended to give many men quite false personalities. I mean that even great men sometimes took so totally wrong a view of themselves that much of their work was wasted. They preferred their own masks to their own faces. They painted themselves so fiercely for the footlights that they concealed their own original good looks. It is only these men who had real reputations to spoil and spoilt them who are of any interest in literary history. We need

not concern ourselves with mere imbeciles and impostors. We are not troubled about mere asses in a lion's skin. The only interesting cases are just those two or three cases of one lion dressing up in the skin of another.

One of these curious cases is that of the late W. E. Henley. He was a man who really suffered from the histrionic habit which has grown gradually on men of letters. He was a man of large heart who deliberately narrowed his heart. He was a man of large brain who deliberately narrowed his brain. He was a man thoroughly by nature a poet who forced himself, against all his own emotional trend, to be a boisterous and topical balladmonger. The critics of the future will have to take a great deal of trouble to extricate the real Henley from under the heavy accretions of the fictitious or dramatic Henley. But they will take the trouble; for they will be digging up gold.

No critic will ever be accused of misrepresenting Henley; the only man who misrepresented Henley was Henley himself. If we read those poems in which Henley was striking a deep note, as distinct from those in which he was thumping a tin kettle, we shall not find it at all difficult without having ever known him, to say what kind of man he was. He was a sad, sensitive, and tender-hearted pessimist, who endured pain that came from nowhere, and enjoyed pleasure that came from nowhere with the exquisite appreciation of some timid child in Maeterlinck's plays. He was not so much a Stoic as a tragic Epicurean. But he had

this truly sublime quality in the highest type of Epicurean, that he enjoyed a pleasure so much that it reconciled him even to pain. He certainly believed (in his soul) that the rule of the universe was bad. But his glory was that he was ready to accept the rule for the sake of the exceptions. He enjoyed a red rose so poignantly and perfectly that he was ready to go through thorns for it, even though it was only an accident of the tree and not its crown. His poetry rose to its noblest height when he spoke of the strange joy of having snatched some good from an evil world. This led him to dwell much upon the past; and to him memory was a kind of intoxication. Neither he nor anyone else ever wrote anything much better or more real in its own way than those lines about things already secured.

> "What is to come we know not. But we know
> That what has been was good—was good to show,
> Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
> We are the masters of the days that were.
> We have lived. We have loved;
> We have suffered. Even so.
> Shall we not take the ebb, who had the flow?
> Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
> Dear, though it spoil and break us need we care
> What is to come?"

That is the true Henley; and as I have said, it is not very difficult to understand him. He was what every poet must be who shares the unbelief of our age; a man melancholy though not without happiness; a man reconciled to a second best.

A poet who has lost his gods must always be like a lover who has lost his love and has married a sensible woman. For the earth which Henley enjoyed has never been the original starting-point of men's thoughts or labours. Heaven was man's first love; and the earth is only a substitute; even when it is not only a marriage of convenience.

Unfortunately in his lifetime, and especially in his later years, Henley hid himself behind the mask of what he thought he ought to stand for. Somebody told him, or he somehow got into his head, that he was the representative of rude energy and militant empire. His talents were entirely in the other direction. So far from specialising in strength he describes in his most penetrating poems a condition of beautiful weakness. So far from being by nature a prophet of the British Empire he had not the temperament to be a prophet of his own town or street. He did not believe in them enough; he did not believe much in anything. There were some things (it is true) which he definitely disbelieved in; he certainly had a sincere hatred for democracy and for Christian morals. But positive belief involves a certain simple fixity of the intellect which was not at all a part of his personality. He did not really believe even in the stone of the street or the stars in the sky. But he had this strange quality of a great imagination about him, that he could enjoy things even without believing in them.

This quite false conception of himself as a Raw Head and Bloody Bones produced a crop of poems

which are not in Henley's good manner or even in his bad manner; they are not in Henley's manner at all. It would be untrue to say that Henley was ever a hypocrite; but some of his poems are hypocritical. "The Song of the Sword" is, I am afraid, hypocritical. It is all about the Lord and the Sword; two things that Henley knew nothing whatever about. Of the sword he had no grasp or experience, and in the Lord he didn't believe. The heavy Old Testament manner of the whole thing was utterly alien to his true nature, which was sensitive and modern, exquisitely attuned to pleasure and to pain. He was not a solemn youth like David; he was an Epicurean invalid. A man more unmilitary cannot be conceived; if he had ever held a sword in his hand, he would have been filled either with pain at having to inflict wounds or with pleasure in inflicting them. Both these emotions are feminine and unsoldierly. And the most painful evidence of all of his unfitness for such topics can be found in this, that when he was attempting to be specially masculine he always came near to that most unmasculine of all ideas—cruelty.

But it is not with the false Henley, but the true Henley that the world will deal. He caused his own exquisite voice to be drowned in the clamour of his own quite fictitious reputation as a sort of political ruffian. He drowned his own voice with his own drum. But anyone who cares to-day to take up one of his books of poems will suddenly find himself in an atmosphere utterly unexpected and

very calm. He will break into a sudden stillness. He will read a few quiet poems about grey streets and silver sunsets. He will find that the poet has a peculiar power of describing the voiceless and neglected corners of a great city; the little grass-grown squares, the little streets that lead nowhere. The poet feels the lost parts of London as more lost than the lost parts of the wilderness; and he loves them more. He has an almost eerie power of realising certain aimless emotions of an empty afternoon. All will seem full of a kind of quiet irrelevance; and yet the very foundations of the reader's heart will be moved. The sadness will only seem an expression of the sacred value of things; and as he walks home at evening after reading such a book every paving stone and lamp-post will be pathetic because it is precious. Nay, the world will seem brittle because it is precious; as if it might be broken, by accident.—*The Bibliophile, March* 1908.

NOTES FROM A FRENCH COOKERY BOOK

It would never do to translate this book [1] into English. No mistress would ever dare to look a self-respecting cook in the eye again after giving her a book which says, talking of cooking partridges: " Don't talk to me of tame partridges, fed on colza, which makes them taste like a dead lamp. Give

[1] *Les Bons Plats de France: Cuisine Régionale.* Par Pampille. Paris: Arthème Fayard et Cie, Editeurs. Rue du Saint-Gothard.

me," he cries (for no woman of any nationality could write about food as "Pampille" does), "give me a wild partridge, a partridge that has run on the plains, a partridge that has picked up its food in the open fields, a partridge that has known fear and thirst—it has a different flavour."

"Will you telephone to the poulterer's yerself, madam, fur a thirsty and frightened partridge? I don't think I'd care to meself," would be the inevitable question, after frostily reading a recipe that contains a dozen different herbs and half a bottle of white wine.

Pampille startles one all the time.

"You must be at least thirty, to love the *pot-au-feu*," he tells you; he calls the national French soups "four poems." "Onion soup" is the name of one of the poems. He says dogmatically that fat cooks have the turn of the wrist needful to make a good recipe into a successful dish. He hastily adds that a little love is quite essential, and he warns us that cooking is not a trade, it is a vocation.

Pampille does not approve of cookery classes. Did you ever know a Frenchman who did? His recipes are all mother-to-daughter ones, he pins his faith to a cook who has been in the same family for thirty years, and he offers you the complete pedigree of the dishes that are the special triumphs of various parts of France—except of some that "lose themselves in the night of the past," as he puts it.

He is serious. Take the matter of salt. He

gives the address of a grocer in Piriac, in the Loire-Inférieure, who stocks real, coarse, salt-marshy salt. He tells us that gourmets say that each grain of this special salt contains " a little landscape."

There is no good game, it appears, except in France. The reason is that hares, partridges, quails, and pheasants realise that for centuries they played noble parts in fables, and in traditional tales, so they live up to their reputation, and try to be " as exquisite as they can."

" Serve the herring very hot, eat it with the sauce I told you of, and go to bed without speaking to anybody," is the abrupt end of a recipe for smoke-cured herring. There is nothing special about the recipe, nor about the highly peppered vinegar sauce. The herring must be the three-halfpenny size. But I dare not try it on my family. The vision of my household dining off three-halfpenny herrings and a well-peppered sauce, then rising and walking silently upstairs, and, still silently, going to bed, is so disquieting. It is the only occasion on which Pampille failed me as to details, In what frame of mind would they retire ? In joy, or in distress ? Would they feel like H. G. Wells's Mr Polly, or like " Those who know that happy feeling that comes after eating So-and-So's Supreme Sardines " ? The whole thing reminds me too much of scare lines in the evening papers.

He gives a recipe for *Bouillabaisse.* To prepare it properly, it ought to be cooked on the seashore (of the Mediterranean, I imagine), as the fish of

which it is composed all come from it, and most of them he says, don't travel. This classical dish is quite easy to prepare (having first caught all the different kinds of fish which must go in the pot—or two pots rather, one for hard, one for soft, fish), but just as his readers are beginning to cheer up when they learn that an unskilled fisherman "among his singing pine-trees" can cook it quite as well as the cleverest Marseilles cook, he chastens them by adding: "But to understand this poetry, to appreciate it, but above all to succeed in cooking it properly, you must have been born in Provence."

There is a captivating simplicity about his tales. Before giving a recipe in which fresh sardines figure largely, he tells us that once he and a friend were lunching out of doors at Marseilles on this dish when a hungry dog passed. The dog liked the look of the newly served dish, and cleared half of the plate with one deft lick. To make us realise the charm of "La Bourride," he goes on: "Well, it looked so delicious that we finished without disgust what the vagabond dog left, and we never regretted it."

"Some people," he says, in writing of what the French always call *les petits oiseaux*, "are too impatient to cut them up, so they just take them by the head and make one mouthful of them, crunching the bones; by no means a bad idea."

He is interesting on the subject of wines. We gather that a good bottle of *vin de Jurançon* is the joyful and indispensable companion of a thick

soup called *garbure*. More: it should be eaten at a certain inn, half-way between Lourdes and Pau, "in the company of Pierre Lasserre," who, I take it, keeps the inn. He describes the view at the Auberge de Bétharram, which looks on the river Gave, whose clear green water flows between charming rocks that have nothing tragic about them, but which gives strength and firmness to the happy landscape. He evidently adores that part of France, though he warns us that it is less suited to *les grandes passions* than some other corners. But it is a grand place for food. This recommended red wine to drink with the *garbure* and with Pierre Lasserre looks innocent, but flies to the head at once. However, it gives a gay drunkenness, and only makes you make silly little mistakes, such as mixing up your words, especially your conjugations. You say *finoir* for *finir*, and *recevir* for *recevoir*. But, he adds comfortingly, it does not make you ill-natured, like that terrible Burgundy.

Indeed and indeed, this is no book for the kitchen cookery-book shelf.

More sedate remarks come at the end of a recipe for a hygienic evening drink.

"You carry the steaming bowl (beaten eggs and milk) to the child, who must be already tucked up in bed. He blesses his cold in the head, as he drinks and smacks his lips."

I am glad to say that he does not appear to realise at what period of dinner we, in Britain, drink our champagne. I quail when I think of the

deadly directness of his remarks had he known. He talks of us very little. What is there to say? He wipes us off his map on account of our tiny wine-glasses; "thimbles," he calls them. As a matter of fact he rather despises champagne.

"It is the least personal of all our wines. Of course, you must offer your guests at the end of dinner a glass of champagne. But it is only a customary, traditional, gastronomical bit of politeness."

The wines of the Rhône are dear to him, and he talks approvingly of George Meredith, who possessed a regular library of "Côte Rôtie" and of "Hermitage." He refers appreciatively to the chapter in *The Egoist*, "An Aged and a Great Wine."

He has no interest in doctors and diets.

"Eat what you like, so long as it is hot, properly flavoured, and cooked just long enough," he says.

In describing a bad dinner—("Oh! if I could get hold of the cook," he cries)—he scoffs at the various French mineral waters that are sure to be offered. He adds gloomily: "The only good table water, water with the microbes all left in, in never seen on the table."

The book ends on rather a pessimistic note, as if Pampille needed a liver pill, after too many of his own highly spiced and buttery recipes.

