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CLIFFORD BAX, F.S.A., F.R.S.L.

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THE LATE EARL OF LYTTON, K.G., P.O.,
G.C.S.L, G.C.J.E.

*Presiding at a Meeting of the Royal Society of Literature
on Wednesday, November 12th, 1947, Sir Edward Marsh
said :*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—This is the first time our Society has met since it sustained less than a fortnight ago the most grievous personal loss that could have befallen it in the death of our honoured and beloved President, Lord Lytton. Two years ago he paid in this place an eloquent and moving tribute to his predecessor, Lord Crewe; and everyone who heard him felt that the bereaved Society, to which he had already given fifteen years of exemplary service on its Council, had passed into the safest of hands. He was indeed a perfect President. Though ours was only one of the innumerable causes in which he wore out his strength, he gave it as much time and thought as if it had been his only interest, and his skilful and resourceful guidance of its business; and the grace and distinction which his noble presence and his felicity in phrase and diction conferred on its public occasions combined to make his term of office memorable.

Of his long and devoted service to his country in the field of State affairs I need say nothing ; and from the list of his other activities, almost bewildering in their variety, but always directed with sound judgment towards the advantage of his fellow men, I will single out only two which were specially akin to our own endeavour : Ms Chairmanship of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells, and his exertions on behalf

of the scheme for a National Theatre. But of all the Arts, the nearest to his heart was Literature. He was one of the few examples of literary eminence in three generations of a single family, and his own most solid contribution was, perhaps, his biography of his grandfather, Bulwer-Lytton. The books which flowed from his hereditary interest in India, reinforced by his tenure of the Governorship of Bengal and the Acting Viceroyalty, were full of charm and insight; and his writings on the religion which played so large a part in his inner life have had a wide influence. But the book by which he is best known and which has most endeared him to the world is *Antony*, a Life of his gifted and brilliant elder son, who was killed fourteen years ago in a flying accident in the course of his training for an airman. The book gives a unique and unsurpassable picture of an ideal relationship between parents and son; nothing can ever have given its author more heartfelt pleasure than the stream of letters which he received from strangers all over the Empire who had drawn encouragement and inspiration from the record.

I never knew he was a poet till I heard his beautiful *Airman's Hymn* sung last Friday at the memorial service in the Abbey, where all sorts and conditions of men assembled to do him honour.

He was one of my oldest and best friends. Our friendship began when he came up to Cambridge in my fourth year at Trinity, and it lasted unbroken for over fifty years. I wish I were more worthy to commemorate this great and good man.

INTRODUCTION

BY CLIFFORD BAX, F.S.A., F.R.S.L.

IN the course of Mr. Speaight's lecture we come upon the arresting phrase "All men need government, no man is fit to govern." If this were true, the prospect for our planet would be dismal indeed, but we can immediately name a number of men who were fit to govern as, for instance, Asoka, Pericles, the Antonines, William the Conqueror, Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Some of us may think that Shakespeare himself lived most of his years under a Queen who was an admirable governess of her nation. Mr. Speaight does, however, bring out clearly his principal notion, that Shakespeare was considerably pre-occupied with "the moral problem of power," and shows again and again how difficult it is to wield authority well. The lecturer rightly indicates that our greatest poet adhered to what Dr. Johnson termed "the grand principle of subordination"; that is, the conviction that society should be hierarchical with some persons above others in the social scale. We are not surprised when Mr. Speaight quotes the famous oration of Ulysses concerning "degree," but when he remarks that Ulysses is here speaking "universally" and a little later shows himself to be nonetheless "a practised politician," the lecturer seems not to note that this speech, like Mercutio's description of Queen Mab, has every mark of being inserted against the grain of the character who utters it. To me it appears probable that, just as Hamlet supplied certain lines to the players, so did the Earl of Oxford now and again compose a set speech or a soliloquy and pay Shakespeare to use it.

The poet's respect for royalty and aristocracy incited Frank Harris to call him a "snob," as though we were compelled to be either snobs or democrats. Mr. Speaight refers to the poet's "hatred of the mob," but contempt might be a juster word. In this very lecture we find him saying that "the King is but a man as I am; the violet smells to him as it doth to me"; and

Shylock's lines about the common humanity of the Jew suggest that Shakespeare is not likely to have felt hatred for anybody. Perhaps we may say that hatred is a characteristic of lopsided natures. An introvert may feel something like hatred toward extroverts, and they in turn may instinctively dislike or despise the introvert. Only a mind which leant to neither extreme could have delineated Hamlet and Falstaff with equal appreciation, and it is interesting to observe, with Mr. Speaight, how frequently Shakespeare, having exhibited the irresolution of an introvert, admirably introduces " the sensible strong man " to put matters right.

Our President might regard as " jargon " the two words which Mr. Speaight and I have borrowed from Jung, but they have become almost indispensable. Most poets have been introverts ; Jonson, Meredith and Whitman are among the exceptions ; and it may be that Shakespeare is the only writer who cannot be placed in the one group or the other. Freud, Jung and Adler bestride Mr. Gilbert Frankau's paper, " Man's Unconscious, and His Published Word." The lecturer is concerned with what he calls " the Constant Antithesis," which means, I gather, that the Unconscious Mind is often completely opposed to the Conscious Mind. He illustrates this familiar concept with little-known quotations from famous men, most of them professional philosophers. Man's Unconscious is to us as America was to the inhabitants of the fifteenth century, an old, vast newly-discovered continent. How far does it extend ? What does it contain ? Can we find a radical instinct from which all our ideas and emotions derive ? Freud fancied that the answer was Sex or the instinct of life to transmit itself. Adler said "No. The primary impulse is a will-to-power." Jung, I believe, considers as most of the mystics do, that at a certain depth the Unconscious loses touch with the Conscious, becomes impersonal and thus merges all minds together. Everything depends on whether you are determined not to admit the existence of the soul. If you dismiss the soul as a pathetic fancy, you immensely simplify the problem of what man really is. You just say " He is an ingenious organism animated for a short time by an energy called ' life ' " ; and life being manifestly a selfish and voracious force, you solve the problem by stating that life desires power in order that it may eat surrounding objects and also, mysteriously foreknowing that its organism will perish, is violently sexual in order that it may slip from an older organism into a newer one. After this, you surmise that the Unconscious is a museum of archaic emotions

and impulses which occasionally surge up into the Conscious and lead to murder, incest and other uncivilized proceedings. Now just as Freud detected sexual symbolism in almost every object because, apparently, he was ignorant of the Eastern concepts "In" and "Yo," so perhaps do other explorers of the mind lose their way because they ignore the possible factors of karma, reincarnation and a deathless element in Man. If Mr. Frankau set out to show how often great men say one thing and believe another, he amply succeeded in his purpose.

Llewellyn Powys would probably have subscribed to the doctrine of Freud. Bernard Shaw once wrote that sex ought not to occupy much of a man's attention except between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven (I am speaking from long-range recollection), and it may have been one of his disciples who stung Powys to exclaim "Let no one pay a moment's attention to such opinions. . . . Sex is the pulse-beat of life. It is the root, the straight long cow-parsley root that reaches down to the antipodes, and which even the dwarfs cannot pull up!" His work is to me more attractive, despite his materialistic philosophy, than that of his brothers. Few writers, and indeed few persons, have praised life so exuberantly, and his joy of it must have been contagious. Our Society was fortunate in having Mr. Louis Wilkinson to discuss, appreciate and assess the work of the three remarkable brothers, for Mr. Wilkinson is an expert on his subject and moreover here, as usual, writes prose that is watchful without loss of fluency.

A friend assures me that John Cowper Powys is a fascinating lecturer and able to communicate his own enthusiasm. Writing and public speaking, however, are as different as sculpture and painting. To some of us the speeches of the most celebrated orators—let us say, Burke, Gladstone and Annie Besant—seem strangely wearisome when they solidify into print. Theodore Powys, again, has a strong inclination toward allegory (I see that Mr. Wilkinson detects the influence of Bunyan), a form easy for some and difficult for others to digest. Well, there it is—all the brothers have or had a high-wind vitality, but it is from passages composed by Llewellyn that I have received most often the unmistakable thrill of extreme beauty. Sometimes in his book 'Love and Death' he jars the reader by the use of words far-fetched and dear-bought, but his jewels were so seldom semi-precious that posterity is unlikely to neglect him. He had the rare power of quickening our delight in beautiful things and of causing us to wonder whether we ought to be more fully enjoying life.

Everyone knows that Mr. Conal O'Riordan can be witty and also provocative when he chooses. In his recollections of Bloomsbury as it was in the Nineties, he makes one statement which surprises me and three that leave me gasping. Before commenting upon them I would praise the delicate brushwork with which he records the mood and pressure of a decade that has for most of us an uncommon fascination. It was the last period in which we had a distinctive Movement in the arts. For fifty years our writers, painters and composers have been playing lone hands. There was no cohesion, for example, between Shaw, Wells, Conrad, Moore, Bennett, Chesterton and Galsworthy. Nobody can refer to their work by using a date ; but the men of the Nineties have a general family likeness. First and foremost, they championed, as our lecturer says, the creed of Art for Art's Sake, and how badly we needed it ! Except for Wilde's fall, our nation might have been shamed into becoming art-conscious, but after 1895 the Philistines triumphantly returned to their native illiteracy, and art was considered to be the handmaid of sin. The writers, with few exceptions, had abandoned religion. They still used the word " God " when they aimed at a climax and the word " sin " when they wished to be audacious. Ten years later this word had, I should say, become obsolete. You would be hard-pressed to find it in the works of the seven successful authors whom I named above. Furthermore, the Nineties rebelled excessively against Victorian respectability. If you were an artist, led a sober life and kept normal hours, you were suspect—as we see from Dowson's grave condemnation of Mr. O'Riordan.

The lecturer surprises me by terming the period " a harsh time " and by referring to its " cruel eyes." He knows, for he was there, whereas I was toddling among the dark red roses of my father's garden ; but surely the manners of that period were almost elaborately fine, and surely it had more elegance than any subsequent decade ? My astonishment begins when I meet the phrase " Military glory is a chimera of the poetasters," for it was no poetaster who wrote " The pomp and circumstance of glorious war." Then too, Mr. O'Riordan comes out with " To be a great poet you, must have immense joy of life, as had Herrick and Walt Whitman. Failing that, you must have a fiery hatred of life as had Kit Marlowe and Byron." The reader will decide for himself whether Marlowe and Byron hated life. He may also feel that most great poets have neither hated nor loved life, but have found it a sad experience shot with delights. Lastly, I am

left wordless by my old friend's judgment that Wells was a greater writer than Hardy or Meredith. . . .

But there is no arguing about matters of taste, and so what am I to say of Dr. Marie Stopes' conviction that Alfred Douglas was a great sonneteer? Technically he was correct, and he had a fine ear for somewhat mild melody. It seems frantic extravagance to believe that the loss of some poems written by Lord Alfred in Wormwood Scrubbs constitutes the loss of "one of the world's greatest manuscripts," but the poet certainly had cause enough for rejoicing over such enthusiasm. Dr. Stopes, not for the first time, seems to reveal that she has a metronomic ear. She does not allow for the elasticity of English syllables, for if we never use a dactyl where a trochee is expected, we produce the monotonous versification of the eighteenth century. Douglas surprisingly accepted her suggestion that "sapphires" would be better (because more "correct"?) than "amethysts" in the line:

"Rubies and emeralds and amethysts glow,"

a line which is much more nervously-alive than it would be if the proposed change were adopted. After all, it is a long time since Coleridge demonstrated that fine verse is not made by counting syllables. And why does Dr. Stopes bother to tot up the number of "ands" in a sonnet? "And" is no more objectionable than "is," "but" or "the." However, the lecturer has an "and" in her bonnet, just as Yeats had a "which" in his hat.