"Only one fruit ripens in November: the medlar. It ought not to be so much despised; for, after all, it does what it can. It tastes like a *confiture* of dead leaves; it tells the tale of the

sadness of the gardens. To enjoy it to the full, you must feel rather sad, and eat it near the fire with a little spoon, and be careful to spit out all the stones."—A. A. A. (Mrs John Adams), *The Nation and the Athenæum, June* 24, 1922.

O JUNE THAT WE DESIRED SO!

In a countryside not very early and not exceptionally rich in wild flowers, the first wild rose usually appears in July. But this year it came out, frail and fleeting, in May, and on 1st June an unkempt hedgerow which the writer passes morning and evening was marked by thickets made red or white by its blossoms. The fragrant honeysuckle also was in full bloom on the first day of the month. It was gathered into great bouquets by girls and young men who, in spite of the coal strike, had found their way to this quiet and secluded lane. Though they scattered on the road as much as they took away, that might be their way of showing the effect produced by the sort of day which William Morris described long ago in his *Earthly Paradise* and has probably occurred over and over again since the time of Chaucer and the early singers. There was the sky " with harmless clouds beset," the soft breezes blowing sweet with " the scent of bean fields far away." There was also a great deal to stir a feeling of regret. The wild rose is the last of the procession of spring flowers, or, rather, the last queen. The elders are coming into flower too,

and perhaps we do not always do justice to a whiteness as pure as that of the hawthorn. The latter was uncommonly early this year, but not so prodigal as it generally is. Some of the frosty winds that played havoc with the fruit blossoms in April appear to have injured the wild hawthorn also. Yet it came out quickly. We found buds ready to open in the first week of April and they were in full flower by the middle of the month. The land is not very highly cultivated, with the result that at the moment of writing many of the hayfields are white with moon daisy. The chestnut is withered, but never have we known the holly in this part of the world to be so prodigal of blossom. It is going back now and, like the broom and gorse, which we have never known to flower with such extraordinary profusion, making the wild bank and common into sheets of bronzy gold. No sooner did their flowers fall than the plants appeared to have settled down to new and very old tasks, the ripening of the seed and the production of those young growths which have a green as tender and as beautiful as anything produced in the early days of spring. The clamour of the birds has in large measure abated. In the dark the nightingales still sing, but not so numerously. Their domestic arrangements are completed and they are gradually sinking back out of romance into commonplace—if it be commonplace to perform zealously the duties of a fond parent. The cuckoo, which, according to legend, changes tune this month, is a shade less assiduous than he was in May when there seemed

to be one in every tree. Instead of hailing the old birds as returning visitors one is now on the look-out for the grotesque spectacle afforded by seeing a great, fierce-looking young cuckoo with all the expression and attitudes of a bird of prey being fed by a tit not nearly half the size of the closed hand of the daintiest lady. Upon her he exercises a tyranny ten times greater than that of her natural brood.

So in a joy that is half sadness the most beautiful month of the year begins to pass even with its birth. The birds that sang so joyously on their first arrival are now like travellers intent on finishing whatever business remains to be done so that they can proceed to pack their trunks and return whence they came. They have no longer time or inclination for serenading or flirtation. They are concentrated on more useful if more commonplace duties. So with the flowers. One after another they came in joy and brightness, but their glory fades just like that of the gaudily coloured insect which for a day or a week buzzes round, perpetuates its species and dies. The wild cherry is a typical example. It for a few days spread a wreath of the loveliest white over the trees in the lane and those that grow on the edge of the woodland, but almost before one had time to realise the transformation the white petals began to float down like snowflakes and the cherry trees became once more as undistinguished as the elms and oaks.—*Country Life, June* 11, 1921.

MILTON

PROFESSOR EDWARD DOWDEN, LL.D.

MILTON'S soaring spirit, which Wordsworth likened to a star, must not make us forget his senses, framed for rich and delicate pleasures. The eye—while sight was his—the ear, the sense of smell, the sense of taste, were with him inlets of delight. The Puritan poet expressly rejected the common doctrine that soul and body are distinct and different in kind; the whole man is for him indivisibly one. He honours the joys of wedlock as sacred. He is the least morose, the least ascetic of poets. The fact that his life, viewed as a whole, was dedicated to great ends and had a continuity of purpose that is rare has obscured the fact that he was in a high degree sensitive and impulsive. The last page of Garnett's little biography of Milton—a far juster appreciation of the man and his work than the life by Mark Pattison—dwells on this point. In 1734 Jonathan Richardson wrote of Milton: "He was always in haste," and he goes on to quote the poet's own words, from the *Letter to Diodatus*: "Such is the impetuosity of my temper, that no delay, no quiet, no different care and thought of almost anything else, can stop me till I come to my journey's end, and finish the present study to the utmost I am able." In his wooing Milton was as precipitate as Shelley; in the rupture with his wife he was far more precipitate. His vehemence in politics was more un-

qualified than the vehemence of Shelley. He steadied himself by devotion to great ends and worthy causes. He regarded himself—too much, perhaps—as a dedicated person; but without the help of this lofty self-consciousness, his temperament might have wrecked Milton in mid-career. Yet it is not to be supposed that his steadfastness of aim made him rigid or unsocial. "He was delightful company," said his daughter, "the life of the conversation, and that on account of a flow of subject, and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility."

In his writings on matters of national interest he is not to be regarded as a practical politician, who is satisfied with the second best because the best is unattainable, but rather as a poet or a seer setting forth the highest ideals, ideals of domestic life, of education, of civil and ecclesiastical liberty. And it was he, the Puritan poet, who dreamed of an organisation of the pleasures of England under the superintendence of an enlightened government. If his soul, as Wordsworth declares, "dwelt apart," it was only because he took a more comprehensive view of the national well-being than any of his contemporaries. He embodies in his art the spirit of the Renaissance united with the spirit of the Reformation; he is Hellenic and at the same time Hebraic. It is an art studiously concrete—visualised for the eye, full of majestic harmonies for the ear—yet founded upon somewhat abstract conceptions. And these abstractions lend themselves to impressive effects of contrast—darkness and light, heaven and hell, the righteous and the

fallen angels, Christ and Satan, the Lady and Comus, Samson and Harapha, the spirit of gaiety and the temper of genius, which is, in the old sense of the word, melancholic, the infant of Bethlehem, and the fallen divinities of the Pagan world. Hence, as compared with Shakespeare, his conceptions of life and character are simple and lack the complexity of actual character and real life; hence they are less instructive; but they are hardly less inspiring.

Milton's temperament was naturally joyous, and until he had fallen on evil days he was sanguine in an extraordinary degree—idealist as he was—in his hopes for the speedy realisation by the English people of his vision of a nation, righteous, free, strong, disciplined, and enlightened. Even when compassed round in darkness with dangers, he was sustained by that faith in human effort, under the guidance of divine Providence, which is expressed by the Chorus of *Samson Agonistes*. A foiled or disappointed idealist runs a risk of becoming embittered or even cynical. In all Milton's writings, while it is true that indignation often breaks the bounds, there is no touch of the cynic. His youth was one of aspiring and joyous self-culture—self-culture not for its own sake merely, but with a view to some great achievement. His mid-manhood was filled with the joys of the combatant champion of liberty, champion of England, and he could even exult in the loss of sight sustained "in Liberty's defence, my noble task." His elder years were happy in the accomplishment of the dreams and

designs and prophecies of his youth. His joys from first to last were arduous, and might almost be called severe. That to some extent removes him from our common, facile sympathies; but he aspired towards those highest delights, in whose countenances there is something of awe.

The alteration, of course, is great from the writer of *L'Allegro* to the writer of *Samson Agonistes*. If viewed aright, the change calls forth no feeling of pity but rather that of a noble pride:—

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail,
> Or knock the breast."

In the young poet's contrasted pieces the higher joys are those described in *Il Penseroso*, and the hope for old age there expressed is that it "may attain to something of prophetic strain." The aspiration of early manhood found its fulfilment in the more advanced years of Milton's blindness. For such an one as Milton a life of uninterrupted continuity is in itself a source of peculiar satisfaction: and although he felt called on during many years to labour with his left hand—the hand that wrote prose—his life had the virtue of a rare continuity. It seemed to him that the very sources of high poetry in a nation's life—liberty and virtue—were threatened, and he laid down the lyre and took up the sword—such sword as he could most effectively wield; he cast off his singing robes and put on his buff-coat of prose, because greater than poetry itself is that from

which all lofty poetry springs. He would not have been Milton had he done otherwise, and once engaged in strife, he would have been other than himself if all his passions had not been aroused. His prose writings are the writings of a poet not because they include occasional passages of almost unmatchable eloquence; they are a poet's work because the central conceptions of those which have permanent value are the conceptions, not of a politician but of a prophet; and even the fierce, insulting rages by which some of them are disfigured do not so much resemble the violences of the classical scholar, in an age when the mammoths of Renaissance learning tore each other in their slime, as they resemble the objurgations and mockery of a troubled seventeenth-century Elijah against the seventeenth-century priests of Baal.—*The Bibliophile, December* 1908.

"WHITE COAL"

AVIGNON.

IN the spendthrift dissipation of its inherited resources, this generation is peerless in history. Everywhere we are guilty, not only in Europe, but also in America, where the present reckless and wasteful destruction of timber, for instance, has never been equalled. Mr Roosevelt was no less right in urging the "conservation of natural resources" than in his protests against that "race-suicide" which is now resulting in a complete

substitution of the racial stock in America. A recent pronouncement by an expert has given some indication of the rate at which the wealth of ages is being spent in such ways as the " hebdomadary " production of some of the most odious newspapers ever " written by office-boys for office-boys." The growth of timber, throughout the world, falls very far short of its destruction. As for coal the case is known to all. We are, for the most part, living on our capital, and, since that process begins to inconvenience ourselves, quite apart from any question of our duty to posterity, we had better look about us.

We should live on income. That income is the solar energy to which, in past ages, we now owe all our coal and peat and oil and timber. We should plant more trees: " they'll aye be growin' while ye're sleepin' " ; drain swamps ; irrigate deserts. Very conspicuous is the present waste of the solar energy which falls not upon the land but upon the sea. That, also, is available for us, no less than that which falls upon the land. It lifts the water into the sky whence, in falling to the ocean level, it can work for us. Modern civilisation, at least in certain countries, such as England and France, has yet to apply the principle of the mill-wheel. On many occasions I have referred to this neglected source of power, and what I have seen to-day constrains me to return to it. Fourteen years have passed since I last saw the abundant waters of the Rhone flowing so swiftly past the piers of the broken bridge at Avignon, and still it is unharnessed.

How utterly incomprehensible is this waste to anyone who has seen what water-power can and does accomplish in North America, or Switzerland, or Bavaria—not to mention Scandinavia, which I do not know at first hand! This unused water has come, in large measure, from the Lake of Geneva, where I saw it a few months ago, more than a thousand feet above sea level. A few drops of it are used, I remember, just before the Arve joins it below Geneva. Doubtless there are other places, but, on the whole, here is a colossal, inexhaustible, almost costless source of wealth and power, flowing through France unused. What a blessing for any man or country to know, "beyond a peradventure," that he is thrown upon his own resources and must make the most of them! It is the lesson we shall soon have to learn in England, and to accept it would do France incomparably more good than to look to Germany for wealth. It is true that a scheme to use the water-power of the Rhone has lately been mooted, but one cannot comprehend what, after all these years, the French are waiting for. I am a student of biology and write here without figures, and subject to the correction of engineers, but I suppose it is well within the mark to say that the water-power of the Rhone would move every train on the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranée Railway, and supply every town on its banks, practically for nothing, with all the power it wants—for ever, in proportion to any period of time that we need think about.

A very different scheme is now being mooted to establish a service of steamers for tourists. The idea is delightful, but if its realisation is incompatible with the hydro-electric scheme—as to which I am ignorant—we may observe the historico-political difference between them. To use the Rhone as a source of wealth for France by means of hydro-electricity is to act as a still living and therefore still creative nation; to use it to attract the money of American and British tourists who wish to see the Palais des Papes at Avignon, or the Roman remains at Arles is perhaps the best way of accepting the inevitable; but surely nations, like individuals, should seek to postpone the hour of decadence—hitherto seemingly inevitable for both, but perhaps hereafter to be postponed for both, even *sine die.*

Observe the cleanliness and cheapness of Munich. Trams, lifts in hotels, electric light, power for factories, what you will: all from the water-power of the limpid green stream which Campbell, in *Hohenlinden,* called "Iser, rolling rapidly." In Canada, last summer, I had an opportunity of seeing a hydro-electric plant at close quarters. Two fine cities, Fort William and Port Arthur, with a magnificent "speedway" between them, stand at the head of Lake Superior. Everything that moves or lights or warms in them derives its power from a small fraction of a waterfall. As not only a Londoner, but a member of the Royal Institution, where Faraday laid down the foundations of electro-magnetism and showed how an electric

current can be derived from mechanical motion, I was delighted to take the opportunity of seeing Kakábeke Falls, as the Indians called them. The cataract is even now superb and terrible, but enough water has been withdrawn from it for every purpose of those twin cities, from the supply of power for factories or locomotion to making toast or pressing one's trousers. A great metal tube carries the water down to the station where its force is transformed. The electric current runs away to do its work. The water simply passes steadily downwards and, taxed of all its power, oozes into a quiet pool below. The place is very clean, powerful, simple, and needs very little man power. Day and night, perpetually, the thing goes on. No men suffer anthracosis, no ponies are deprived of sunlight, no ghastly explosions or other accidents entomb the workers concerned in the utilisation of this "white coal," as they call it in North America. No questions as to the "life of the mine" arise; no air is befouled nor sunlight obscured; no women are enslaved in what should be their homes; and everyone is served with power galore at rates most ridiculously low. The thing seems to have every conceivable advantage and no disadvantages whatever.

Cries of vandalism have been raised about the utilisation of Niagara Falls. When last I saw them it was impossible to conceive anything more magnificent, yet at that time, by means of some 650,000 horse-power of the total of five millions—as I was informed—they were copiously serving

cities in all directions, Canadian and American, over distances of scores of miles, not to mention the many new factories, spotless and hygienic, of the American and Canadian cities called Niagara Falls. Again, every possible advantage and no disadvantages: from the biological and the sanitary point of view, sheer perfection. In the future, when engineers can derive all the power they desire from intra-atomic sources, they may condemn the loss involved in sending an electric current to considerable distances, but, meanwhile, just contrast even that process with the waste and dirt and labour and space involved in the carriage of, say, coal or timber or oil. In past years I have described the amenities of life, for persons of the most moderate means, as I have met them in such cities as Buffalo and Niagara Falls, N.Y., thanks to cheap electricity, and, above all, the incomparable boon to the housewife. I long for these things for my own country, and desire to persuade our public that we should use all the resources of this kind that we have. Even if the whole of our internal hydro-electric potentialities amount to only some seven-tenths of those of Niagara Falls alone, why should we not use what we have? To supply almost costless, clean, hygienic, quiet, inexhaustible power to cities and industries and the arts is not vandalism: least of all is it to be condemned on any ground of beauty or ethics when compared with what it is competent to replace. Water-power can be turned almost directly into life and beauty. It is not vandalism to turn

barren soil into fertile; to grow golden harvests where none grew before. Water-power can and does do this. Turn it into electricity, as in Scandinavia, and use the electric power for the fixation of the atmospheric nitrogen, and there you have the fertiliser which will yield fresh food and life and health and beauty for your city population. This is a long way round for the solar energy, but enables us to live on what reaches the sea as on what reaches the land. And, similarly, if the grandiose plan for harnessing the tides of the Severn and using gravitation thus for electric energy were possible, what a service, what a multitude of services, for South Wales and Bristol! The first demonstration of water-power that I ever saw was at the Royal Institution, perhaps some fifteen years ago, when the late Professor Silvanus Thompson showed how the electric arc was being used for the synthesis of nitrites in Scandinavia, and from that hour to this the elegance and inexhaustible value of hydro-electricity have fascinated me. Perhaps the play, *Welcome, Stranger!* now running in London, which shows the transformation of a New England village when it used its waterfall may help to arouse public interest in the subject in Old England, one of whose most consummate experimental geniuses gave to mankind all the benefits of "white coal."—LENS, *The New Statesman, February* 11, 1922.

THE LETTER-WRITERS

MAURICE HEWLETT

THERE is no art more apt for personal judgment than that of letter-writing, for there is no other art in itself so personal. What makes it so in particular is that it is privy to two instead of one; and that sets it off from all other kinds of writing. The reaction of the multitude upon the artist is different in kind as well as in degree from that of the individual. The world at large hears the poet even when he addresses Mæcenas or Maria Gisborne, and he is well aware of it. Even if he indite a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow one of his own is cocked to the passengers about her. So, too, with "Discourse upon our Present Discontents, in a letter to a Noble Lord," where his lordship is no more than a stalking-horse. The letter which is written with an eye on the general (even if it be the posthumous general) betrays itself. It takes a forensic spread, cannot avoid the rhetorician's gesture. It is as if a man should write a tragedy for Drury Lane. He frames his periods to the echo. Good letters may have been written on those terms, as good tragedies may have been written for Drury Lane (though their names escape me); but they are not *in pari materiâ* with private letters, and cannot lie beside them. Three-quarters of his way through life Stevenson discovered that his letters might be copy; and they were—

and good copy. But they ceased to be such good letters. The community of interest was violated, and perhaps there was no going back. It has been charged against Walpole (and I see that Mr Saintsbury suspects him) that his punctiliousness in securing the return of his letters to Mann was to ensure their publication. Personally I don't believe it, because I fail to detect any tarnish upon their naturalness. He was all his long life engaged upon memoirs of his times, and needed them for that purpose. There is no consciousness in the letters themselves than any other eye than his correspondent's was upon them, or to be so.

One of the great charms of the letter as a piece of art is that double personality involved. Practitioner and patient act and react. Observe how Mme. de Sévigné attunes her pen. Always delightful, she reserves the best of her malice for Bussy, of her wit for Mme. de Lafayette, of her heart for her daughter, of her delicate reserve for M. de Guitault. One would like her letters to the Cardinal de Retz. She loved and, oddly enough, revered that Eminence. The desire to please should have been beautifully evident there. So also Lamb was always at his wildest when writing to Manning, finding something in the sage to egg him on. Wordsworth, not surprisingly, provoked him to irony; but Coleridge had his heart. It was only to him that Lamb wrote freely of himself. The same thing is noticeable in Gray, never perfectly natural to anyone but Thomas Wharton. He wrote to Bonstetten as to a beloved child;

to Mason as from an indulgent uncle; to Wharton as an equal. Gray comes next to Cowper, I think, in excellence; but you can read in him the sentences of a man who disapproved of himself. Cowper, who in charm and translucency of wit is the nearest we have to Mme. de Sévigné, is at his most winning in his letters to Lady Hesketh. The situation with her was delicate. She was the sister of his old flame, not far perhaps from being herself a new flame. He never overstepped the modesty of his nature; yet never said less than he ought. Britain has bred no truer gentleman than Cowper.

If Cowper was a true gentleman, Horace Walpole was a fine one, much too fine to betray it. He could snub with severity—witness his extinguishment of Mason when the time was ripe. But he did it, not *en grand seigneur*, but as a man of common sense. Though Mason had forgotten himself, Walpole did not. Perhaps he could not. For all his republicanism, he was very conscious of his rank, a Whig through and through. But I cannot remember any instance of his using his rank to crush a bore or an impertinent. Now Byron wrote with intolerable insolence to Murray, and could hardly keep patronage out of his letters to Tom Moore. How he galled the kibe of the miserable Hunt the victim has declared.

What are the properties of a good letter-writer, then, genius apart, and a good correspondent implied? Leisure and love of the art are, of course; self-esteem and the desire to please, obvious. Esteem of the correspondent follows. No artist

has ever succeeded who despised his audience. Byron, it may be said, succeeded, and did despise his audience. But I doubt his success; at best he was only second-best. He produces restlessness in the reader, dis-ease. The fact is that he was a *cabotin* in grain, and would have postured before his shoeblack if he could not get another looking-glass. You must be able to depend upon your letter-writer to this extent, at least, that he believes what he is telling you at the moment. With Byron you could not. One other requisite of excellence there does seem to be, if only because it was nearly always there, and that is *an ache*. As a grain of flint to the oyster, so is unhappiness to the poet, or an ache to the letter-writer. Our best have been unhappy or discontented men. Swift comes first. Mr Saintsbury calls him "one of the unhappiest lovers in the world." What sort of a lover he was I cannot say at the moment; but there can be no doubt of the misery in which he passed his days. The problem in Swift's touching *Journal to Stella* is how he could have had the heart to keep it up, as he did, while he was "carrying on" with Vanessa in town. But he did it—and you can feel it trembling underneath. But to pursue. Cowper despaired, Gray disapproved of himself. Mme. de Sévigné longed; she was permanently an-hungered. Lamb was a haunted man, hag-ridden by ever-present fear. Thackeray was sorrow-stricken; FitzGerald, deeply dissatisfied with the "innocent *far niente* life" which Carlyle found so tolerable in him, cannot be called happy. Carlyle

himself, his tormented wife; and again (to return to him) Byron. Those are our best, and all unhappy, or disgruntled. Walpole is out, Chesterfield is out, Harriet, Lady Granville, is out. Good as they are, they are not of our very best. The texture is too hard, too metallic. The wit has the glitter of a diamond. There is no dew. What is wanting? Heart.

I don't speak now of love-letters. Those are not art at all, or if they are, the worse love-letters they. But with letter-writers generally the fact does seem to be that unhappiness, or at least discontent, has shed a bloom upon their letters which ambition or the desire to please could hardly have given them. Does not Cowper's wistful smile betray him, with his doom impending? Is not Gray's *leucocholy* pervasive? Mme de Sévigné's heartache, Carlyle's stomach-ache, Jane Carlyle's bitterness—— ? *Sunt lacrimæ rerum*, indeed. These things tell. At least, they lie hidden in the pearl.—*The Nation, May* 27, 1922.

HEDGEROW LIFE

ENGLAND has been called by many foreign visitors a country of fertile fields, green woods, good roads and *glorious hedges*. The latter are strikingly beautiful as the seasons change, clad as they are in vestures of ever-changing colours. In spring the foliage is bright emerald green, darkening as summer advances until autumn tints the landscape,

and then gold, red and brown blend with some of the darker greens that are later in changing colour. Even when winter's grip is on all, the hedgerows bordering an old lane are highly attractive, when every twig is encrusted with hoar frost which glitters and radiates in many different lights, in the gleams of winter sunshine.

Wild flowers of many kinds flourish on the banks and in the ditches in their season. Wild life, from the tiny insect to the fox, make their haunt or home here for a time. There seems to be a certain amount of affinity between these creatures and human beings, particularly so with birds; for one knows from personal observations that they prefer hedges in close vicinity to a high road and near houses. This year in such a vicinity I found no less than fourteen different nests in forty-five yards of hedgerow. But in two fields away, along a hedge over one hundred yards long, there were only two blackbirds' nests, and one chaffinch's. Before this bird has completed his fantastic dance for the mate he is wooing to admire, the blue-tit's note, when he is searching for a mate, sounds like the tinkle of a little silver bell up and down our hedgerows. When we hear the chaffinch singing his utmost from the topmost twig of a bush or from the outside bough of a tree, we know that his mate and nest are close by. This bird ranks amongst our neatest and most expert of nest-builders. The nest is cup-shaped, made of moss and lined with horsehair, and the outside adorned with lichen. It is a perfect specimen of neat

architectural work. Yet this is not always so, for I have found them very slovenly built and without any outside decoration.