The discovery of Hazlitt is a major experience for any lover of literature and proud English. Perhaps himself coming from Addisonian stock, he has had a large and notable progeny. We know all about the incomparable R.L.S. playing the sedulous ape, and Hazlitt's dream-children also include C. E. Montague, James Agate and all the other idolators of Montague. Hazlitt, Lamb and gentle Leigh Hunt rehumanized the essay after its mummification in 'The Rambler' . . . and now that I think of it, I suppose that Montaigne is the Adam of unbuttoned and friendly essayists? Well, it is hard to conceive that any literary aspirant in any future age will not envy and admire Hazlitt. For my part I have always retained a deep interest in his most vilified work, the 'Liber Amoris.' Here we watch genius becoming abject through a sexual obsession; but must not something of equal oddness have befallen Shakespeare? I believe it may happen that any true or mighty genius can astound his contem-

poraries by tragically misdirecting his natural passion. We are bewildered by Shakespeare's collapse before the Dark Lady, by Rossetti's infatuation for Fanny Cornforth, by Hazlitt's obeisance to the trumpery allure of the innkeeper's daughter, but that is because we are not loaded with genius and have only to manage ordinary lives.

In Matthew Arnold we have a well-balanced man. I think much more highly of his grave and noble verse than, apparently, Mr. Nicolson does. It has such a Corinthian elegance that it may well be read with bated reverence when Swinburne has come to seem cloyingly fluent. Arnold, as a poet, triumphed over his academic inheritance. Dons cannot write poetry because there is no wildness in them. His prose, too, is a firm model for our slapdash contemporaries to study. I cannot assent to Mr. Nicolson's complaint about Arnold's "trick of repetition." We may be sure that it was deliberate. Was there not once an intelligent bishop who, having preached the same sermon to the same listeners for three consecutive Sundays, explained that "It is only at the third hearing that they fully understand what I mean"? There is wisdom in the phrase, quoted by Mr. Nicolson, "The hard doctrine of the unsoundness of the majority," and again in "Culture aims at the perfection of all human power."

I do not know what to say of Mr. Gawsworth's lecture on the poets of the French African Empire, for I know nothing about them, and until an hour ago had not even heard their names. It did occur to me at once—from Mr. Gawsworth's quotations—that Edmond Gojon, "poet of the French Empire," owed much to Heredia. It is also clear that Mr. Gawsworth regards Scal6si, a Tunisian, as a poet in whom genius was to madness near allied, but we have not here enough specimens of his work to form our own estimate of its value.

From year to year the Transactions of this Eoyal Society must vary as inevitably as the crops of a farmer. It is for the reader to decide whether 1946 was a bumper year. He or she may be confident that not only shall we strive to obtain the best that is available, but, greatly honouring a literary association of such proud lineage, will always aim at bettering our best.

THE WEDMORE MEMORIAL LECTURE.

FOREWORD.

BY F. S. BOAS, LL.D., D.Lit., V.-P., R.S.L.

IT gives me special pleasure to take the Chair this afternoon, both on general and personal grounds. Mr. Robert Speaight's paper on "Shakespeare and Politics," to which we are all looking forward, continues the series of Wedmore Memorial Lectures. The Royal Society of Literature is now fortunate in being able to include in its sessional programmes a trio of endowed Lectures. The Tredegar Memorial Lecture was endowed by Lord Tredegar, a Vice-President of our Society, in honour of his late father the first Viscount of the second creation, and was inaugurated on January 29th, 1936, by the founder with a paper on "John Donne, Lover and Poet." The Giff Edmonds Memorial Lecture was founded by Miss Sophia Gifford Edmonds, a Fellow of this Society, in memory of her brother Lieutenant Nicholas Gifford Edmonds, an officer in the Black Watch, killed at Magersfontein. The first of the addresses on this foundation was given on May 31st, 1939, by the late Dr. Robin Flower on "Lost Manuscripts."

To-day we celebrate the third occasion of the Wedmore Memorial Lecture, founded by Miss Millicent Wedmore, in memory of her father, Sir Frederick Wedmore, the eminent artistic and literary critic. The first of these Lectures was given by the Hon. V. Sackville-West on May 25th, 1944, on "Wordsworth, especially in Relation to Modern Poetry." She was followed on June 6th, 1945, by Mr. L. A. G. Strong, with a paper on "The Art of the Short Story."

To-day it is a pleasure to us all that Miss Wedmore is with us, having made the long journey from Cornwall to hear Mr. Speaight. In nominating him as Lecturer this year she has helped to keep up, what I for one value highly, the association of our Society with the theatre. Sir Arthur Pinero was for many years one of our Fellows. Mr. Bernard Shaw and Dr. Granville-Barker are happily still on our Roll.' In Lord Dunsany, Mr. Clifford Bax and Mr. Laurence Housman we have another trio of eminent dramatists, and in Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth the Director of the British Drama League. Mr. St. John Ervine, Mr. Ashley Dukes and Mr. Ivor Brown have lent authority to our Chair of Drama. Many of us still keep in memory the illuminating address by the late Sir John Martin-Harvey on October 6th, 1942, on "The Player and His Art."

Now in Mr. Robert Speaight we have the player and his art before us personified. From his Oxford days, when he was Hon. Secretary of the O.U.D.S. and acted Peer Gynt and Falstaff, he has done yeoman's service to the stage. Since then, as is known to all, he has appeared professionally in a wide range of Shakespearian roles, and in such memorable parts as Hibbert in 'Journey's End,' Cameron in 'The Sleeping Clergyman' and Becket in 'Murder in the Cathedral.' He has lectured, broadcast and written on dramatic and other subjects. I have no inkling as to how he will treat his subject this afternoon. But I know that he will speak with the authority of one who is in the fullest and best sense a man of the theatre.

¹ Since these words were spoken the Society has had to mourn the irreparable loss of Dr. Granville-Barker.

THE WEDMORE MEMORIAL LECTURE.

This Lecture perpetuates the honoured memory of Sir Frederick Wedmore, author and critic, Hon. Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter Etchers. He wrote on art, literature and drama, specializing in those of France. He was knighted in 1912 "for services to Art and performances in Literature." The Lecture was founded by his daughter, Miss MilKcent Wedmore, a Member of the Society since 1928.

SHAKESPEARE AND POLITICS.

BY ROBERT SPBAIGHT, M.A., F.R.S.L.

[Read May 21st, 1946.]

MY first word must be a word of respect and gratitude to the Founder of this Lecture. For those of us who are glad of an occasion to set our thoughts in order upon some aspect of Shakespeare this annual opportunity is a precious gift. Sir Frederick Wedmore was knighted in 1912 "for services to Art and performances in Literature." As the late Marquess of Crewe pointed out, he was representative of the best English culture in his day. This cultivation of mind and spirit is attested by his books on painting and etching, and particularly, if I may say so—for here I feel especially at one with him—in his love and appreciation of France. His short stories showed a real knowledge of the French character and landscape, and I envy him an acquaintance with the novels of Balzac which resulted in a biography of that abounding genius. Nothing but good can come of this awareness on the part of English writers of what France has meant in the making of Europe ; and I am sure that we should all be the better for a familiarity with the best French prose. Sir Frederick Wedmore's care for the cultivation of the mind has descended to his daughter, who founded this Lecture in memory of him. She is, I am glad to say, present with us here this afternoon, and it is to her that I am immediately indebted for the privilege of addressing you.

When I speak of politics, I mean, broadly, the exercise of power in the government of men, and I am concerned to show how this theme, in its various aspects, was treated in Shakespeare's plays. It is an immense, an inexhaustible topic, and I

cannot do more than touch the fringe of it in the brief space at my disposal. But it is a subject of some relevance to-day. We live in a time when power has lost its equilibrium—its "bias" as Falconbridge would have said—and we are continually disturbed by some unfamiliar assertion of authority, at home or abroad. When we are invited to take certain things for granted—this or that abrogation of personal rights, this or that toleration of injustice—we are interested to learn what the wisdom of Shakespeare has to say upon these matters. I use the word "wisdom" advisedly, for we shall search in vain among his plays for any cut-and-dried political theory or any neat panacea for the problems that politics are supposed to solve. Shakespeare was neither a practitioner nor a philosopher of politics, but he was a very profound observer of men and women. And when he treats of politics, as he frequently does, it is always in relation to human nature; how the exercise of power affects "him that gives and him that takes"; how liberty and order can so be balanced as to procure the greatest good for the greatest number; how the city can be secured without doing violence to the citizen.

At the same time we shall be cautious in assuming that Shakespeare had an "opinion," in the lawyer's sense, on any topic of which he treats. His positions, even when they were detached, were never quite dispassionate. I should prefer to say, more simply, that his imagination saw certain things and set them down. His mind was a prism in which the truths of natural law were flashed and his pen recorded them with an intuition which never faltered. If reason is the instrument of the intellect, imagination is the instrument of some higher faculty which transcends the intellect.

"Sure He that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after gave us not
That capability and God-like reason
To fust in us unused."

The reason of which Hamlet here speaks is illumined to a divine incandescence. It is in fact the synonym of wisdom, and in our present context wisdom is a word which will serve us well. Nor must we too readily assume that the mind of any one of Shakespeare's characters is necessarily his own. Flaubert's famous confession: "*Madame Bovary—c'est moi!*" might be echoed by almost any creative writer about almost any created character. But then we must view each character in relation to the rest.

The truth may lie somewhere in the middle, or it may include the two extremes. For example, there is no doubt that Shakespeare held a high view of authority :

" He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be as holy as severe."

But the fantastical " Duke of Dark Corners " who utters these lines is not allowed to forget that the sword of heaven is all too often wielded by unholy hands. Indeed, the Shakespearian conclusion to this matter is very clear, and we shall try to see how the poet arrived at it. It may be summarized by saying that while all men need government, no man is fit to govern. Shakespeare was too wise to suggest a political issue from this impasse. Only the purification of the spirit, Prosperous—

" My ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer "

could make the King worthy of his sceptre. But when subject and monarch alike were purified, there would then be no need for government. We should have reached the Kingdom of Heaven on earth where righteousness and peace had kissed each other; the Marxist Utopia where the State had " withered away " in the beatitude of a universal liberty. Well, we have not reached it yet; and in this respect Shakespeare was much less of an adventist than some of his posterity to-day.

I do not wish to press too closely a comparison between the Elizabethan Age and our own which in many ways could only redound to our discredit. But it is important to realize that in Shakespeare's time also the balance of power was shifting. In a sense, of course, the balance of power never does anything else, but at some periods it shifts more rapidly and more irresponsibly than at others. I do not only refer to the balance of political power ; the reversals of spiritual authority were of even greater consequence. There is no certain way of telling where Shakespeare's sympathies lay in these confusing matters—how far he was a man of the Renaissance and how far a man of the Reform, or how far he belonged to the disappearing culture of the Middle Ages. But one thing is certain ; all around him he saw political precedents being set up and everywhere the title-deeds of authority were challenged. As the Duke in 'Measure for Measure' remarks :

\ " Novelty only is in request; and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce

truth enough alone to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accurst:—much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news."