It is in the hedgerows that that sentinel for all wildings, the blackbird, and that sweet songster, the thrush, frequently (not always by any means) nest and rear their young. Linnets, shrikes, finches, and many others nest and feed here also. The turtle-dove prefers an old thorn hedge to build her frail platform of twigs for her two white eggs ; pheasants and partridges constantly nest in the hedge bottoms, and under the bank tangle, more often than in the woods.

Insects innumerable thrive here, and form the food of the insectivorous creatures that inhabit our beauteous hedgerows. My work is always among such places in the winter, and I have been surprised at the quantity of insects our little wren finds in the crevices and among the mosses on the old stems. Rabbits burrow easily in the banks, as the roots make this soil porous ; and many people would hardly credit that so timid an animal, whose every movement, aye, and even the eye, speaks of timidity, will drive away its dread enemy the stoat, in defence of its young. This has been witnessed not only by me, but by others who walk or work in the open fields or woods.

Moles have their main runs through the banks into the damp ditches, and I have known eight caught in the same run in a day. There is an old saying, " As blind as a mole," but put your finger within an inch or so of its nose, and then tell me

what you think of his blindness. Rats stay here till harvest is gathered in and the last hedge fruit has gone; then the majority move to the nearest building. Stoats and weasels hunt and live here for a time, then move on. Snakes, frogs, toads, and lizards are all to be found here at times. Many meals I have unearthed for toads and frogs when ditching. It is very interesting to watch one of these creatures creep up to a wriggling worm or insect. If it is an insect, one lightning thrust with his wonderful tongue and it has vanished. With a large worm it is different: an inch or two often protrudes from the corner of his mouth, and the expression on his face as he tries by a series of gulps to stow it out of sight is a study worth seeing. Owls hunt up and down hedges with regularity every night, and if poor froggie is hunting for his food among the grass a little distance from the ditch, his piteous cry tells us one of these most useful birds has caught him. Well-versed is the fox in all the ways of hedgerow life, and often he waits for hours for a hare to slip through her "mew" in the hedge-bottom, or for a covey of partridges to dust themselves at the foot of the bank. This is the hedgehog's sanctuary, and he can be found here at practically any time of the year by those who know where to look for him.

The fruit which hedgerows yield is best known to country people. The blackberry (the fruit of the bramble) and the crab-apple make exquisite jelly; and an excellent preparation is made from the juice of the crab-apple for sprains and bruises,

known as "Verjuice." Sloes and elderberries make an ideal cordial for winter use. Years ago the flowers of the latter were gathered and distilled by country damsels into a wash, to aid their complexion. An old hedgerow that I have visited many times is always fresh in my memory. A little distance away is a small hamlet with its grey old (church) clock tower mellowed by the hand of Time and surrounded by a peaceful "God's Acre" where many men with whom I worked as a boy are at rest, as I once heard a Surrey man say, "under their daisy quilts."—*The Saturday Review, May* 20, 1922.

THE USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

THE Public Library is still regarded by quite a number of people as a mere device by which servant girls may be enabled to read Miss Braddon at the expense of the ratepayers. It is true, of course, that to some extent public libraries serve as a popular substitute for the middle-class subscription libraries, and they are bound to keep a large supply of popular fiction. There is a certain danger, indeed, that high-minded librarians, sternly conscious of a mission to educate the public taste, may seek to ignore this very proper function of the public library and refuse to purchase second-rate fiction. But it is a worse mistake to exclude such laxative literature from the shelves than it would be to fill them with it. Most librarians steer, in fact,

a middle course. Even when they scorn the client who reads nothing but novels, they stoop to conquer, in the hope that the hook baited with fiction may draw the fish up to higher things. But they are also at pains to provide good fare, both of literature and of technical and scientific books, for the amateur and the student. If their resources were larger, they could supply both sections of the public without stint, but they are almost always short of money, and inevitably the rival claims conflict.

In the mind of the librarian thinking of his public, books divide themselves roughly into three classes: tosh, literature, and technical appliances. We use the word "tosh" in no condemnatory sense, but merely to describe the books which are bought, not because they are good by any critical standard, but merely because they are readable. "Literature," of course, includes good fiction as well as poems, plays, essays, and all manner of general creative work. "Technical appliances" include all books which are read to serve a utilitarian purpose in the widest sense—books for students of every kind as well as ordinary manuals of trade or science. Between these three classes, which overlap to some extent, the librarian has to strike a balance. Literature has the first claim, and until the library has a reasonable stock of standard works, it cannot afford to venture far into the region of either tosh or technique. But, given a going concern already provided well with standard literature, every week presents its problems of adjustment between the

conflicting claims of the three groups upon the limited resources available for purchasers.

Two factors have in the past made these resources smaller than they need have been. Until 1919, the maximum amount of the library rate was fixed by law so low as to make the provision of a reasonable service very difficult. Moreover, the benefactors to whom we are indebted for many of our public libraries were, in some cases, far more ready to spend money on buildings than on books. Large grants were secured and spent in the erection of large—and often very ugly—buildings. These buildings were got for nothing, but they were very expensive to keep up, and the library was often magnificently housed, but quite unable to buy out of its income a tolerable equipment of books. The tendency to build palaces has been checked in recent years, especially with the growth of branch libraries, and an improvement of service has been the result. The limitation in the library rate has also been lifted, but, in these Geddesian days, it is hard to find money for such a luxury as reading at the public expense.

In spite of these obstacles, most of the big towns and a few of the small ones have developed very efficient services. Both the novel-reader and the lover of good books—the terms are by no means mutually exclusive—are well looked after, and of late years the better libraries, often in close touch with the elementary and secondary schools, have organised excellent juvenile departments. In this, as in many respects, this country has not gone

nearly so far as the United States, but a good beginning has been made. The libraries have been least successful in caring for the student and the technician, who have often to go hungry or to avail themselves of other institutions. The reason is clear enough ; the arts and sciences are many, and historical, scientific, and technical works are numerous and expensive. Moreover, a good work of ordinary literature is a good book until it is worn out, but the scientist and the technician are always harassing the librarian by publishing indispensable new editions. Nor is this all. Most public libraries have a reference department, and there is a constant difficulty, in the case of technical books, in deciding whether the lending or the reference department is the more appropriate place. The position is worst where the library is rigidly departmentalised, but even where books may be borrowed from the reference shelves, the student loses in one way at least part of what he gains in another. He can borrow the book he wants, if it is in, but when he wants it for reference, he finds that it is out.

Under the present conditions of library administration, it is impossible either to solve this problem or to give the specialist student an adequate service of books. The library system has grown up purely on a local basis, and each town has attempted to meet its own needs without regard to the doings of its neighbours. As a result, the larger towns did far the best, and the countryside had practically no libraries at all until the Carnegie Trustees stepped

in with their rural scheme, since taken up by many of the County Councils with their aid. But localism not only failed to provide for the needs of the countryside; it also placed an intolerable demand for self-sufficiency upon the shoulders of each urban library. It is obvious, however, that specialist students are not very many in relation to the general reading public, and that it would be foolish, even if it were possible, to provide a complete service of books for them in each district separately.

The useful institution known as the Central Library for Students came into being, under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association, as an attempt to co-ordinate this branch of library work on a voluntary basis. It has grown very rapidly, and many public libraries now subscribe to it, and thus secure a call on its central store of books for students of every kind. But the need has far outrun the possibilities of purely voluntary provision. This was recognised by the Adult Education Committee which, in its excellent Report on Public Libraries, recommended that the Central Library should be taken over and made the nucleus of a national circulating library to which all the local libraries would subscribe, and from which all would draw their supplies of books too special or too expensive to be acquired locally. This part of the Committee's Report unfortunately remains among the many unfulfilled aspirations of the post-war period. It will have to be carried into effect before a good book service can be assured either

for the countryside or for the great majority of the towns.

Apart, however, from the provision of a central library, there is the question of closer co-operation between the libraries of different localities. Something could be done by interchange of books between library and library, and especially in London a multiplicity of inferior reference libraries within working distance of one another could be replaced by fewer and better libraries still easy of access. The libraries of London and of some of the big groups of adjoining towns in other parts of Great Britain stand sorely in need of co-ordination into a single system. There is need, indeed, for many branch libraries and depots to which books can be sent near the reader's home, but there is no case for half a dozen wholly distinct library services within a single homogeneous area. Six bad services are no substitute for one good service. This problem, of course, is intimately bound up with the whole question of Local Government administration. The library is not the only service which would benefit by the adoption of a larger area as the unit.

At present, the public library is in the care of a separate committee of each council, which has taken advantage of its powers under the Library Acts. There has been much controversy of late concerning this arrangement. The Adult Education Committee, standing for a wider conception of the educational system, held that the library should be brought under the control of the Education

Authority, acting through a special sub-committee. Clearly, the public library can only do its work well if it is in the closest touch both with the schools and with the bodies organising adult education in the area. Theoretically just as it is right to broaden the idea of education so as to include every phase of organised cultural activity, it is right that the public library should be recognised as a part of the educational system. The librarians themselves, however, are for the most part strongly opposed to the change, and hold that the Education Authority, regarding the library as quite a minor part of its work, would probably economise at its expense For the time being, the librarians' case is a strong one. To transfer the libraries to the Education Authority just now would be to invite drastic economics at their expense. But, for all that, the Adult Education Committee were right, and the transfer will come when the broader idea of education, which is already recognised, achieves the sanction of public opinion.

It is improbable, now that the occasion of the Adult Education Committee's Report has been let slip, that the needed reorganisation of the public library system will be made for some time to come. For the present, we must muddle on, each library acting for the most part on its own, and therefore spending unprofitably much money which could be better used for the development of a co-ordinated system. The Central Library, we may hope, will continue to expand, but, clearly, it cannot do the work that is needed unless it is taken over, properly

supported from public funds, and made the nucleus of a national system. The Carnegie Trustees, we may hope, will continue their work in the stimulation of rural libraries, and the local libraries will extend their experiments in providing for the special needs of children, in devising forms of co-operation with their neighbours, in the increased use of book-boxes and travelling libraries, and in making general the "open access" to the shelves, which all good librarians have long ago adopted. These steps and others like them all help to prepare the way for the properly co-ordinated library system which will come only by national action.

The public library is important, not only because it places the best books at the disposal of the poor student or specialist, but also because it can be the most powerful of instruments in the education of the public taste. A good library does not content itself with handing across the counter the books which are demanded; it allows the reader access to the shelves, and it provides persons who are ready to advise him and to put him on the track of the sort of books he wants. There is in this respect all the difference in the world between good and bad library administration. The good library is not merely a storehouse; it is a place where children and adults alike learn what to read. The problem, therefore, of making the libraries efficient is not merely one of co-ordination or of providing a good service of books, but also one of getting the right people as librarians and assistants. Librarianship has achieved recognition of late years as a

university course. If the course is post-graduate, well and good; but the indispensable qualities for a good librarian are not bibliographical knowledge or even dexterity with card-indexes, but a good general education and a wide sympathy with all sections of the reading public. For the best librarian is not he who buys the best selection of books, or makes the best catalogue of them—important as these things are—but he who gets his books used to the best advantage.—*The New Statesman, July* 1, 1922.

THE PRESERVATION OF SCENERY

MANY of our readers on their holidays will doubtless discover beautiful tracts of scenery, as well as ancient monuments and historic buildings, which are protected from defacement or destruction by having been permanently dedicated to the enjoyment of the public under the terms of a trust. No doubt many are equally familiar with similar spots which are in danger of being defaced or monopolised for want of the same policy being applied. In a small and overcrowded country, and one, moreover, which yields to hardly any other in beauty of scenery, it is of the highest national importance to safeguard the most beautiful and characteristic tracts of landscape before they are built upon or defaced by industrial development. In spite of the high price of building since the war, the spread of towns into the surrounding country has hardly

been checked; nor is it desirable, on the whole, that it should be. In proportion as the dwellers in great towns migrate from the overcrowded central areas into an airier suburban fringe, they will gain both in mind and in body from breathing a less polluted air and from some participation in those country interests and recreations to the value of which the *Field* has always borne testimony. But as towns spread, and the motor-car facilitates residence in the heart of the country, there is a great danger, as we see on all sides, that the country as we and our fathers have known it may almost disappear. A great work in safeguarding their visible heritage for the people of Britain is being done by the officers and supporters of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, which is now the possessor and guardian of almost a hundred pieces of land and ancient buildings and monuments in many different shires. The National Trust, as it is commonly called, is an invaluable public trustee for the maintenance and supervision of sites of historic and scenic value. It also acts as a skilled and energetic central body for collecting subscriptions for the purchase of properties of peculiar value from its own standpoint, as opportunity arises to acquire them. It is at present engaged in raising funds for buying the famous and magnificent neolithic earthwork on the Sussex Downs known as Cissbury Ring. It is unthinkable that such a historic monument, of equal interest and grandeur, should be allowed to be destroyed or seriously defaced, and it would

be only less regrettable were it to pass into the hands of proprietors who excluded the public. Yet without some central body to form the backbone of effort, it is obvious that many such opportunities would be missed by securing a threatened site; and adequate financial support for the central body from members of the public who share its aims is equally indispensable.