I agree. We can read it every morning in the *News Chronicle*. And it all amounts to this ; that for Shakespeare the image of authority was the absolute ruler. Just as the return of absolutism, wearing the bowler-hatted crown of King Demos, has made people curiously forgetful of liberties which our fathers took for granted, so Shakespeare seems to be ignorant of all those mediaeval jurists who were the founders of modern constitutionalism. Yet it was little more than a century before that Sir John Fortescue had written :

" There be two kinds of kingdoms of which that one is a lordship called in Latin *dominium regale* and that other is called *dominium politicum et regale*. And they differ in that the first king may rule his people by such laws as he maketh himself. And therefore he may set upon them taxes and other impositions such as he wills himself without their assent. The second king may not rule his people by other laws than such as they assent unto."

Now this conception of kingship seems hardly known to Shakespeare, so completely has the later conception of absolute monarchy taken its place. In the Roman plays, it is true, there is a suggestion of popular republican liberties which may not be transgressed:

" I was born free as Caesar, so were you.
We both have fed as well and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he."

So speaks the envy of Cassius. But it is an assertion of moral equality rather than of legal right:

" O you and I have heard our fathers say
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king."

Brutus is more disinterested than his fellow-conspirators ; but within his conscious nobility there is a worm of pride :

" There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats
For I am armed so strong in honesty
That they pass me by as the idle wind
Which I respect not."

Brutus is as immovable as the *Manchester Guardian* when he has made up his mind upon the morality of a political issue.

It is the innovation of the crown, and its proved abuse, which finally persuades him:

" He would be crowned:
 How that might change his nature, there's the question :
 It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
 And that craves wary walking. Crown him ? That—
 And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
 That at his will he may do danger with.
 The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
 Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar,
 I have not known when his affections swayed
 More than his reason. But, 'tis a common proof,
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder
 Whereto the upward climber turns his face;
 But when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
 By which he did ascend : so Caesar may ;
 Then, lest he may, prevent."

The preventive assassination of Julius Caesar brings many evils in its train. The murderer's highmindedness may have prevented the coronation of his victim ; it could not prevent the unity of the Roman State from being torn apart. It could not prevent a period of civil war, with Antony, Pompey and Octavius competing like gangsters for power. Wherever the Pax Romana may have been born, it was not born of blood in the Capitol nor of rhetoric in the Forum. Shakespeare's imaginative sympathy entered deeply into Brutus, but he held the scales mercilessly even. Caesar is a frozen parody of grandeur ; Antony combines the opportunist politician and the loyal friend, ruthless where he is determined to rule ; and the Roman people illustrate once again, as Antony's eloquence sweeps them to tears and frenzy, Shakespeare's hatred for the mob. The murder of Cinna the poet is a perfect example of popular injustice. No, the Caesarian party is not attractive. But, for all that, it is not upon them but upon their opponents that judgment falls at Philippi.

The Roman plays are, in any case, a theme apart. It may seem paradoxical to suggest that in ' Coriolanus ' and ' Antony and Cleopatra ' politics are a secondary issue. But ' Coriolanus ' is not, as many people imagine, a play about politics ; it is a play about pride. What matters is not whether Caius Marcius will capitulate before the sovereign people, but whether he will give way before his mother. The clash between the democratic and the authoritarian temper, important and vivid as it is, does

no more than provide the framework for the conflict with Volumnia—a conflict all the more poignant because this man is so manifestly his mother's son. It is the same with 'Antony and Cleopatra' which is perhaps the greatest play ever written about love. Here the wrangles of the Roman triumvirate compose the setting. The "triple pillar of the world" is well and truly turned into a "strumpet's fool"; but the erotic apotheosis of the final scenes reduces Octavius' triumph into dust. Here is something beyond order and reason and prudence; here is certainly something beyond politics. "Where souls do couch on flowers we'll hand in hand." The history of Antony and Cleopatra has been a parade of folly, but at the end it is not they who look the fools.

If we reflect a little on these two plays, we should be warned against thinking that Shakespeare is saying something final about politics when in fact he is saying something else. His preoccupations about the moral problem of power—because that is what his political thinking amounts to—are more evident when he looks back into English history and when he surveys the contemporary scene. It was all a single chronicle and he was himself living at the end of it. On its title-page he might well have written "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*." Shakespeare was not a speculative thinker, and there is no reason to suppose that he had studied Fortescue or Bracton or John of Salisbury—let alone St. Thomas Aquinas. If he had he might well have despaired even more deeply of politicians, when he saw how persistently they defied their philosophers. I have already suggested that the image of authority most familiar to him was the absolute ruler. Claudius in 'Hamlet' is the very pattern of a Renaissance despot—a presupposed divinity hedges his kingship. But when he turned to write the history of England he found very much the same thing. John, the weak and violent ruler, is sustained and strengthened by Falconbridge. The capricious Richard is dethroned by the competent Bolingbroke, who lives to find the fruits of usurped authority turn bitter in his mouth. Henry V, in many ways the paragon of Christian kingship, launches an aggressive war, sustained by the casuistry with which moral theologians so delight to deform the consciences of simple men. It needed, as we know, the sanctity of Jeanne d'Arc to give their hypocrisy the lie. The piety of Henry VI, rudely disturbed by the wars of the 'Roses', was followed by the tyranny of Richard Crookback; and then, again, the sensible strong man, Henry Richmond, ushers in the

Tudor dynasty at Bosworth. That dynasty had been very successfully consolidated. Archbishop Cranmer, at the end of 'Henry VIII,' speaking at the baptism of Princess Elizabeth, had foreseen it all:

" This royal infant—heaven still move about her
 Though in her cradle, yet now promises
 Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,
 Which time shall bring to ripeness.
 In her days every man shall eat in safety,
 Under his own vine, what he plants, and sing
 The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours :
 God shall be truly known; and those about her
 From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
 And by those claim their greatness, not by blood
 Nor shall this peace sleep with her— "

and so on. But above these mellow accents I seem to hear a Shakespearean whisper telling me that Archbishops should not always be taken *au pied de la lettre*, not even when they are speaking in blank verse, and reminding me that the golden age of Good Queen Bess was not quite as golden as all that.

Lear : " Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

Glou.: Ay—sir.

Lear: And the creature run from the cur ? There thou mightst
 Behold the great image of authority : a dog's obeyed in office.
 Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand !
 Why dost thou lash that whore ? Strip thine own back;
 Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
 For which thou whipst her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
 Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
 Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
 And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
 Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
 Get thee glass eyes,
 And, like a scurvy politician, seem
 To see the things thou dost not."

This brings me to my first conclusion—that Shakespeare's political outlook was wholly without optimism; and this separates him from many people to-day, who survey a similar abuse of power. I am sure it would never have occurred to Shakespeare that hope was a political virtue, or that the world could be improved by getting other people to make the moral effort one is unwilling to make oneself. I do not believe, of course, that Shakespeare saw no good in man; but I think he

would have agreed with Lord Acton that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," and I should be interested to know whether, in his recreation of English history, he had come across some verses attributed to King Henry VI:

" Kingdoms are but cares ;
State is devoid of stay ;
Riches are ready snares
And hasten to decay.

" Pleasure is a privy game
Which vice doth still provoke
Pomp unprompt; and fame a flame,
Power a smouldering stroke.

" Who meaneth to remove the rock
Out of his slimy mud
Shall mire himself and hardly scape
The swelling of the flood."

Shakespeare, then, found himself in a situation where authority could only be usurped from without or curbed from within ; its only constitutional checks were the checks of conscience. This was a long way from Aristotle or Bacon or Bellarmine, but it was the lesson of history. No great poet had quite such a concrete imagination as Shakespeare, and he was quick to see that, where power was in question, the formulas of philosophy were dead letters even if they were inspired by live principles. His imagination seized, firstly, on the exercise of authority itself. What sanctioned it ? If it were indeed the sword of heaven, who put it into a ruler's hand ? For what reason, if any, could it be usurped ? And these questions, when they were addressed to history, led straight to the conception of the Christian King.

I say conception, but Shakespeare could never rest until his conceptions had become incarnate, and all through the early histories he is searching for a man who could satisfy his regalism. He met the problem in 'King John.' Here it is the bastard son of Richard Coeur de Lion who fixes his imagination; but he still has to reconcile wisdom and legitimacy. The country is in a state bordering on anarchy, and somehow order must be restored. For Shakespeare the establishment of order is capital. Without order there is neither justice nor life ; there is only the social suicide of chaos. And order depends, not upon the despotic impositions of authority, but upon the free observance

of degree. You remember the great speech of Ulysses in 'Troilus and Cressida' when he is trying to reconcile the factious chieftains of the Greek Army:

" O when degree is shaken
Which is the ladder to all high designs
The enterprise is sick ! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhood in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels
But by degree stand in authentic place.
Take but degree away, untune that string
And hark what discord follows !
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong
Between whose endless jar justice resides—
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite ;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make performe an universal prey
And last eat up himself."

This is one of the occasions, as in Mercutio's "Queen Mab" speech or in Portia's plea for mercy, where Shakespeare is writing beyond, though not necessarily against, his character. Ulysses, who here speaks so universally, presently shows himself the practiced politician as he persuades Nestor to his plan for seducing Achilles out of his retirement. Ulysses knows human nature by heart. If Ajax is put up to fight with the unconquered Hector, Achilles will be stirred to action:

" If the dull brainless Ajax comes safe off
We'll dress him up in voices ; if he fail,
Yet go we under our opinion still
That we have better men. But hit or miss,
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes.
Ajax employed plucks down Achilles' plumes."

'Troilus and Cressida'³ is of course a much later play than⁴ 'King John,' but there is no reason to think that these considerations were not in Shakespeare's mind when he brought in Falconbridge to balance the weakness of John. The relationship between the two men is an interesting one. Linked by the band of sworn service, which in Shakespeare is always a sacred obligation, they become almost like one character. John contributes the legitimacy, and Falconbridge the authority, of

kingship. John flounders until Falconbridge has put life into him:

" But wherefore do you droop ? Why look you sad ?
 Be great in act, as you have been in thought;
 Let not the world see fear and sad distrust
 Govern the motion of a kingly eye ;
 Be stirring as the time ; be fire with fire ;
 Threaten the threatener, and outface the brow
 Of bragging horror ; so shall inferior eyes
 That borrow their behaviours from the great
 Grow great by your example, and put on
 The dauntless spirit of resolution."

Falconbridge has the true intuition of kingship, and we feel his breath enter and sustain the flagging spirit of his master. But Falconbridge is no more of an idealist than Ulysses ; statesmanship, he would seem to say, is a game and you must know the rules, as you must know the rules of chess. Take the complicated scene where John and Philip of France arrive before the walls of Angers, and are refused admittance until one or other has proved his title to the English crown. Falconbridge has an idea. Why not join forces to take Angers, and afterwards dispute their title to the crown ?

" Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
 Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town :
 By East and West let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon, charged to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawled down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city:

.
 " That done, dis sever your united strengths
 And part your mingled colours once again ;
 Turn face to face, and bloody point to point ;
 Then, in a moment, fortune shall cull forth
 Out of one side her happy minion,
 To whom in favour she shall give the day
 And kiss him with a glorious victory.
 How like you this wild counsel, mighty states ?
 Smacks it not something of the policy ? "

We, answering the Bastard's question in 1946, reply that it smacks very strongly of it indeed. I need not weary you with the dynastic bargain which is struck to avoid the promised bloodshed ; but Falconbridge's final comments are worth recalling. The spirit of compromise or the sense of advantage—call it what you will, and Falconbridge christened it " com-

modity "—is the motive power of politics. This makes nonsense of idealism. Here was France,

" whose armour conscience buckled on,
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
As God's own soldier "

making terms with—

" that broker that still breaks the pate of faith— "

with " commodity " which—

" Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,
From a resolved and honourable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace."

But Falconbridge is perfectly honest:

" And why rail I on this commodity ?
But for because he hath not wooed me yet."

Indeed, his cynicism is part of his humour just as his humour is part of his humility, and one can feel Shakespeare's heart warming to him more easily than ever it warmed to Brutus. But as the shadows gather over the reign of John, Falconbridge becomes more serious. Another man—a Bolingbroke perhaps—might have been tempted to usurp the crown—but that would be to break faith with the very soul of authority itself. When John is babbling in his last delirium, Falconbridge is still the trusted servant, rough and humorous of tongue and infinitely tender of disposition, who had sworn him service those many years before. When Arthur's body is found beneath the battlements and Hubert lifts it up into his arms, he can exclaim :

" How easy dost thou take all England up !
From forth this morsel of dead royalty
The life, the right, and truth of all this realm
Is fled to heaven ;

.

Now for the bare-picked bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace.
Now powers from home and discontents at home
Meet in one line ; and vast confusion waits
As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast
The imminent decay of wrested pomp."

Falconbridge has not, in the end, been able to do very much ; but in alliance with an unsteady crown, he has given Shakespeare a notion of authority which we shall see turned to account later on. The poet was almost immediately to find himself once more confronted with this problem of the office and the man. Where did authority really reside ? Where was loyalty really due ? The problem had been partially solved in ' King John/ where the royal authority was divided between two people. There was no such easy way out in ' Richard II,' where the efficient ruler made no bones about usurping the crown. Shakespeare's natural justice, which is perhaps only another name for his natural charity, is illustrated here as lucidly as it was illustrated in 'Julius Caesar.' The famous lines of John of Gaunt are nearly always quoted out of their context. The England over whom he spends his eloquence is once more in the grip of anarchy, and once more through the weakness of its King.

This time there is no Falconbridge at hand. Shakespeare is held to history and we have, instead, the cold masculine cunning of Bolingbroke pitted against the feminine caprice of Richard. All Shakespeare's sympathy goes out to the man who is an artist in self-pity, but he does not say that he should have remained on the throne of England. That is one of the moral judgments which he does not feel called upon to make. If the authority of the King is divorced from fellowship with the subject, then, Richard tells us in one of his great passages of introspection, Kingship is vanity and passes with the emblems of mortality. In the rigidly hierarchical society of Elizabethan England, where nevertheless there was a more or less chronic traffic jam on the ladder, Shakespeare was always tempted to see the ruler in a perilous and pathetic isolation:

" For within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps death his court; and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp ;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchise, be feared, and kill with looks ;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit—
As if this flesh which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable; and humoured then,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell King ! "

But if we are to guess at the poet's own feeling in this difficult matter of the rights of a bad ruler, perhaps we can take the

attitude of old York for guidance. York has loved and served Richard, and pities him in his fall; but he sees that Bolingbroke is the effective ruler. That is enough for him :

" But heaven hath a hand in these events
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.
To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,
Whose state and honour I for aye allow."

And once having made up his mind York sticks to Bolingbroke, even to the sacrifice of his own son.

We may censure this as treachery or commend it as common sense ; and there is in any case no need to pretend that York's answer was an answer that completely satisfied Shakespeare. Moreover, when the poet moved on into the chronicles of Henry IV, he could not warm to Bolingbroke. How cold they are, those formal speeches in exercise of an authority of which he was half ashamed ! How inhuman beside the breadth of Falstaff and the lightness of Hal ! The shadow of regicide darkens this competence of kingship, and the promises of expiation leave us quite unmoved. But meanwhile Shakespeare is scenting a way out of his impasse, and it is in the alleys of Eastcheap rather than in the ante-chambers of Westminster that his patriot King is taking shape. I need not delay over Prince Hal. We have many of us seen him on the stage and we know the difficulties of the part. Not even Shakespeare can reconcile us to the rejection of Falstaff—but still the rejection was dramatically necessary even if it was psychologically undesirable. The only alternative was for Falstaff to have died in Shallow's orchard. He could not, in any event, be allowed to dominate the history of Henry V.

We should beware, too, of sentimentality in approaching these situations which grate on a modern taste. It was essential that we should feel in Henry the clear vocation of Kingship, even if at times he looks a prig ; that through all his foolery and good-fellowship he should know himself to be cut off from other men, separated by a destiny which he cannot escape:

" So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off."

This is not, perhaps, very skilful writing, nor are we much attracted by the young man who thus moralizes in the mirror. But the point I want to make is that 'Henry V' was the best that Shakespeare could do with the absolute ruler, given the facts of human nature and the facts of English history. And his best is not so bad. Taking Henry in the round, we find something of Bolingbroke's sententiousness and something of his calculation, something also of his ruthlessness: but we find, too, the winged rhetoric and brusque gallantry of Falconbridge and Hotspur. If we had met Henry V we know that we should have found a human being. There was no need to idealize the portrait; all that mattered was that authority and love should meet.

We must not linger over the purple patriotic speeches, which are in any case so well known and where a nascent nationalism is finding its voice; nor can I do more than mention the rigid justice imparted to the three conspirators and the rough reprisals meted out to the French prisoners. These two scenes were most dishonestly excised from the film version of the play, although they are essential to its central character. They show that even when Shakespeare is doing his best for "man, proud man dressed in a little brief authority," he will not romanticize him. What, then, is the distinguishing mark of Henry among Shakespeare's rulers? The answer is in one word—fellowship. Turn to the night before Agincourt where Henry, wandering through the camp incognito, enters into casual conversation with the three soldiers. In a few imperishable sentences Shakespeare indicates the source of all effective sovereignty; sovereignty, he suggests, must be rooted in humility and in the fraternity of all flesh:

"For, though I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man as I am; the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions; his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet, when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing."

Then, you will remember, William gives his opinion that—

"if the cause be not good, the king hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all 'We died at such place'; some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left.

I am afraid there are few die well that die in a battle ; for how can they charitably dispose of anything, when blood is their argument ? Now if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it; whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection."

To this Henry replies at some length that " every subject's duty is to the King's ; but every subject's soul is his own," but when the soldiers have left him he can exclaim against the solitude of ceremony:

" O ceremony, show me but thy worth !
What is thy soul of adoration ?
Art thou aught else but place, degree and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men ?
Wherein thou art less happy being foared
Than they in fearing."

This passage is vital for an understanding of our subject, for it establishes that even in the very moment when the ruler has ratified his social contract with the ruled, he is besieged by an ultimate scepticism. The poorest man in the kingdom is better off than the King. He little knows—

" What watch the King keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages."

From the point of view of our present enquiry, the play of ' Henry V ' is a watershed. Henceforward Shakespeare's conception of the normal man, which includes his conception of the successful ruler, is to undergo a profound change. Those types that we have hitherto admired, the happy warriors and successful lovers—Benedick, Mercutio, Hotspur, Falconbridge and Harry—men who were successful in so far as they were extrovert, are going to fail. Romeo and Juliet will pass into Troilus and Cressida, Falconbridge into Enobarbus. And with the general clouding of Shakespeare's mental landscape by the irresistible vision of sin, the notion of authority decays. In ' Macbeth ' and ' Hamlet ' it is usurped ; in ' Coriolanus ' it is abused. And so we find a new theme entering the poet's mind, which becomes more insistent as his achievement draws towards its close. He has shown us the uses and abuses of authority; he will now show us its abdication. This is quite a natural step, for he has already suggested that although it is a bad thing to usurp power, it is a good thing to be without it, and it is a necessary thing to know that what unites you with the rest of mankind is more important than what divides you from it. This is not a bad

definition of democracy, and in this respect, though in this respect only, Shakespeare was a democrat. He was nothing of a leveller, and he would have been horrified by the mythology of the Common Man. But he became very interested in the abdication of power. The Duke in 'Measure for Measure' goes disguised as a monk among his people because he is afraid of his own popularity;

" I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes :
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it."

The misconduct of Angelo forces the Duke to return, but the interesting point about 'Measure for Measure' is that the man who enjoys power abuses it, and that only the man who is detached from power is successful in his exercise of it. In 'King Lear' we find exactly the opposite. Lear wants the appurtenance without the responsibility of kingship. This is precisely his tragedy, that he starts off with the wrong detachment and only through madness and misery arrives at the right one. The passion of King Lear is the Nemesis of vanity. It may seem to us a venial folly that an old man should want to keep his crown and state, and let his daughters do the hard work. But power cannot be bartered like that. If it is not checked by conscience, it will corrupt and destroy ; and Lear is not forgiven because he has handed it on to someone else. The play of 'King Lear' is a chaos of misrule. By the end of it no symbol of authority is pure and no Fortinbras arrives to give promise of a new order. Shakespeare has passed beyond political solutions and his mind is all in Edgar's brief words to his brother :

" Let's exchange charity."

Lear finds peace in a serene second-childishness ; it is only from the distance of an ineffable detachment that he will ever again look upon the world of politics:

" so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear' poor rogues
Talk of court news ; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out;
And take upon's the mystery of things
As if we were God's spies ; and we'll wear out
In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by the moon."

The detachment of Lear was a pure detachment, but it was forced upon him by the consequence of his own folly. Being also a tragic conclusion, it was quite without optimism. Charity is exchanged between those who were but recently at odds, but there is no pretence that the world is going to be a better place. "And my poor fool is hanged"—that is the last straw. "No, no, no life." The consummation of death is all that Lear can look forward to.

'King Lear' is arguably Shakespeare's greatest play, but it was not his last word. In 'The Tempest' he considered, once again, the problem of power, and the establishment of moral order. Prospero tells Miranda how he had abdicated his ducal power in Milan; in order that he could pursue the liberal arts, "these being all my study." But Prospero's abdication provoked the same consequence as Lear's:

"I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but my being so retired,
O'erprized all popular rate, in my false brother
Awaked an evil nature; and my trust
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood in its contrary, as great
As my trust was."

Prospero goes on to tell how he was deprived of his dukedom, his brother determined to be "absolute Milan" and the play, as you remember, tells us how the usurping Duke and his confederates are shipwrecked on the island and delivered into Prospero's power. For Prospero has, after all, only exchanged a natural for a supernatural authority. He becomes, with Ariel's help, the minister of justice:

"You are three men of sin"

exclaims this angelic accuser when the prisoners have been led into captivity. But that is not the end of the story. It was not enough to bring Antonio and Sebastian to repentance, or to give a pristine innocence to Ferdinand's and Miranda's love. At least, it was enough for Prospero but not for Ariel, in whom I think we may catch the refined quintessence of Shakespearean wisdom. The moment of Prospero's rightful vengeance is at hand when Ariel reminds him:

"Your charm so strongly works
That if you now beheld them your affections
Would become tender."

Prospero : Dost thou think so, spirit ?
Arid: Mine would, sir, were I human.
Prospero : And mine shall
 Though with these high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
 Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
 Do I take part: the rarer action is
 In virtue than in vengeance : they being penitent
 The sole drift of my temper doth extend
 Not a frown further."

We have moved, you see, from a world stricken by tragedy to a world penetrated by Grace, and it is no accident that in making this transition Prospero has had to turn himself into a magician and to appropriate a divine authority. For there was a difference in kind between the abdication of Prospero and the abdication of Lear. The former was necessary in order that justice might be demonstrated and innocence be restored. It is not as the magician that Prospero—and Shakespeare—takes leave of us, but rather—"as I was sometime Milan." There is no further need of miracle, and it is time for him who has been acting as a superman to lay down his borrowed magic—for the secular history of man has been redeemed by contact with the divine purity. The emblems of sovereignty are resumed without the pride which would have abused them or the weariness which would have laid them down. Prospero and his company return to Milan "where every third thought shall be my grave." But this life of contemplation need not impair the exercise of sovereignty ; rather it is the condition of that charity, which Shakespeare now sees as the cement of all moral, and therefore of all political order. In a world sustained by prayer,

" Which pierces so that it assaults
 Mercy itself and frees all faults."

even old Gonzalo's Utopia might come true:

" no kind of traffic
 Would I admit; no name of magistrate ;
 Letters should not be known ; riches, poverty,
 And use of service, none ; cc'tract, succession ;
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation; all men idle, all;
 And women too, but innocent and pure."

This is presumably a description of the Kingdom of Heaven; it is certainly not what they call practical politics to-day. For

fallen man it is clearly an insane delusion, although it is never an ignoble dream. It is the anarchist's short cut to the good life. Yet, if we follow Shakespeare, we dare not admit it to be impossible. I have tried to show you how his political thinking has been pessimistic to the point of cynicism ; but 'The Tempest' is a profoundly theological play, and it teaches us the lesson which all statesmen at all times have to learn from a repeated experience—that it is only in the order of grace that the problem of politics can be solved. It is here, in this final play and within its metaphysical framework, that Shakespeare at last permits himself to hope; that he dares to believe that through faith, humility, and discipline man may become pure enough for power.

MAN'S UNCONSCIOUS, AND HIS PUBLISHED WORD.

BY GILBERT FRASTKAU, F.R.S.L.

[Read October 16th, 1946.]

IN the days before the very latest of the little tin gods on wheels—the one who is called The Common Man—had graciously vouchsafed to hear the name of Freud, Freud himself said :

" One must be very humble, one must put both one's sympathies and one's antipathies clean behind one, if one would learn by experience what is real in this world ".

While composing this paper for the Transactions of our Royal Society of Literature, I did my best to obey his first principle. Please do your best to comply with his second ; and consider the suggestions I am about to put before you—they are mainly suggestions—as objectively as your several egos, superegos, sexes, ages, credos, natures, mental conditionings *et hoc genus omne* permit.

Now, holding as I do, that no man should inflict his spoken word on his fellows for more than sixty-five minutes by the clock which misgoverns our western lives ; and addressing, as I am, an audience of fellow craftsmen, I do not feel it necessary to elaborate the syllogism implied by this paper's title.

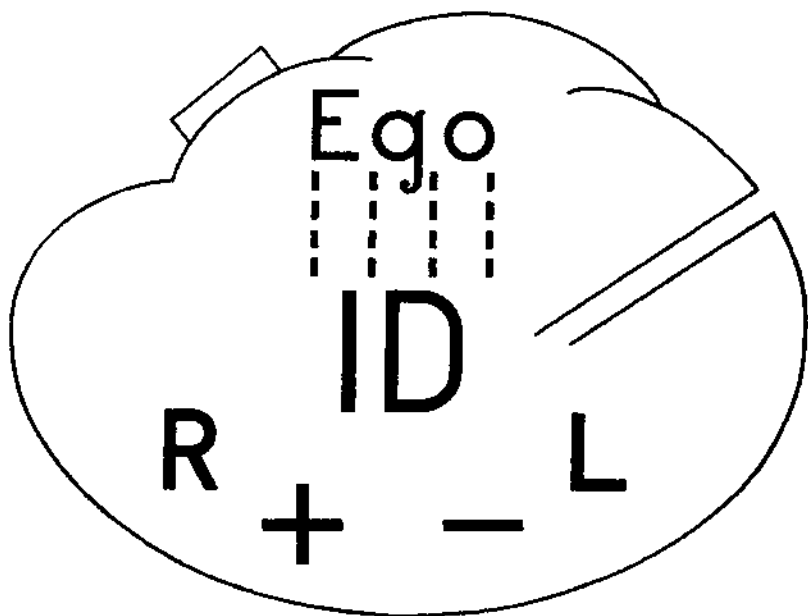
You all know of your own knowledge that literary creation is not primarily a conscious process. Take away our "busy little brownies of the brain", as Robert Louis Stevenson called them, and we become mere technicians, little better than schoolboys writing derivatively for an exam.

" The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling " is no figment of speech. Man's Unconscious—that metaphysical quality we call "inspiration"—is the very fount and origin of our craft.

Even our craft, nevertheless, has its limitations. Nor could any of us, however frenzied his or her inspiration, hope to depict Man's Unconscious with the meticulous scientific accuracy of the high priests forever after the order of Rank and Metrd-Goldwyn, who reveal all its secrets—and every single glorious secret in breathtaking technicolour—wholesale on the screens of those

altars where they burn everlasting incense before the little tin god.

I, therefore, content myself with producing this diagram—its main outlines borrowed from Freud's treatise 'The Ego and the Id'¹.



And my principal reason for doing so is to remind you that the Id, according to Freud, is a phallic Hinterland ruled by a daemon even more monopolistic than our well-beloved B.B.C., sempiternally stuttering, "Great is Diana of the Ephesiaris", or "Io, Eros". A sexual distinction without much difference. Or so it seems to me.

May I remind you further how the early fathers of the Freudian church—I trust they will pardon the simile—nearly flogged that poor daemon to death; and how one of the two original here-siarchs, Alfred Adler, called him "Power" instead of "Sex"; while the other, C. G. Jung, calling him "Libido", preached that the Hinterland is inhabited by a whole host of other daemons, among them the Archetypes—images of all those primitive rites, instincts, emotions and superstitions which are symbolised for us by the Legend and the Myth.

Meanwhile, as far back as 1915, a distinguished English surgeon, the late Wilfred Trotter, F.R.S.—whose book 'The Herd Instinct in Peace and War' you have doubtless read—had claimed that we can never understand that mysterious animal, Man, unless we think of him as intrinsically gregarious—a concept taken a step further by Jung, when formulating his theories of the collective, or national, element, and the primordial, or universal, element in the individual Unconscious. Meanwhile, too, a third heresiarch Adolf Meyer—whose disciples of the Phipps Clinic, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, can, on their occasions, be no less fanatical than the early Freudians—had arisen in that transatlantic refuge of our lost European liberties, the United States of America. He contends for "Psychobiology", briefly that there is always a link between the mental and the physical. And this contention is well supported by the glandular operations of L. R. Broster of our own city which have successfully cured sexual perversion—though only, he informed me when I met him, in one male patient.

Latterly, moreover, a few greatly daring human vivisectionists have been experimenting with an operation on the brain, known as leucotomy, to alleviate schizophrenia; and many more—in my humble opinion far too many more—experiments have been conducted with what is known as the "shock treatment". This latter treatment, which is both painful and dangerous, brings on artificial convulsions by partial electrocution; and if, as I am credibly informed, any order or instruction has been issued under which disability pensions, whether temporary or permanent, can possibly be withheld from applicants who refuse to submit themselves to it, I have no hesitation whatever in suggesting that the responsible officials should be ... regularly subjected to the same treatment until the order or instruction is withdrawn.

The parties concerned may find my next suggestion, also, slightly iconoclastic. It amounts to this: That psychoanalysis—as hitherto preached and practised by the Freudians—will soon be relegated to the museum of medical curiosities. Narco-analysis accomplishes all and far more in a twentieth of the time.

This treatment, in case you are not yet acquainted with it, entails an injection of what the high priests forever[^] after the order of Popular Journalism call a "truth drug". Factually the drug used is pentothal.

Will you accept from me, not as a suggestion, but as another statement of fact—I have myself been narcoanalysed—that narcoanalysis does *work*, the only test of any medical treatment, whether physical or psychological? In my own case, for instance, it revealed an unconscious conclusion, reached at sixteen, of which, up to four years ago, when I was already approaching sixty, I had never been even faintly cognisant—and in another case it revealed the consciously withheld secret of a murderer who had been pronounced not guilty by twelve good men and true.

So much by way of preface—these Draconian minutes allow no more—to my own concept of the Unconscious, and its "affect", to borrow a term from medical psychology, on Man's published word.

I feel for what one man's feelings are worth :

First : That the conscious part of an author's mind, indeed of any human mind, is little more than a piece of mechanism, as it were a motor without current ; and that it is the human Unconscious which generates, by some form of metaphysical nuclear fission, the whole stream of energy that alternately directs and misdirects our words, our actions *and our thoughts*

There is a parallel, I believe, between the recently discovered process of physical, and the still undiscovered process of metaphysical nuclear fission. Just as the first generates atomic energy, so does the second generate mental energy. That Man, hitherto, has not learned to discipline either form of energy you will not, I imagine, dispute.

Secondly, I feel that Freud himself—though I am tolerably confident that historians of the future will rank his influence on the tendencies of his day at least as high as Darwin's—was misdirected by his own Unconscious when he maintained that Sex is the leitmotif of our mundane existence. Every explorer yearns to call public attention to his discoveries. Freud, all unknown to himself, took the easiest way.

Parenthetically I suggest to you that a similar truth may hold good both in the case of Adler, misdirected by the " power politics " of his epoch ; and of Jung, unconsciously influenced by the old Swiss reformers, especially Zwingli. And I further suggest to you that the Schoolmen, if I may so call them, of Medical Psychology, however valuable their discoveries, have not yet succeeded either in invalidating or in disproving the oldest

concept known to philosophy. I refer to the concept of the Dual Nature of Man.

Thirdly, therefore, I feel—again for what one man's feelings are worth—that the correct name for the ruler of Man's Unconscious is the Daemon of the Constant Antithesis ; and it is this Dictator who is symbolically represented on my diagram by the two letters, the two signs, which even the little tin god on wheels can now interpret, thanks to the blessings of universal free education, as Plus and Minus, Left and Right.

Respectful of your sympathies and antipathies, I hasten to add that my symbols have no political significance whatsoever. They merely represent the process I have called metaphysical nuclear fission. They merely signify that perpetual war between Courage and Fear, Love and Hatred, Beauty and Ugliness, Kindliness and Cruelty, Pride and Humility, Belief and Doubt, Individualism and Collectivism, Strength and Weakness, and a whole army of minor antitheses, which, raging ceaselessly to produce them, has alternately directed and misdirected the energies of even the greatest human minds.