It has sometimes been urged that the Government should purchase and set aside a tract of land as a "National Park" for the preservation of the wild birds and animals of Britain in their natural surroundings. The suggestion is generally fortified by a reference to the Yellowstone Park, which has long and justly been the pride of American citizens. A slight examination, however, will show that the aim of preserving the wild life and scenery of Great Britain is not best to be achieved in this way. No more in our own country than in the United States could a single tract be selected which would include all the main types of scenery, or a representative selection of the rarer denizens. In the United States the Yellowstone Park has been supplemented by other extensive tracts, including a great sanctuary for wild ducks in the valley of the Mississippi, and other refuges for the long-persecuted egrets, which yield the so-called "ospreys" of the plumage trade. Some of these sanctuaries are maintained by the central Government, others by the Governments of the various States; our point is that it has been found necessary to set up a number of sanctuaries in widely separated

districts. A diversity of refuge is equally essential in our own country, though it is impracticable, even were it necessary, to institute them on an equally spacious scale. The Cornish chough will not breed on the same tract of coast as the Kentish plover, and the misty moorlands and stony corries that harbour the wild red deer and the golden eagle are widely separated by Nature from the characteristic scenery of the mountain limestone gorges, and from the ancient yew-trees and juniper bushes that dapple the smooth turf of the chalk downs. We need, in fact, not a single "National Park," but the preservation of the largest possible number of beautiful and characteristic sites. Whether they should be acquired and administered by the national Government, or mainly by private effort, is a question of method, and there are strong and obvious arguments in favour of continuing the work on the lines of individual co-operation which have already served it well.

Great caution needs to be exercised in the reinforcement of our native fauna and flora by foreign species. No doubt many of the most characteristic landscapes owe a great part of their attraction to trees which were originally introduced. The common meadow elm is now as inherent a part of most landscapes in the south of England as the sycamore in those of the north ; yet neither appears to be a native species. The Scots fir had vanished from southern England for many ages before it was planted by John Evelyn at Wotton in the seventeenth century. If we may trust the

observation of a military commander whose attention was doubtless preoccupied with other subjects than botany, and are also quite confident that we know the meaning of the word he uses, we must admit on the authority of Julius Cæsar that the beech as well as the fir was not native to southern Britain in his day. The innumerable plantations of larch and spruce fir, as well as of the silver and Douglas firs, and other kindred species, are of even later date than those of the Scots fir or pine. On the whole, England has gained immensely by the introduction of those species, even from the scenic standpoint, although many plantations of conifers strike an alien note, and are to be defended on economic rather than æsthetic grounds. Some acclimatised trees of old standing, such as the lime, have never made good their footing among their wild competitors, and remain park or garden exotics to this day. The Scots fir, on the other hand, has become almost a weed in light soils, and has greatly altered the scenery of certain English counties, not always for the better. While we must be grateful to the acclimatisers of the past, it is questionable whether Britain has not already received all the exotic plants and shrubs which are suitable for incorporation in its native scenery. Gardens and pleasure-grounds stand on a different footing; there the culture is deliberately artificial, and it is natural to enrich them by every exotic specimen which can be induced to thrive. There is also a sound economic argument for the introduction of any new species which would yield a

profitable crop. But all such innovations should be carefully excluded from the wild tracts of which it is sought to preserve the pristine beauty; and the Scots fir has shown us that when a vigorous species is introduced to a virgin field it is impossible to tell how far it will spread. The acclimatisation of foreign birds and mammals in this country is far more likely to be mischievous than that of foreign trees. The pheasant stands undoubtedly on the credit side of the account, but the place of the rabbit is more doubtful. There is widespread, if not universal, agreement that the naturalisation of two of the latest aliens—the little owl and the grey squirrel—has been an error of which we have yet to reap the full fruit. We need now to preserve out natural heritage rather than to extend it.—*The Field, August* 26, 1922.

CATS IN LITERATURE

"In particular, like all good men, he was a devoted lover of cats." This is the concluding sentence in an obituary notice of Dr Garnett, written by Sir William Robertson Nicoll. I am not sure that the statement is as true as it is provocative. Men famous in the world of books have written about cats with enthusiasm. Others have regarded them as objects of antipathy. If the cat was a god in ancient Egypt, she—why do we usually speak of a cat as "she" and of a dog as "he"? —was throughout the Middle Ages a hunted and

unholy thing. Her enemies describe her as decadent, disobedient, dissembling, treacherous, and cruel. Her friends, seemingly unable to deny these charges, praise what they call the independence of her character. What they mean is that the cat is the most contemptuous of creatures, and I see no reason why affection should be attracted by contempt. As showing the lengths to which cat-lovers will go, I have heard a famous novelist, who has lately attempted to preach a crusade against dogs, pronouncing a panegyric in praise of the melodious voice of a friend's cat. And yet that very novelist took an active part in a campaign for the suppression of noises in the London squares.

Horace Walpole, Dr Johnson, Cowper, Scott, Southey, Shelley, Huxley, and Swinburne were all cat-lovers. Horace Walpole's cat, as everybody knows, had the grace to drown herself, and, like Spring and Eton College, to inspire one of Gray's odes.

> "I shall never forget," Boswell writes of Johnson, "the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat, for whom he used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants, having that trouble, should take a dislike to the poor creature. I am, unluckily, one of those who have an antipathy to a cat, so that I am uneasy when I am in the room with one; and I own I suffered a great deal from the presence of this same Hodge. I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr Johnson's breast, appar-

> ently with much satisfaction, while my friend, smiling and half-whistling, rubbed down his back, and pulled him by the tail; and when I observed he was a fine cat, saying, 'Why, yes, sir, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this'; and then, as if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, adding, 'But he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed.'"

Cowper's cats are the friends of every reader of some of the most delightful letters in English; and Southey's letters, if they do not take such high rank, are well worth reading, especially by cat-lovers. They have some charming passages about Dido, Hurlyburlybuss, Rumpelstilzchen, and other cats with whom Southey associated.

"Dogs all well—cat sick—supposed with eating birds in their feathers," Scott wrote from Abbotsford to his son, who had just become a cornet in the 18th Hussars. A month later he is able to report, "dogs and cat are well," adding, by way of afterthought, the news that "poor Lady Wallace died of an inflammation after two days' illness." This demonstrates that Scott thought intelligence about his four-footed companions was as likely to interest his correspondent as the fate of his human friends. Lockhart tells us that the two constant inmates of Scott's study were Maida, his favourite dog, and Hinse of Hinsfeldt, "a venerable tom-cat, fat and sleek, and no longer very locomotive." When Maida had occasion to leave the room, "Hinse

came down purring from his perch, and mounted guard by the footstool, *vice* Maida, absent upon furlough." Another instance of Scott's fondness for cats is found in a letter to Abbotsford when he was detained against his will in London. "There are no dogs in the hotel where I lodge," he wrote, "but a tolerably conversant cat, who eats a mess of cream with me in the morning." Nobody but a cat-lover would have made choice of the fitting pronoun.

That Shelley liked cats is proved by his description, in a letter to Peacock, of certain evenings in England "whose hymns are the purring of kittens, the hissing of kettles, and the laugh of children." The best cat story in all literature, according to Miss Agnes Repplier — whose *Agrippina* displays her in the dual capacity of enthusiastic cat-lover and engaging essayist—is one which "Monk" Lewis told to Shelley. Here it is in Miss Repplier's words :—

> "A gentleman, late one night, went to visit a friend living on the outskirts of a forest in East Germany. He lost his path, and, after wandering aimlessly for some time, beheld at last a light streaming from the windows of an old and ruined abbey. Looking in, he saw a procession of cats lowering into the grave a small coffin with a crown upon it. The sight filled him with horror, and, spurring his horse, he rode away as fast as he could, never stopping until he reached his destination, long after

> midnight. His friend was still awaiting him, and at once he recounted what had happened; whereupon a cat that lay sleeping by the fire, sprang to its feet, cried out, 'Then I am the King of the Cats!' and disappeared like a flash up the chimney."

"Only a Frenchman," wrote Théophile Gautier, "can understand the subtle organisation of a cat." Certainly the most enthusiastic pages in the Book of the Cat have been written by Frenchmen. Gautier himself has written some of them in *La Ménagerie Intime*. There he discourses of the cats of the Black and White dynasties—equally worthy of fame with the race of Peppers and Mustards—who inhabitated his house; of Don Pierrot de Navarre, who resented his master's staying out late at night—no rare event in the life of "le bon Théophile"; of Madame Théophile, who made up her mind that the parrot was a green chicken; of Zizi, who lived the contemplative life of a Buddhist; of Gavroche, and Enjolras, and Epononine, and Mummia, and Séraphita. So devoted was Gautier to these animals that whenever he re-read *Les Misérables* he thought of all the characters in the novel as transformed into black cats, and he found that this added to its interest. And Gautier is but one of a multitude of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen who have written in praise of cats. They include Montaigne and Chateaubriand, Baudelaire and Sainte-Beuve, Madame de Custine and M. Fée, and

Champfleury, whose book on cats is undoubtedly a classic.

Among our own contemporaries two have written about cats with exceptional understanding and affection. Those who like Pierre Loti least have little fault to find with his descriptions of Moumotte Blanche and Moumotte Chinoise. And Hamilcar is not the least of Anatole France's creations. This is how Sylvestre Bonnard, seated in his study, addresses its guardian cat :—

> " Hamilcar, somnolent Prince of the City of the Books, thou nocturnal guardian ! Thou dost defend from vile nibblers those manuscripts and printed volumes which the old scholar has acquired at the cost of his poor savings and indefatigable zeal. Sleep on, Hamilcar, in this library which thy military virtues protect, sleep on with all the luxury of a Sultana ! For in thy person are united the formidable aspect of a Tartar warrior and the slumbrous grace of a woman of the Orient. Heroic and voluptuous Hamilcar, sleep until comes the hour in which the mice will come forth to dance in the moonlight before the ' Acta Sanctorum ' of the learned Bollandists !"

Ronsard's lines :—

> " No living man, of things beneath the sky,
> Can hate a cat more bitterly than I,"

are a poor counterpoise to these tributes of affection.—PENGUIN, *The Nation, May 27,* 1916.

" BROADCAST " GOOD AND EVIL

THE authorities are still busy with the preliminaries to broadcasting ; and their official caution, exasperating though it may be, is prompted by a wise anxiety. In the United States the development of " radio " has been hampered by success. The masses took up an invention which brought all the noise of the great world into their parlours at the price of a little box and a bit of wire hanging out of the window, and the transatlantic ether is confused with the shouts of rival purveyors of news, so that demand is overwhelmed by the plethora of supply. All this confusion is to be avoided in England, and no one will rebuke the Post Office for its forethought, if the system, when once inaugurated, can keep abreast of its own developments. They will be far-reaching. Another stage is about to be marked in a great social process, the drift of population away from the congested areas which the industrialism of the nineteenth century brought into existence. First, the internal combustion engine made the suburbs accessible ; now the wireless telephone will strip country life of its loneliness ; and the average man will be confronted with a new change in his circumstances.