Am I altogether wrong when I contend that every single conflict of that sempiternal war has been fought, and eventually decided both for nations and for individuals—not, as Man loves to delude himself, in the daylight of the Reasoning Ego, but in almost total darkness across the obfusc shadowy Hinterland of the Id ?

Maybe my concept is altogether wrong. But bear with me while I produce some of the written testimony—only a few jots and tittles of the total published testimony—on which I have based it. And acquit me of irreverence when I cite, from the greatest of all books, as my first example of the Constant Antithesis, Samson's words, "Strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for *one* of mine eyes ", *one* is the literal translation, as he pulled down the great house at Gaza, and the Founder of Christianity's "Father forgive them for they know not what they do ".

Acquit me, moreover, of controversialism merely for the sake of being controversial, if the bulk of the evidence I ask you to consider this afternoon is taken from writers on Religion, Philosophy and that curious hybrid between the two, Ideology. My reasons will be patent as I proceed.

Imprimis, then, I ask you to consider some published words of Plato. Because Plato's was the first European mind to

formulate the concept of a heaven and a hell made in earth's image—that antithetical concept of Eternal Reward *versus* Eternal Punishment—which became the main bulwark of credal, as apart from ethical Christianity, from the conversion of Constantine onwards ; and, in my contention, saved medieval Europe from relapsing into barbarism by putting the fear of the Lord into the barbarians. For thenadays, as nowadays, it was useless to preach a god of infinite mercy and compassion to the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, the Avars, and the Tatars and the Huns.

Now Plato, you will remember, formulated his concept of heaven through the mouth of Socrates, who says as he waits to drink the hemlock :

" Besides men and women there are living creatures in the land to which I go. The blending of the seasons there is such that they have no sickness. There are thrones moreover and temples where in very deed the gods abide ; voices and oracles and sensible apprehensions of them ; occasions of intercourse with their very selves ".

And the Platonic concept of hell, as you will also remember, is formulated in the dream which closes that—to me at any rate—dreariest of all Utopian visions, his fasci-communist " Republic ". When the souls preparing for reincarnation inquire the whereabouts of Ardiaeus the Great, " some answer that they had seen him emerge from the pit, but before he reached its mouth men of fierce and fiery countenance seized him and hurled him back ".

But Plato's fires were only for the very, very wicked, and one cannot help speculating what that gentle pagan would have thought could he have read a pamphlet entitled "The Sight of Hell ", published during the lifetime of men who are still with us, and footnoted by the invaluable Lecky.

I quote only :

" The fourth dungeon is the burning kettle. In the middle of it there is a boy. His eyes are like burning coals. There is a sound like the kettle boiling. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. His brain is boiling and bubbling. . . . The fifth dungeon is the red hot oven. The little child is in this red hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. God was very good to this little child. Very likely God saw it would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in Hell. So God in His mercy called it out of this world in its early childhood ".

Lecky adduces that pamphlet as evidence of fraud ; but the

essence of fraud is conscious deliberation. I maintain that its author, the Reverend Furniss of Dublin, was only, in Henri Bergson's phrase, an unconscious Platonist—after the model of Saint Fulgentius, who antedated his colleague by some thirteen centuries, and whose published word runs :

" Be assured that little children who have begun to live in their mothers' womb and have passed away from this world without the sacrament of holy baptism must be punished by the eternal torment of undying fire, for although they have committed no sin by their own will they have nevertheless drawn with them the condemnation of original sin by their carnal corruption ".

Surely all three writers, the ancient Greek philosopher, the medieval saint, and the 19th century Irishman were equally convinced—unconsciously if not consciously—that they wrote truth ?

And was not Saint Thomas Aquinas convinced that he wrote truth when, seven centuries after Saint Fulgentius, he summed up all the teaching of medieval ecclesiasticism on one of the most vexed aspects of Eternal Punishment thus, " In order that the saints may derive more pleasure and give more thanks to God for their salvation, they shall be granted a perfect view of the punishments of the impious " ? Was the author of ' Lead, Kindly Light ', when he wrote that Reason, when correctly exercised, leads to belief in a *future retribution*, attempting to defraud humanity ?

Obviously not. Yet is not the dividing line between reason and what medical psychology calls rationalisation only a hair line ? Has any man yet put both his sympathies and his antipathies so cleanly behind him, so subdued the Constant Antithesis in his own mind, that he can answer the question, " Is the soul immortal ? " without taking refuge in Transcendentalism, which is only another word for the projections, identifications and sublimations of the individual Unconscious ? Is even the author of ' The Golden Bough ' empirically accurate when he tells us, " If Man had always been wise and logical his history would not be one long chronicle of folly and crime ".

Consider—while you deliberate that last question—into what crimes and what follies the wisdom and the logic of Saint Thomas Aquinas as displayed in that sentence I have just quoted—for, according to the lights of his epoch, he was both a very wise man and a very logical—led the collective intellect of Europe until long after the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.

Perpend all those foretastes—may I say "curtain raisers " or

" flyers "?—of the glorious sights to come, which were produced in breathtaking technicolour—or rather in breathtaking pyrotechnicolour—by both sides in the greatest credal controversy of Christian times.

Weigh well the fact that he who cried " Play the man, Master Ridley", was himself no mean pyrotechnician. And ask yourselves whether, as a humble practitioner of our craft, I should be altogether wrong if I set down the last thoughts behind the scorching eyes of the heretic at the stake in those classic words, "*Hodie mihi, Cras tibi*"—" My fate today will be yours to-morrow"—and the thoughts behind the gladdened eyes of those who produced the spectacle as, " We shall enjoy an even more perfect view of such punishments throughout eternity ", before you reject the contention intrinsic to my concept, that the Unconscious both drives and dominates the conscious mechanism—the so-called intellect—of the human mind.

Historians of fact and circumstance claim that two coincidental epochs, the Renaissance and the Reformation, caused radical changes in the European mind. Yet as late as 1727—little more than two centuries ago—a traveller to Scotland—once again my authority is Lecky—saw nine witches burnt in public there. And on that vexed subject Martin Luther and Saint Augustine were in full accord.

" It is impudence ", cries Saint Augustine of the 4th century, " to deny the existence of witches " ; and Martin Luther of the 16th, fresh from throwing his inkpot at the devil projected on the wall by his Unconscious, howls :

" I would have no compassion on these witches. I would burn the lot".

" No one who is ever so little touched with the honour of God could read such blasphemies without righteous anger ", runs the published word of Jean Bodin, described by Hallam as the equal of Aristotle for wisdom and logic, when he attempts to confute John Wier's contention, contained in '*De Praestigiis Daemonium*', that many so-called witches might be merely harmless lunatics.

Doctor Wier's book was published in 1563. Only this summer the military expert of a famous newspaper described army psychiatry as witch-doctoring. Only this very summer Turkish peasants tried to kill the devil who had eclipsed the moon by firing rifles at him.

The inference, my literary lords, ladies and gentlemen, is for

you to draw. Your humble lecturer, having duly followed Hume's counsel—which some of you may not have forgotten—in so dealing with the religious aspect of his thesis that he may avoid giving offence, returns to philosophy. And he prefaces his evidence from the philosophers of the so-called Age of Reason by quoting yet another superb example of the antithesis—Saint Chrysostom's description of woman, whom that saint describes as " a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill ".

- For, with one exception, the philosophers I propose to call before you this afternoon eschewed matrimony—from which also you will draw your own inferences—though I must apologise to you for a youthful indiscretion and a resultant illegitimate daughter, on behalf of my first witness, Rene Descartes.

Maybe, I should also apologise to the little tin god on wheels for even bracketing philosophy with the name of Descartes—seeing that he neither cultivated a semi-Socratic beard, nor attempted, having refrained from war in his own youth, to dissuade his juniors by a few years from fighting for their kings and countries. His first book, indeed, which is unfortunately lost to us, was a treatise on the use of the sword ; and he left the Jesuit College of La Fleche to practise the trade of a soldier. Only after he had proved his physical courage on the battlefield did Descartes attempt to prove his moral courage in the fields of thought. His Boswell, Baillet, relates the origin of this attempt in the ' Olympica '.

At the age of twenty-four—Baillet tells us--Descartes underwent a " travail of the spirit " which culminated in three dreams, all occurring during one night, and which he interpreted *while he was still asleep*—I stress that—as " revelations from the Spirit of Truth to direct my future course and warn me of sins previously committed".

In one of those dreams, furthermore, Descartes felt " a violent storm driving me towards a church—and this I interpreted as my evil genius forcing me towards a place whither I was already inclined to go ".

No more perfect evidence—I submit to you—could be produced to prove the existence of the 'Daemon of the Constant Antithesis. And that the entire earthly life of the greatest mind of the 17th century, of the brilliant mathematician to whose algebraical symbols Isaac Newton owed his calculus, of the man whose formula "*Cogito ergo sum*"—" I think therefore I am"—influenced the whole trend of European philosophy for a hundred

and fifty years, of the scientist who insisted on clarity and distinction as his first tenet, was controlled by the same evil genius is further proved by his own letter to his best friend, Marin Mersenne.

"Although I consider all my conclusions based on very certain and clear demonstration", wrote Descartes at the height of his powers to Mersenne, "I would not *for all the world* sustain them against the authority of the church."

And did not Voltaire prove the existence of my Daemon when he proclaimed antithetically, "*ficraisez Vinfame*" and "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him"? Is not even Montaigne's "*Que sçais-je*"—"What do I know about it?"—a confession of the constant conflict in his own Unconscious between Philosophy and Theology, Doubt and Belief?

Having called three Frenchmen I summon to my witness box—as is only right in view of our national bias—one Englishman, whose name the little tin god will doubtless associate with the game of our national idolatry. Because it happens to be Hobbes.

No apologies, I feel, are necessary for calling Thomas Hobbes—though he was almost the first Englishman to fly his country at the threat of the Civil War; though he deserted the Royalists in Paris for the Cromwellians of London, and successfully turned his coat again at the Restoration—since at least, unlike some of *our* contemporaries who are still remembering their emotions of 1939 in transatlantic tranquillity, Hobbes was sufficiently honest to analyse and proclaim his own motives.

The three prime desires of the human mind, says Hobbes—and note that he puts them in this order—are the Desire for Safety, the Desire for Gain, and the Desire for Glory.

Nor must we blame him, I feel, either for thus generalising from the particular—a habit to which we are all prone—or for the unconscious triumph of Pride over Humility which projected his declaration, "If I had read as many books as other people, I should be as ignorant as they". For did not Hobbes give us—and most aptly entitle '*Leviathan*'—which being interpreted means either a whale or a crocodile—the first authorised version of the English Totalitarian Bible, as now standard in Whitehall?

Nevertheless, I submit to you, even Hobbes, who died a bachelor at the age of ninety, supremely confident—as his published words prove—that he had succeeded in squaring the circle, could not quite escape from the Constant Antithesis.

" The multitude so united in one person ", he wrote, " is called the Commonwealth. This is the generation of that Great Leviathan, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence/

Picture of a wise and logical atheist—the men of his day called him all three—reshaping, to curry favour with a dictator, Innocent the Third's dogma of " The Divine Right of Kings " !

The evidence of my next witness, who was also unmarried, John Locke, is, I admit, mainly circumstantial. Yet surely it is a little significant of antithesis that the Puritan Civil Servant, who tells us that the five great pleasures we must—note that Civil Service " must "—constantly pursue are health, reputation, knowledge, the luxury of doing good to others, and above all the expectation of eternal and incomprehensible—note that incomprehensible—happiness in another life, can simultaneously fulminate, " These ministers of Christianity who call themselves priests have assumed both the parts of the heathen priests and the heathen philosophers, which hath been the cause of more disorder, tumult and bloodshed than all other causes put together " ?

And is it not even more pertinent to my concept that the mind which recoils in horror from what this witness so scornfully called " unverified assumptions " should project its own theory of Eternal Rewards and Punishments ? No anticipation of glorious spectacles in breathtaking pyrotechnicolour for the author of the ' Essay on Human Understanding '—which argues alternately that we have no innate belief in God, and that God is a *demonstrable* conclusion. Only the saints—according to Locke—enjoy that " eternal and incomprehensible happiness ". The Impious are punished by . . . complete annihilation.

" O blessed paradox ", your lecturer might exclaim were he not so humble. " O glorious triumph of English sentimentality over English common sense ! "

So let us summon an unmarried Scotsman, whom we have already mentioned, David Hume, to restore our Sassenach balance. If he can !

Now Hume, as you are presumably aware, claimed that Man learned everything by sense ; that his mind, at birth, was *tabula rasa*, the smooth wax awaiting the stylus.

" *Nihil est in intellectu, quod nonfuit prius in sensu* "—" Everything in our intellects came to them through our senses"—main-

tained Hume. Yet Leibniz's wisecrack, one of the few in all philosophy, "*Nisi intellectus ipse*"—"Except the intellect itself"—still echoes provocatively down the centuries. And what have you to say, Philosopher Hume, about this letter, written to a doctor when you were in your teens?

Do you not state, very clearly in this letter, that you feel yourself "akin to the French mystics", and that you suffer from "coldness and desertion of spirit"—rather queer statements, I submit to this jury, for the author of the 'Treatise on Human Nature', written when he was twenty-five, whose whole teaching rests on the key sentence, "In all the incidents of life we ought to preserve our scepticism"? And how shall we explain this other statement written by Hume in his successful maturity: ⁶⁶ "Should I attach myself to any other business or diversion"—i.e., than philosophy—"I should be a loser in point of *pleasure*"; and this is the origin of my philosophy?"

Ladies and gentlemen of this erudite jury, compare those three statements before you reject this witness as evidence for my concept.

One further fact for your consideration is that friends, visiting Hume when he was close on forty to condole with him on his mother's death, reported, "We found him in the deepest affliction and floods of tears".

A Freudian, accordingly, might allege that he was no more immune than any of us from the Oedipus complex. But I only claim him as an adolescent escaper from Belief into Doubt.

And did not Hume's Continental disciple, my next bachelor witness, Immanuel Kant, the Great Etymological Bore of Königsberg, attempt that very same escape from Belief into Doubt, when he pontificated:

"The appeal to supernatural influence is the refuge of a sluggardly philosophy?"

Indubitably.

Yet the Constant Antithesis defeated even the author of the ⁴ Critique of Pure Reason'. For that very passage, as of course you know, goes on, "If we cannot prove that the soul is immaterial and immortal, that there is a power of commencement in this world, and that there is a God, no more can we disprove these theses. Both parties to the dispute beat the air".

What does that piece of Kantian verbiage amount to? Merely, I suggest, to an elaboration of Montaigne's, "What do I know about it?" ; to a request, as it were, for an armistice in the conscious conflict between Theology and Philosophy, produced by

the unconscious conflicts between Pride and Humility, Doubt and Belief, Individualism and Collectivism which had been raging ever since the Renaissance ; those unconscious conflicts which finally brought on, as all unresolved mental conflicts are apt to bring on, schizophrenia—that split in the personality of France, still the brain-centre of Europe thenadays, which eventually " affected " the entire Continent, and is known as the French Revolution.

For what is any revolution—psychologically regarded—but a form of collective insanity ?

Surely the " Sans-culottes " who prayed to the Goddess of Pure Reason for Liberty and Equality were even shorter of brains than of breeches ? Surely they might just as well have prayed to the Goddess of Perfect Impossibility for Right to become Left, or Plus to become Minus, as for the free to be made equal and the equal free ?

While as for Fraternity, I need only remind you—even if you do happen to be on the best of terms with your own brothers and sisters—of Robespierre's declaration, quoted by Mrs. Webster, " It is necessary in order to introduce the type of socialism we are contemplating that we reduce the population of France by one half ".

This brings my bird's-eye view of European history to the temporary cure—it is, alas, only a temporary cure—for Sea-Green Incorruptibility—Napoleon's whiff of grapeshot, which signalises—for the historian of fact and circumstance—the onset of modern times.

But here I must broach yet another personal theory : That, for the historian of psychology, the vainest of all Man's unverified assumptions is contained in those two words " modern times ", which were presumably current in Ancient Babylon ; and that, however much, and however rapidly, facts and circumstances change, the objectives for which the battles in the shadowy hinterland of Man's mind are fought change so very slightly and so very slowly with the efflux of the centuries that we are justified in speaking of the Constant Antithesis as the Poltergeist of the Perennial, and Perennially Connected War.

There is no disconnection, I hold—once again for what one man's opinion may be worth—no single break, not one hour's truce to bury a dead opinion, in the whole aeon-long course of this war. For every king Man beheads, his Daemon crowns some emperor, transforming his every Cap of Liberty into an Iron Mask. Bawl what Man will through that mask—" Aux

armes, citoyens", with the Gallic revolutionaries of the 18th century, or "*Pajousta e stenke*"—"Please step to the wall"—with the Muscovite revolutionaries of the 20th, his Id still dominates his Ego, and the perennial Armageddon goes on.

Did not that very man, Lenin, who prayed to the Goddess of Perfect Impossibility for "dictatorship by the proletariat", and proclaimed religion to be "the opiate of the people", cross himself, as Philip Guedalla tells us, in the first flush of his success?

But my Draconian minutes are ticking on, and before I ask you for your verdict I must call three more witnesses out of the cloud I could bring before you to prove the contention intrinsic to my concept and the falseness inherent in that unverified assumption "modern times".

All three witnesses are foreigners. The little tin god, accordingly, might distrust their evidence. You, less xenophobic, will, I hope, accept it as more than a slight proof of the close psychological link between the Europe of the Holy Alliance which followed the fall of Napoleon and the brave new world flowing with powdered milk and watered money in which we live today.

For my first witness is none other than Hegel; Hegel, the apostle of True Transcendental Enlightenment, the professed adorer of liberty, equality, fraternity and the Greek spirit; Hegel, the so-respectably married Teuton whose correspondence with his wife-to-be is such a model of the holiest sexual proprieties that even the Poltergeist of the Perpetual Paradox must have experienced some astonishment, if poltergeists are capable of any, when those three words "*Blut und Eisen*"—"Blood and Iron"—first trickled from the Hegelian pen.

"War is the touchstone which proves whether there is a real coherence in the state. I call for a hero to realise by *blood and iron* the political regeneration of Germany. The common mass of the German people must be gathered into one by the violence of a conqueror."

May I recommend those words—written secretly in the second year of the nineteenth century, while Hegel was still drawing a salary from, the quisling government which Napoleon had set up in the Duchy of Wurttemberg, but eventually published by his official biographer—to any of you who still believe with Jeremy Bentham that enlightened commercial selfinterest signposts the road to Utopia? And may I further suggest that

theories very similar to Stuart Mill's may also have been current in Tyre, and in Carthage, and in Ur of the Chaldees ?

My next witness is Karl Marx, and my last Friedrich Nietzsche. The former, fortunately, need not detain us long.

Bad husband—" if only he would get hold of some capital instead of writing about it ", declares his disillusioned wife ; worse father ; worst friend—only Job's patience was equalled by that of the constantly beseeched foxhunter Engels ; contemptible stylist ; muddled thinker whose theory of " surplus value " appears to be incomprehensible even by the distinguished social economist *and* author of detective stories who writes his biography for the ' Encyclopaedia Britannica ' ; Karl Marx, this would-be biter of the hand which fed him, who wails, " The English will never make a revolution, foreigners will have to make it for them ", is only pertinent to *my* concept because—willy nilly—he invalidates his own when he admits that the way to material paradise must be led by a new and all-powerful " boss-class ", we call them commissars, governors of the Bank of England, or Cabinet Ministers nowadays ; and so joins the sempiternal procession of those who pray to the Goddess of Perfect Impossibility for Equality to become Freedom. Whereas my last witness Friedrich Nietzsche is my whole concept, and far more than my concept—the golden psychological key to every suggestion I have ventured to make this afternoon.

Before you dismiss this paper as unworthy of our learned society I ask you to read, or re-read, Daniel Halevy's ' Life of Nietzsche ', Peter Gast's ' Postscript ', which you will find in the definitive edition of Nietzsche's works published by Naumann of Leipzig, to ' Thus Spake Zarathustra '—and that rhapsody itself.

And will you please remember while you do so that the apostle of *Wohllust, Herrsucht, Selbstsucht*, " voluptuousness, thirst for power, selfishness " ; the Nietzsche who preached, " To will is to be free. Only a child says I am body and soul ", " Love peace as the means to new war. The shorter the peace the better " ; the Nietzsche who declaimed, " War is for the man, woman for the relaxation of the warrior. Women are either cats or birds. At the best they are only cows. Take your whip when you go with them ", was no more *certifiably* insane at the time he wrote those published words than Robespierre, or Napoleon or the defunct author of ' *Mein Kampf* '.

This witness, who once stated, " It is by my work that what is

best in the work of Richard Wagner will be continued ", did not escape into madness until five years after he finished ' Thus Spake Zarathusthra '—factually in the January of 1889.

And his escape, as I see it—once more for what one man's seeing is worth—was not primarily from that individual physiological inheritance which he voices when he cries—generalising from the particular even as Oscar Wilde crying, " Each man kills the thing he loves ", generalised from the particular :

" *Welches Kind hatte nicht Grund ueber seine Eltrn zu weinen* '—
" Was ever a child born with no cause to weep on account of its parents " ?

No, ladies and gentlemen, Nietzsche's escape, at least as I interpret it, was not primarily from his paternal inheritance. Primarily, it was from the Daemon of the Constant Antithesis, that is to say from the whole psychological inheritance of the human race.

As a philosopher, his own words, " If there were gods, how could I bear to be no god. Consequently there are no gods", prove him contemptible. As an ideologist he does not even preach an ideology. Nietzsche's " Over-man ", commonly mistranslated " Superman ", was only an unconscious identification of his saner self with the man to whom his other self eventually *went over*, the psychotic to be found in every lunatic asylum, who tells one that he is either a deity or a king.

Why then do I set such store on the testimony of Friedrich Nietzsche ? Because, because, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, it is in the published words of ' Thus Spake Zarathustra ', if only you will read them aright, that you can see every truth written in our own time about the Unconscious—Freud's truth and Alfred Adler's and C. G. Jung's—Wilfred Trotter's and Adolf Meyer's—and the tiny modicum of the truth as I see it, which I have tried to set out in this paper—demonstrated with far more clarity and distinction than any ever imagined by Descartes.