What will the average man make of it all ? He must now face an issue already raised by the growth of popular journalism. The cheap newspaper has broadened his outlook but has also flattened it. It has taught him, for example,

what the Empire means, but at the same time refused to allow him to think about the Empire in his own way. The herd instinct is triumphing in us ; we none of us dare ignore a topic which we know to have been brought to the attention of a million of our fellows. The tyranny of the majority is thus assuming a new aspect. It does not limit itself to public matters and to conceptions of civic duty, but is attacking habit and taste and all the qualities which make up the individual's idiosyncrasy. It has already begun to regulate physical recreation. Many a man plays tennis and golf, not from any special affection for those particular games, but because the papers tell him that other people play them. And now " radio " will invade the field of mental recreation too. Here, also, the standardising process has already begun. There is, for example, less variety about the film than about the spoken play. But there will be no variety at all about broadcasted music. The listener must take what the station sends him, and the station will send him what its directors think will best please the great mass of their customers. It is for them to say whether the stuff supplied shall be good or bad, and there is certainly room for a strong manifestation of public taste. At present we are too tolerant of one another's weaknesses, and therefore too acquiescent in the commercialism which plays for safety by offering no more than the greatest number will be content to accept.

But the danger to spiritual health lies not so

much in the quality of the wireless messages, which can be raised at will, as in their uniformity, which is inevitable. All who remember their childhood must have shuddered when they read of the projected broadcast children's hour. We made our own fairies out of the material the nursery-books supplied us, but the child of to-morrow will not merely have his fairies made for him by a voice in the nursery corner, but will have to share them with all the other children of the district. There is something revolting in this extreme case of the forced conformity to pattern which is already a feature of life in modern democracies. Influences, of which legislation has now become one of the least important, are thrusting mankind into a series of national moulds. Carried to its utmost, the process must be fatal to society, for life according to formulæ is automatic, dull, and incapable of response to all the varied stimuli of a world in transition. " Radio " thus comes to cast a new responsibility on everyone who makes use of it—the responsibility of preserving that touch of personality without which he is valueless as a social unit. It will work good ; it may even work against its own prime defect by making communal life compatible with a considerable solitude. But its deadening, standardising influence must always be guarded against. Because mankind could not properly appreciate the mechanical achievements of science, it brought upon itself the physical horrors of war ; and if it now fails to appreciate the reaction of this tremendous new engine upon thought, it will

be confronted with the more fatal, because more subtle, evil of intellectual and æsthetic torpor.—*The Observer, July* 16, 1922.

CHEATING

THERE is a great rivalry going on in the newspapers. It is a rivalry for prominence between the people who behave as if they had the right to kill other people and the people who behave as if they had the right to rob other people. All over the world there is an orgy of murder and dishonesty. Mr Lloyd George, as he stood at his open Bible the other day, spoke as if " Come, let us kill him " were a phrase of purely Bolshevist origin. As a matter of fact, it is a phrase that enshrines one of the most ancient principles of conduct. It is an extremely difficult thing to persuade human beings that, in the last resort, they have not the right to kill other human beings who stand in the way of their comfort. It is the same in Belfast as in Johannesburg : all terrors are very much the same, whether they are white or orange or red. Then, in addition to mob killings, individual killings have also been becoming more popular lately. The papers have been full of the stories of murders, in many of which the motive seems to have been strangely inadequate to the crime. Even Landru seems to have been willing to murder a woman for little more than her furniture. One is almost driven to think at times that there may have been something in the mediæval legend

of the werewolf—the human being who becomes a wild beast and in that shape commits crimes which he does not even remember. The war is blamed for murders of this kind, as Bolshevism is blamed for the mob murders. It is supposed to have destroyed the equilibrium of personality in a good many men —to have reminded the domesticated beast that exists in the human being of the savage self that it was before Moses brought morals into the world. The average human being, so far as we can judge from meeting him casually, still appears to submit to some extent to the chains of morality. But the egoists who have the courage of their egoism are undoubtedly on the increase. It may be that the habit of killing, so easily acquired during a war, is in some cases proving ineradicable. To kill a person one does not like is, we suppose, a natural thing to do. It is as natural as walking on all fours. Man is the animal that most of all has defied Nature by training himself to walk on two legs, like a bird. He is thus a performing animal—an animal that remains upright with an effort. His uprightness has become a second nature, but there is always a tendency in him to revert to four-footedness. An observer of human nature has said that many men are inclined to become four-footed after dusk. They pad along the streets of every city by night like animals. They remember appetites that they had forgotten by day. They are no longer performing animals of religion and morality. In the lamplight you can easily believe in metamorphosis and the transmigration of souls.

Fortunately, it still shocks us to see a human being ceasing to be a performing animal and becoming an animal in good earnest. We are convinced in some deep part of our nature that, if man is a wolf or a fox, it is better that he should be a wolf or a fox walking on its hind legs. We are aware that it must cost him a severe effort—that the training of a performing dog for a music-hall is nothing like so arduous as the training of a human being for morality, whatever the code of morality may be. There are some trainers who declare that the human being likes it, and of many human beings this is undoubtedly true. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the effort of remaining in an upright position is too much for many people. Even after they have been walking circumspectly on two feet for half a lifetime, some of them suddenly begin to feel that they can keep it up no longer. The religion and morality of forty years collapse almost in an hour. We have no means of judging how slowly or how quickly the reversion to four-footedness usually takes place. All we know is that a man who yesterday was a respectable citizen is now a criminal—that he has given way to some forbidden lust, and will never be able to win back his place among honourable men on this side of Heaven. To say that all men are capable of this desperate relapse would be to say more than anyone can prove. All we can say is that never a year passes without some startling example of a presumably decent man who has deserted the code of all decent

men. Just at present money scandals are almost as prominent in the papers as murder scandals. And most of these money scandals involve men who were regarded as honourable—some of them even as notably honourable—by their little world. The Peel case, which has been exciting and shocking the public for the last week or two, is but one example of the collapse of decent standards among decent people. Sportsmanship is a word which connotes many of the virtues that are dearest to the average Englishman—straight dealing, fair play, the preference of honourable defeat to dishonest victory. Cynical Puritans have told us that the sportsmanship of sportsmen has always been greatly exaggerated, and, indeed, that sportsmanship scarcely exists outside Rugby football and cricket. They tell us that City fathers cheat at croquet, and that horse-racing is not a sport but a crooked trade. They go, we believe, too far. We are aware that some men are corrupted by the desire to win at croquet, and others by the desire to win money on horses. But we are persuaded that neither on the croquet lawn nor on the racecourse is there any declension from the principles of honour on the part of the average man. The code of the average man who bets is the code of a man who willingly takes certain risks in the hope of making money more quickly than he can make it by work. He will take certain steps recognised as legitimate in order to minimise the risks and increase his chances of success. He will, if he gets a "tip from the stable," back his information

against the bookmaker's ignorance in the hope of getting a "long price." All this is within the four corners of the betting man's code—a code recognised by both sides to the bet. On the other hand, the average man would no more think of stealing from a bookmaker than of stealing from anybody else. It appears, however, that the custom of stealing from bookmakers has recently been spreading as the result of the system of betting by telegram. Trusting to the efficiency of the Post Office, bookmakers have accepted bets telegraphed up to the very time of the start of the race, even though the telegrams have not arrived for an hour afterwards. Clearly, if it were possible to discover the result of a race quickly, and then to persuade a telegraph-clerk to falsify the time given for the receipt of the telegram, it would be possible to bet on horses that had already won, and so to get rich at the cost of a few shillings. The strangest thing about the Peel case is the fact that this plot to cheat the bookmakers should have been conceived in a household which already possessed an income of £7000 a year. Most of us feel that, if we had £7000 a year, there is at least one commandment which we should be secure from breaking. Apparently, however, money is no security against the love of more money. A man in any position may be tempted into a crime which he can commit with safety, and nothing can have seemed safer than cheating by telegram if a postmaster could be cajoled into putting an incorrect time on a telegram.

There is no better preventive of crime than unsafety. Most men live by a code of morality, but there may come a time when they are tempted to depart from it, and it is then that danger is the most valuable ally of conscience. Certainly, it is very natural to take what is not one's own. Lions, foxes, sparrows, and world-conquerors all do it. If we have learned to do otherwise, it is because men have had to discover a means of living at peace with their neighbours, and they know that this is impossible unless, with regard to their lives and their property, they can to some extent trust one another. Materialists would say that the desire of safety here got the better of the instinct of possessiveness, and that honesty became an accepted virtue because, all things considered, it was the best policy. There is no documented history of virtue to tell us when men first came to believe that it was wrong to steal and to cheat and to lie. We know, however, that it *is* wrong, whether the first imperative came from Sinai or from the common sense of mankind. We accept the imperative at this stage as part of a code that we cannot deviate from without betraying human nature itself—the nature that first turned a four-footed or four-handed beast into *Pithecanthropus erectus* and then turned *Pithecanthropus erectus* into a man. Our evolution, no doubt, did not take place exactly in this way, but this will serve as a rough working theory. Our code is now our inheritance. It has entered into our imaginations and our emotions, and, if we call a man a "cheat" or a "thief," we feel that the

word is an edict of banishment from human society. Yet self-interest is continually tending to undermine our code. Most trades have their petty dishonesties. Grocers may not mix sand with their sugar, but the adulterations that are practised on many wares have brought the life of the tradesman into bad odour. Many manufacturers are tempted in the same way to cheat the public. Just at present there is a campaign in the Press against shoddy boots. Yesterday it was against shoddy clothes. Shoddy, unless it is frankly sold as shoddy, is only a polite name for cheating. We have heard it maintained that the old-fashioned contempt for trade was really due to the fact that the tradesman was regarded as a man who thought more of his money than of his honour. The political economy of the nineteenth century, with its advocacy of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest one, and its curious application of the phrase to industrial life, did nothing to improve the tradesman's code, which was cynically translated as "cheating tempered by Christianity." Christianity, luckily, did temper the wind to the shorn consumer, and there were—and are—both manufacturers and shopkeepers who took a pride in the quality of their wares as well as in their profits. But, as we said at the beginning, codes are not maintained without an effort—the effort of remaining upright, two-footed, with head high. The honest man, said the poet, is the noblest work of God. And not the least difficult. Decidedly, not the least difficult.—*The New Statesman, March* 18, 1922.

BEGGARS

THERE never were so many beggars in London. At least, not within living memory. And the worst of it is, they have none of the romance of beggary. They are prosaic, dull, hopeless. Most of them look as if they had been born to be commonplace citizens, earning a more or less honest living like you and me. To speak strictly, indeed, they are not beggars but collectors. They stand on the kerb; they wait in the doorways of restaurants; they haunt the streets of the respectable. All the time, they keep shaking their narrow white boxes, rattling the coppers that the charitable have given them and asking for more. They vary from the sullen to the responsive. Some of them seem to demand a right rather than to beg a favour. They believe that there is money somewhere, and it is only just that it should be shared. It is the habit of civilised societies, at the end of a great war, to provide kerbs fit for heroes to stand on. Heroes are no longer so willing as they used to be to accept this as a fitting reward. Even so, heroes, like other human beings, are strangely submissive. To be licensed to beg is better than to be allowed to starve. And so the West End of London, which a few years ago used to be alive with the tinkle of sovereigns, is at present alive with the dull clatter of pennies in wooden boxes. Strangers to town are at first depressed by the spectacle. Their hearts are touched. They begin by giving to

everybody. They feel a boundless charity that flows out in copper and at times even turns into silver. Every beggar they see is a new man. They pity him personally. They shrink from the sin of passing by on the other side. After a week or so, they begin to give here and to give there, but cease to give everywhere. If they have given at the door of the restaurant, they can refuse on the kerb with a good conscience. And, if they have given on the kerb, they feel justified in not seeing the man with the box at the entrance to the Underground. As a matter of fact, they have become a little impatient of such an incessant appeal to their charity. At first they pitied every beggar as a man wronged by society—wronged almost by themselves. Now they begin to feel as though it were they themselves who were the aggrieved persons. They are not sure that other people, however poor, have a right to annoy them so persistently. They can hardly walk down the quietest street without being interrupted by a man with a money box. What they object to most of all, perhaps, is that it puts them in a false position. They cannot refuse without appearing niggardly, and, as they have to refuse sometimes, they are aware of the beginnings of a feeling of hostility against men who make them look niggardly. They long for the old system of flag-days, so that they might buy a new flag every morning and be hall-marked for the rest of the day as having done their duty. By the end of a few more weeks they have ceased to see the average collector as a human

being in whom they have any interest. They think of him, if they think of him at all, more and more as a nuisance. They probably take little more notice of him than a reader takes of the recurring commas on a page. If they do, it is because he is a comma misplaced. He has lost his original significance. They may still on occasion see him imaginatively, but it is only on occasion. Their charity is no longer constant, but spasmodic.

We confess we do not think the thin black line of beggars fits in well with the London landscape. In Italy it is different. Beggars seem to be a natural part of Italy. They are picturesque in decay. They have crooked hands that are fit for nothing else. Their thanks are musical—"*Grazia, Signor!*" They are a race by themselves, living in the shadows of church doors. They have a long tradition of poverty, and have adapted themselves courteously to a life of dependence on the passers-by. The Italians are a charitable people, and it is said to be they and not the foreign visitors who keep the beggars in bread. English and American visitors are apt to take it for granted that any man can earn enough to keep him if he is willing to work, and to resent the sight of men who voluntarily choose a life of idleness. We are inclined to doubt the theory that any man can earn a living if he pleases. Almost any man of strong character may, but the man of average character is a creature of circumstances. Luckily for the beggars, the Italian does not ask whether a man is fit to work, but what he wants. And the

average beggar wants so little that to be charitable is one of the cheapest of hobbies. We fancy, however, that the Italian climate is more suitable to begging than the English. For the greater part of the year it is warm enough to sit idly at a church door without discomfort. In England, idleness during at least half the year is misery. There have never been any English beggars of the romantic kind except tramps, who warmed their blood with walking. There are few to-day except gipsies, and even the gipsies have become little more than a nuisance. In London, at least, the beggar is a mere figure of wretchedness. Most pitiful of all are the blind who sit reading the Scriptures with their fingers, or who clasp a handful of matchboxes and wait for the sound of the penny dropped into the tin cup that has been hung round their necks. Hardly less wretched are the old grey-haired women who sit under the arches of bridges with a tray of matchboxes and studs and such pretence of merchandise. They are blown upon by every wind, especially by the cold wind from the east that finds its way round corners. To sit in the wind and the dust, as they do, for a single day would give an ordinary respectable citizen his death of pneumonia. We have heard it maintained that these wretched creatures do not feel the cold, and that there is no need to waste pity on them. This seems to us too comforting a belief. The beggar under the arches, no doubt, survives as the soldier in the flooded trenches did ; but it is not through want of sensibility. Happier, much happier, the

beggar who can warm himself by singing! And yet, strange to say, it is the itinerant musician who of all beggars wins most of our sympathy. He sings songs that we do not want to hear; he plays airs we dislike on an instrument that we detest. But he appeals to us somehow as a decayed artist. He may blow his beery breath under a beery nose into a cornet that can emit only discordant blasts of pain. But he is in his way an artist and, at any rate, it is better that he should go and drink more beer than that he should go on playing the cornet. The man with the hurdy-gurdy and the man who goes round with a gramophone, on the other hand, do not attract us in the same way. They are beggars disguised as artist-hawkers of ready-made and imitation music. How different is the flute-player · the fiddler! Here are artists, and artists even th noble instruments. They live in the finest ıdition of beggardom. They play to please us, ‹t merely to annoy us into paying them to go way. There was an admirable old man in Dublin who played the flute in the streets right down to the coming of the Black-and-Tans. When he played it outside a fashionable hotel, he played "God Save the King," because he knew that the people in the hotel would like that. When he played it in a poor street, he played "The Soldiers' Song," because he knew that the people in the poor street would like that. Could courtesy go further?

As for beggars in general, one's attitude to them is curiously paradoxical. One's heart is often fullest of sympathy for them on the very days on

which one will not go to the trouble of giving them a penny. It is entirely a matter of weather. If it is a cold day, one feels so distressed at the spectacle of a poor man that one would go to almost all lengths to help him. As it is a cold day, however, one is closely wrapped up, and the notion of undoing all our coat-buttons and glove-buttons for the purpose of giving a fellow-creature so trivial a sum as a penny seems positively ludicrous. It is making a mountain out of a molehill. Besides, it is to make a public exhibition of charity. One would not greatly mind being seen giving a shilling to a beggar, but one likes to bestow copper hurriedly, stealthily, unseen of the passers-by. On a fine, sunny day one can do this quite easily. One is unimpeded by an overcoat. One can transfer a penny from a pocket to a blind man's tin almost by sleight of hand. But, alas, it is so warm that one takes it for granted that everybody is fairly happy. There is an old story of a farmer's wife who, on seeing a beggar coming to the door on a bitterly cold day, said to her servant: "Mary, go and give that poor old woman a bowl of hot soup." The farmer's wife herself felt so cold that she went into another room, took out the brandy-bottle, and helped herself to a glass. She felt its generous warmth spreading through her frame. She went back to the kitchen door and put her head in. "Mary," she said, "you needn't bother about that bowl of soup. It's not so cold as it was." It is a rather cruel story, but, really, when one thinks of one's own behaviour, one does not feel like throw-

ing stones at the farmer's wife. The best rule is probably to give a penny to anyone who looks as if he were asking for it, whether it is wet or fine. It may seem an easy thing to do, but as a matter of fact it is almost a counsel of perfection. One can do it on a holiday, for giving money to beggars is a natural part of a holiday. But it is extraordinarily difficult to keep it up. Either you take a sudden dislike to some particular beggar, or you see somebody else giving him money, and you feel, "Oh, well, that's all right." We confess we have never been able to be charitable to those beggars who attempt to sell you large earthenware pots of ferns when you are walking along the street. One of them particularly we detest. He comes up beside you, and says in an eager, husky voice: "Do you want to be my friend? Do you want to be my friend?" And he does not stay for an answer, but attempts to thrust the pot into your arms. It is only a pretence. He has had the pot for years. It is disguise. It enables him to pass as a merchant.

But we confess we cannot take a sentimental view of beggars. We do not like them. We wish they were abolished. Their poverty, it seems to us, is a crime. No doubt it is our crime rather than theirs. That is why we think that it ought to be suppressed. To allow thousands of men and women to lapse into beggary under various disguises, as is now happening in England, seems to us to be to despair of order and intelligence in the arrangement of human society. There is plenty of

reason for despair, but not until after we have tried common sense. And common sense tells us that it is as easy to make use of the energies of practically everybody in time of peace as in time of war, if only we have the mind to do it. But we have not the mind. We have only the Mond. It is not an alternative that makes for a better world.—*The New Statesman, March* 25, 1922.

JAM

An interesting history of flattery might be written. It plays a large part in life. Human nature not only demands it, but shows a strong tendency to give it. We all think our own age less susceptible to it than other ages, just as we think ourselves less susceptible than other men. But this is probably a mistake. The demand and supply are always there; it is only the method of administration which can be chronicled. If we look back, we wonder how the Roman Emperors stomached it in the form in which it was set before them; we wonder how Queen Elizabeth could enjoy it, and how the men of the eighteenth century could pay money down for it. If we take it for granted that flattery, to be acceptable, must be believable, the matter is inexplicable. But is this true? "Oh, irresistible power of flattery, though I know that this is a madman, I cannot help being taken with his applause," wrote Cervantes. For "madman" we can substitute a score of other terms,

sycophant, for instance, or poet, or political follower, or prejudiced person, or even lover; what you will, the words still hold good.

A very formal and fulsome dedication would please no one now. Nevertheless, prominent men accept whole books—not short prefaces—full of flattery. They are pleased, apparently—at any rate, they are not nauseated—by fanciful biographies written not by men of genius but by anybody who can write at all. It is true our prominent men to-day have to stand a great deal of bitter criticism—criticism which comes to the ears of all in a way it never came before. Perhaps some jam is necessary to get the powder down. Anyhow, it is asked for. Men are not children. They do not believe saccharine nonsense about themselves, but do they therefore dislike it? It is always said, at least women always say, that men are more easily flattered than their wives and daughters. Would it not be more accurate to say that leading rather a larger life they are susceptible to it over rather a larger surface? Women like personal flattery and mind very much from whom it comes, value it almost entirely according to its source; but men like it even where it is impersonal, where it concerns their work or their achievements, and comes, perhaps, from persons who never saw them and do not know or even much care what they are like, physically or mentally or morally. One wonders sometimes how that audacious flatterer Disraeli would have set to work had he had a royal master instead of a royal mistress to cajole. He

might have failed; anyhow, he would not have used the same trowel. In both cases it is impossible but that the trowel should from time to time have been seen. "*De l'audace*" was seemingly his motto, and he risked—indeed, he flouted—detection. So does every really successful flatterer. He managed to create by "the softness of habitual affability" a prejudice in his own favour, and after that the way was safe, or not too dangerous, for a bold man. It has been cynically said that "the want of fortitude, not martial but philosophic," stands in the way of many a man who might succeed by flattery. It never stood in Disraeli's.

If we look round among our friends, it is decidedly not the worst people who are most easily flattered or even the worst who innocently ask for flattery. It is, of course, a weakness to want it, but very often if only those people who need it so much stood in a position to get it properly supplied it would do them no harm. As it is, they cannot get it directly, and they try for it, so to say, by underhand methods. For instance, they choose deliberately to live among their inferiors. They like to be abler—sometimes, perhaps, even better—very often richer than their company. The fact that they have a certain superiority makes them happy, although they have, as it were, arranged their social scenery to suit themselves. They know they have done so, just as greater men know the adulation they accept is not all genuine. They "flatter themselves" they are very superior people, but in their hearts they know that they

"flatter themselves." We very much doubt if conceit is a common quality. If men were really self-satisfied, they would not want so much flattery. There is nothing so startling as to find a bit of real, genuine humility in a man we had put down perhaps for a conceited ass, or even perhaps for a very good fellow very conscious of the fact. We have all experienced this surprise. The hackneyed discussion about whether men like to be flattered on their weak or their strong points has always seemed to the present writer to be ridiculous. Of course they like it on their weak points. They hope that nobody knows what they know to their cost, that they are without some root virtue like courage or industry, or that they are semi-idiotic where some art or science is concerned, or that they are dull or testy by nature. They dream of themselves as heroes and geniuses, as wits or paragons of magnanimity. That someone else should think of them as coming even within a very long distance of these things, or should be able even to play at thinking so, is, of course, delightful. We have all felt the glow when the game is well played.

It is absurd to say that flatterers are always actuated by a low motive. It would be as true to say that a man who habitually teases and chaffs his acquaintance a little more than sympathy should permit is actuated always by cruelty. He is no doubt yielding to a temptation, but not such a bad temptation as that. Some people are always studying human nature. It is—in spite of Pope—sometimes rather a small study. They want to see

what their fellow-creatures will do when they are a little bit pleased or a little bit tormented. Perhaps there is some desire to tyrannise in those who thus amuse themselves, but it is not a wish which goes very far, sometimes no deeper than manner. In other men and women the habit of flattery is simply a wish to please themselves. They like to be liked and, being rather stupid, they take what seems to them the most obvious means to popularity. It is rather a pleasant peculiarity than otherwise, though it is apt to discount itself. When these people are really moved by admiration or affection they cannot get themselves believed. There is nothing for them but action, and so often when we are most anxious to express our goodwill action is out of our power.

Dr Johnson says in the *Rambler*: "Just praise is a debt and flattery is a present." For all his diatribes he had a real indulgence for human nature. We cannot help being more pleased with a present than with our just dues. We like it even if it is not always given from the very best motives. We once heard a woman say of a piece of what might have been called flattery: "I liked it. It made me feel so warm and undeserving." Such persons cannot be spoiled. No flattery can do them any harm. They have no cold, cynical armour in which to defend themselves from the pleasant onslaughts of well-meaning, or even ill-meaning, men. They take and enjoy their "presents," and keep their own opinion of themselves, often for all their affectations of satisfaction not a very good one.

It is difficult sometimes not to feel sick of the subject of auto-suggestion. It starts, however, a thousand whimsical as well as serious trains of thought. It will be a sad day for humanity if in the struggle to gain self-confidence men and women should turn a cure to a poison, and should finally destroy what is, after all, the most delicate, the most elusive, perhaps the highest, certainly the most lovable quality in man—his hitherto unconquerable humility.—*The Spectator, April* 15, 1922.

BED

By V. H. FRIEDLAENDER

> "In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
> And born in bed, in bed we die;
> The near approach a bed may show
> Of human bliss and human woe."

YOUTH has the best of it in most things, but a few rich plums of pleasure are reserved for a later day, and bed is one of them. Not only sleep, which is the unconscious performance—and which may, anyhow, be marred by a nightmare or interrupted by a snore; but the promise of sleep, the active anticipation belonging to that moment when we

> "Stretch the tir'd limbs and lay the head
> Down to our own delightful bed."

It is true that we all (roughly speaking) go to bed from our first night to our last; but it is equally

true that it takes most of us half a lifetime to reach the point at which bed is just bed, a joy exquisitely complete in itself.

During a brief infantile period, indeed, we seem to appreciate peace and recumbency; but is not one of the earliest impulses noted in a baby its persistent determination to fall, crawl, wriggle, or squeeze itself free of those alternating prisons, its cradle and its perambulator? And from thence onward, for years, it is one of our chief preoccupations to delay, to circumvent, to obliterate from the memory of ourselves and of other people the hour of our bedtime. For to a child, bed is simply one of those brutal and meaningless tyrannies imposed by an adult world; and whether the nightly, inexorable edict whisks us away from a summer garden to toss in broad daylight between hot sheets, or whether the winter proclamation of banishment from light and fire exposes us to the ghostly terrors of dim corridors and dark cupboards, it is all one: bed is the word, the thing that bangs the door on the paradise of day.

Adolescence works a gradual change. We discover that bed is a convenient place in which to dream our salad dreams, see our immature visions. Romance and adventure ring their changes on our pillow; beggar maids, fairy princes, *belles dames sans merci*, very perfect gentle knights troop across our counterpane. And from the general to the particular is but another short step. Where may the jewel of first love be unlocked from the heart's casket and its flashing facets examined so privately

as in bed? Or, when the jewel breaks in our hand, brittle as the bauble on a Christmas tree, what receptacle for our tears so secret, again, as the sheets?—what grave for our unique and shattering grief equal to a retirement beneath the sound-deadening blankets?

Co-existent with, or hard upon the heels of first love comes ambition. It is in bed that we blow tentative blasts upon that new toy, our own trumpet, and are ravished by its melodious timbre; in bed the darkest night is lit by the moon of our desire, though it be in reality but a Japanese lantern; in bed we lord it, with our particular farthing dip, over the stars in their courses.

Sweet, however, as are all these uses of bed, they are but various manifestations of one spirit—youth. It takes middle age to enjoy bed, not as an adjunct to something else, but for its own sake—as the day's reward and goal, seldom denied even to the most wretched; as rest for body, mind, and, above all, spirit; as the boon (holding its own with the best) of imminent oblivion.

Oblivion! It is then that we really begin to appreciate sleep—to understand with our hearts and not only with our brains such things as the significance of the word "greatly" in the lines,

> "Sleepe after toyle, porte after stormie seas,
> Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please,"

and the true inwardness of that Italian proverb (the work, obviously, of a middle-aged man subjected to the bitter cheatery of a sleepless night),

"To expect what never comes, to lie in bed and not sleep,
To serve well and not be advanced, are three things to die of."

An exaggeration, of course, for only one of the three is really a dying matter; the other two evils do not become malignant until their germs find themselves established in the sympathetic soil of insomnia. "There's nothing but what's bearable as long as a man can work," says George Eliot. And he can work—at something—as long as he can go to bed, as long as "sleep comes to close each difficult day."

Our manner of wooing sleep is as various as our conduct of any other love-affair. Some of us like to lie in bed in a draught, and some with a hot-water bottle; some, again, are never happy until we have both. One man will boast that after turning out the hall light he begins to take off his collar on the first stair, and is all but ready for the bliss of bed by the time he reaches it; another will prolong the joys of anticipation by dozing in his chair, by having a bath, by reading in bed, by all the arts known to that pathetic animal, man, who has hoped much and has usually been disappointed, but who knows that bed, at any rate, is a fairly sure and certain hope at the end of the most imperfect day.

Not long ago a little group of people, discussing the incompatibility of a certain English doctor and his French wife, were all rather at a loss to account for it until some one mentioned, as one trivial instance of their bickerings, that the man was accustomed to fresh air and the morning light in a

bedroom, the woman to darkness and shut windows. That, for one of the group, at any rate, settled the matter; for it was not a trivial difference at all; it was enormous, it was volcanic. Naturally we hate anyone who, night after night, robs us of all that makes bed worth sleeping in. Job himself never rejected the "mocking curse of breath" with more sound and fury than when he realised that he had said to himself, "My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint," and had been mistaken.

Inherent, of course, in our enjoyment of bed is the knowledge with which all our joys are shot through, that sense of transitoriness that half spoils, half enhances every earthly pleasure. As sleep is the "ape of death," so bed is the remembrancer of the grave, of the time when life's wheel shall have come full circle, and bed shall turn, as in our childhood, to a doom from which there is no escape. Yet, even so, is not bed by far the most agreeable form in which the remembrance can come? There is nothing, even in Shakespeare, more drenched in beauty, more utterly satisfying to the spirit of man than the speech of Prospero that ends:—

> "and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

And as (we may fairly surmise) not even Shakespeare could have written that speech when he was young, so it is not youth that can draw the last drop of delight and wonder out of it.

Lesser poets innumerable have made good use of bed, spoken or implied, in their work. Take such a familiar and favourite piece of verse as Stevenson's "Requiem," and consider which of its eight lines is most responsible for that sense of fearlessness and comfort that the poem conveys. Is it not the fourth,

> "And I laid me down with a will,"

that charms us by its irresistible association with the pleasant idea of bed?

And—to mention only one more instance—how gracious was that inspiration of Christina Rossetti, mitigating even the sting of death, robbing even the grave of total victory, in a line so tranquil, so unterrifying as—

> "Yea, beds for all who come."

Bed is one of the simplest tests that we can apply to the majestic utterance,

> "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

For when, in childhood, bed was bad, it was undoubtedly horrid; but as years pass and we note that bed is taking on a new character, we perceive, too, with surprised gratitude, that when bed is good, it shares with the little girl who had a little curl that other attribute of being very, *very* good.

THE PERFECT ENDING

By Isabel Butchart

The unwary preacher, thoughtlessly beginning a sentence, "And now to——" and bringing his startled congregation to its feet ten minutes or so before the appointed time, may spend the rest of the day regretting the omission of his carefully worked-out conclusion, but his impromptu ending was probably both forcible and dramatic.

For the perfect ending is generally to be found about seven minutes before the real end of a sermon and about a page before the end of a book. Alas! that little more, and how much it is. Many a work, after soaring to its climax and dropping in one swift movement to what should be its end, gathers itself feebly together again in anti-climax and creeps along on a broken wing. The perfect ending is rare—much rarer than a good beginning. Jane Austen's endings are quietly adequate to the occasion, but do not equal the masterly beginnings to her novels. The great Victorian novelists run to wordy explanations as they hurriedly indicate in their last pages the future of their many characters. And in the more distant past the writers did not care a blot if their books ended artistically or not, as long as they had said what they meant to say. So the perfect ending is more frequent in modern books than in theirs. When we write beautifully now we are meaning to do so and know we are doing so. Long ago they did it by accident

—genius, if you prefer the word. They wrote beautifully, not knowing what they did, and the time and the place and the right word altogether were just a happy chance, seldom found on the last page. There were exceptions, of course. *Le Morte d'Arthur* ends finely :—

> " They went into the Holy Land there as Jesu Christ was quick and dead . . . and these four knights did many battles. . . . And there they died on a Good Friday for God's sake."

But among those old books there is hardly a last chapter that I would not shuffle a little if I might. Tamper with these beautiful words and those ! Ah, it is their imperishable beauty that cries for the grace of silence after them, and not for other weaker words to follow. Bunyan did not know when his words were inspired, or he would not have ended *The Pilgrim's Progress* with a vague account of the future of Christian's children and his own farewell to the reader, when he might have ended a page earlier with the death of Mr Valiant :—

> " So he passed over, and the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Does not *that* cry for the silence of " the end " ? Half a page earlier still might have been another perfect ending, almost impossible to read without the sudden pricking of tears :—

> " Now Mr Despondency's daughter, whose name was Much-afraid, said, when she heard

> what was done, that she would go with her father. . . . When the time was come for them to depart, they went up to the brink of the river. The last words of Mr Despondency were, Farewell night: welcome day! His daughter went through the river singing; but no one could understand what she said."

Ah, Master Bunyan, Master Bunyan! yet you probably never thought twice of the passing of Much-afraid, and congratulated yourself all your life on your powerful handling of the Foul Fiend.

Of books known as "standard," I can only remember one, at this moment, with a perfect ending. There must be others, of course, though as a rule the endings are too explanatory. But the end of *Wuthering Heights* is as unforgettable as its title:—

> "I sought, and soon discovered the three headstones on the slope next the moor—the middle one grey, and half buried in heath; Edgar Linton's only harmonised by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare.
>
> "I lingered round them under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heather and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

Emily Brontë, modern in everything else, ranks with the great writers of old in that she did not

know when her words were inspired. The wind of her spirit blew where it listed.

There has never lived a more finished artist than Mrs Ewing. The craftsmanship of her books is so exquisite that one could never, never wish her to have written one word less than she has done. And the end of *Jackanapes* is a perfect ending. But what another perfect ending chapter five would have made!

This is the perfect end of *Jackanapes* as it stands. Jackanapes had died of wounds in the Crimean War, wounds received in saving the life of his friend:—

> "A sorrowful story and ending badly?
>
> "Nay, Jackanapes, for the End is not yet.
>
> "A life wasted that might have been useful?
>
> "Men who have died for men, in all ages, forgive the thought! . . .
>
> "Very sweet are the uses of prosperity, the harvests of peace and progress, the fostering sunshine of health and happiness, and length of days in the land.
>
> "But there be things—oh, sons of what has deserved the name of Great Britain, forget it not!—'the good of' which and 'the use of' which are beyond all calculation of worldly goods and earthly uses; such as Love, and Honour, and the Soul of Man, which cannot be bought with a price and which do not die with death. And they who would fain live

happily EVER after, should not leave these things out of the lessons of their lives."

And this is the perfect end of *Jackanapes* as it might have been. The Major is speaking to Jackanapes, dying :—

" 'My dear boy, you're faint. Can you spare me a moment ? '

" ' No, stay—Major ! '

" ' What ? What ? '

" ' My head drifts so—if you wouldn't mind.'

" ' Yes ! Yes ! '

" ' Say a prayer by me. Out loud, please, I am getting deaf.'

" ' My dearest Jackanapes—my dear boy—— '

" ' One of the Church Prayers—Parade Service, you know—— '

" ' I see. But the fact is—God forgive me, Jackanapes—I'm a very different sort of fellow to some of you youngsters. Look here, let me fetch—— '

" But Jackanapes' hand was in his and wouldn't let go.

" There was a brief and bitter silence.

" ' 'Pon my soul, I can only remember the little one at the end.'

" ' Please,' whispered Jackanapes.

" Pressed by the conviction that what little he could do, it was his duty to do, the Major—

kneeling—bared his head, and spoke loudly, clearly, and very reverently :—

" 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—— '

" Jackanapes moved his left hand to his right one which still held the Major's.

" '—— the love of God.'

" And with that—Jackanapes died."

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