Through and behind those published words, I claim, you can perceive—not as in a glass darkly—but in the clearest light—almost as a biologist perceives, through and behind the plate-glass window of an aquarium, the fighting and the spawning of his fishes—the whole metaphysical process of the Unconscious, every single one of those unresolved conflicts which, raging ceaselessly back and forth across the shadowy Hinterland of the human mind ever since Plato's time, have now brought our planetary civilization to its nadir, and may yet succeed in sweeping all that literary culture of the English-speaking races, for which

this Royal Society was constituted to be both the fosterer and the custodian, into a new limbo, not unlike the limbo which eclipsed Graeco-Roman literary culture, for centuries to come.

Can such a catastrophe happen ? I suggest to you, with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that it can happen. I suggest to you that it will happen, that we shall be turned, as Tennyson phrased it, into " Puppets, man in his pride and beauty frail in her flower ", never hearing with Wordsworth, " Authentic tidings of invisible things, of ebb and flow and ever-during power, and central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation ", unless we overset and cast down forever from our altars that falsest of all the deities we have created in our own image, the very latest of the little tin gods on wheels.

This in conclusion. There is no living member of our craft—as my published words prove—who admires the fighting qualities, the courage and the kindness and the good humour of Great and Greater Britain's Common Man, of " poor bloody Tommy ", more than I. But when certain pseudo-philosophers of this brave new world demand that we make a god of him, the demand, I maintain, is for totem worship.

Medical psychology has a name for those pseudo-philosophers. It calls them Narcissists.

Narcissism. Otherwise, Auto-Eroticism !

Lord Lytton, my Lords, ladies and gentlemen, do *you* imagine that we can refashion all the kingdoms of earth—to say nothing of the Kingdom of Heaven—by preaching as infallible dogma, "Man, love thyself" ?

SPEECH FROM THE CHAIR DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LYTTON, K.G., PRESIDENT, K.S.L.

We have had a most thoughtful and learned lecture, for which our thanks are due to Mr. Gilbert Frankau. As he has asked for a discussion, I will, in deference to his wishes, start the discussion with a few comments.

I am handicapped by a feeling that I did not understand a good deal of what he said, due to the fact that much of it was expressed in the jargon of the subject. I do not use the word

" jargon " in any disparaging sense, but merely to describe the technical language which all experts use when talking on their subject. Every department of human thought has its special jargon, which is sometimes employed to express ideas for which there is no equivalent non-technical word and sometimes as a technical disguise for words with which we are quite familiar, as when astronomers describe the Milky Way as " galactic nebulae," or mystics speak of love as " the astrolabe of the mysteries of God." Scientists can only explain the operation of an atom bomb in terms of ions, electrons and nucleae, but why must Economists refer to our appetite as our " consumptive capacity "? Even Education has a jargon of " certificated and uncertificated teachers," " curricula," " syllabuses," etc., and the language of doctors, of course, is quite unintelligible to laymen, and only chemists can interpret the prescriptions they write for us.

So, as our subject to-day is Psychology, we must have schizophrenia, narco-analysis, psychobiology, the Id, and the " Daemon of the constant antithesis." If you have learnt this language, now is your chance to make use of it. But, if you have not learnt it, don't be afraid to use the vernacular. Let me give you a lead. I did not know before that I was " a little tin god on wheels," but since I am a common man I must be one, and most of you ladies, and gentlemen, are, I suspect, also " little tin gods on wheels." Let us speak our own language.

If I understand Mr. Frankau's concept aright, it is that in each one of us there is a constant conflict between selfishness and altruism, love of self and love of others, between pleasure and duty, etc. That, I think, we can all admit, and it scarcely needed the many learned witnesses our lecturer has cited to prove it. That being so, the question is how can psychology help us to deal with such conflicts ?

At first it seems only to have added yet another conflict, namely, that between the conscious and the unconscious, between the intellect which Mr. Frankau has likened to a machine, and the instinct which he has compared to the motive power. Then, having introduced us to this new conflict, psychologists proceed to tell us that because of it there is wasted energy, and either retarded progress or complete stagnation.

I would express that idea by a very simple illustration. If two vehicles are coupled back to back and try to advance, pulling against each other, there is wasted energy, and either stagnation if the opposing forces are equal, or slight progress in the direction of the stronger retarded by the countervailing force of the weaker.

Now the right remedy for that is to uncouple the two vehicles and re-attach them one behind the other, so that they both use their power in the same direction. In technical language the remedy for antithesis is synthesis.

Now that psychologists have revealed to us the existence of the unconscious mind, the first thing for us to do is to make up our conscious minds about its nature. Some will tell us it is the voice of the devil trying to pull us back into evil ways. When we are told from the pulpit to "crucify the old Adam" that only means "suppress your unconscious." I do not believe that salvation is to be found in that way—I do not hold that view at all. On the contrary, I regard the unconscious mind of man as the source of all inspiration, the generator of all creative impulses, and so, I believe, does our lecturer.

But as our conscious reason is predominantly moral and our unconscious instinct is definitely unmoral—not immoral, but unmoral—our task, if we are to get the best out of ourselves and the best out of others, is to discover how far we can allow our unconscious instincts free play in our present moral environment, and I submit that the only test or measure we can safely apply is love—and that perhaps is why the mystics have called love an "astrolabe" or instrument for measuring the heavenly bodies.

Mr. Frankau concluded his lecture by putting a definite question to me and you. He asked, "Lord Lytton, my Lords, ladies and gentlemen, do *you* imagine that we can refashion all the kingdoms of the earth—to say nothing of the Kingdom of Heaven—by preaching as infallible dogma, 'Man, love thyself'?" I will give him an answer which will perhaps surprise him. I answer, emphatically, "Yes." If his question had been, should we teach "love thyself only," my answer would have been the emphatic "No" which he doubtless expected. But self-love is the necessary beginning of altruism. If a man hates himself, he will hate others. If he is always punishing himself, he will want to punish others. If he calls himself a miserable sinner, he is probably a hypocrite, but he will certainly think all other men are miserable sinners. The only way in which psychology can help us is if it can teach us to find *sogae* happiness, perhaps the greatest happiness of all, in the service of others. In that way only can we synthesize our conflicts and reconcile love of self with love of others.

THE BROTHERS POWYS.

BY Louis UMFREVILLE WILKINSON, M.A., F.R.S.L.

[Read February 26th, 1946.]

I DOUBT if it has ever happened before that each one of three brothers has achieved distinction as a writer. Of the three Bronte sisters Charlotte and Emily certainly did achieve it, though this can hardly be said of Anne. In our own day there is the remarkable family phenomenon of the two Sitwell brothers and their sister Edith. But I do not know of the existence, either now or in former times, of three brothers so distinguished in literature as are John Cowper Powys, Theodore Francis Powys, and Llewelyn Powys.

In this same family there was another brother—A. R. Powys, who died in 1936 and was for many years Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings ; and he wrote some excellent books on architecture in a direct, truthful, and forcible style. Yet another, Littleton Powys, has published an Auto-biography of much interest, full of valuable commentary upon the other members of his family, a book affirming the values of life as he has experienced them, and of the values of Nature as seen through the loving eyes of a born countryman. Of the Powys sisters two have produced work of impressive individual quality : Gertrude Powys as a painter—she exhibited in London shortly before the last war—and Philippa Powys as a poet (" the only poet of our family," her brother Theodore has called her) and as the author of a remarkable, wild, poetic romance which was published by Constable some years ago under the title of ' The Blackthorn Winter.' Another sister, Marian, is the leading expert on lace in America, and has written on that subject.

But we have no time to' give more than this rapid side-glance to the work of these brothers and sisters. I do so merely to indicate the exceptional qualities of this family.

Of the three Powys brothers with whom we are concerned the eldest, John Cowper, was born in 1872, the second, Theodore Francis, in 1875, and the youngest, Llewelyn, in 1884. Both

John and Theodore are living ; Llewelyn died in 1939. There are hardly any signs of relationship in the writings of these brothers : John does not write in the least like Theodore—indeed, no two writers could be less alike : neither did Llewelyn write in a way that suggests either Theodore or John. From almost any single paragraph, taken at random from the work of any of the three, the identity of the author would at once be clearly seen ; and this is of course one of the surest tests of any author's value : that he should imprint, as it were, his image and superscription upon what he writes. He may at the same time show derivation of a kind from others ; it may be and it generally is possible to trace in him some quite well defined literary ancestry, but his own features will appear in unmistakable outline none the less, his own voice will always be heard. John Cowper Powys, essayist, poet, autobiographer, and novelist—but most notably autobiographer and novelist—shows inheritance from the Jacobean dramatists, from De Quincey, from Emily Bronte, from the fiercely romantic and fantastically imaginative writers of prose fiction at whom Jane Austen raised her satirical eyebrow in 'Northanger Abbey' : Theodore Powys, novelist, short-story writer, and fabulist, often suggests John Bunyan in his style and religious feeling, and John Donne in his union of fantasy with realism : Llewelyn, essayist, biographer, author of books of travel, autobiographical books, and one novel, shows in his style the influence of Charles Lamb, Walter Pater, and especially Robert Burton ; and, in his thought, of the writers of the great humanist tradition, the writers who were lovers of life, such as Montaigne whom he called his master, and Rabelais. He was also influenced by *Guy de Maupassant*. The work of each brother is strongly impressed by poetic feeling and by love of Nature ; but it is not at all the same poetry ; while love of Nature, too, is strained through the identity of each. For Theodore, for Llewelyn, for John, the meaning of poetry, the meaning of Nature, is something almost wholly different ; it is determined by the writer's separate sense and separate spirit.

Of the three, Llewelyn found most joy and most reassurance in the aspects of Nature and in all the common experiences of life. His whole philosophy may indeed be summed up in the one word, "Live !" "To be alive," he writes, "only to be alive ! Here is the praise, the wonder, and the glory !" "Love every moment of life that you experience without pain," he wrote when he was lying on his death-bed. "Now that my hours so sharply shorten . . . I look back to the most incon-

sequential and accidental of them with the liveliest regret and yearning to have them again."

But in spite of this regret and yearning for past life, Llewelyn resented the attempts that were made to prolong his life at the end. These seemed to him artificial, against Nature. "They are dragging me the wrong way," he said. He wished "to be allowed to die like a follower of Epicurus." In his last letter he wrote : "I have had a happy life for half a century in sunshine."

All through his life Llewelyn's was the philosophy of Epicurus, the philosophy of the "life-accepters," of those who rejoice in the visible world and in the life of man. But he was never a heedless optimist; he was, indeed, acutely aware that life has been discoloured and maimed and impoverished by the vices of men, that man has been robbed by man, in every age, of his rightful heritage. None the less he believed that sanity, goodwill, and reason will in the end prevail. In his last letter, of November, 1939, he also wrote : "I believe . . . that the present desolations will pass and you and your children will live in a better age with simplicity and gaiety." "Make no doubt of it," he had written some two years earlier, "happiness holds empire over sorrow. In the darkest dungeons of despair it revives against odds."

Belief in and joy in life ; delight, and more than delight, ecstasy in all sensations, whether of spirit or body, never-failing awareness and response, this is the religious creed of Llewelyn Powys. "The true religion is simple," he writes. "It is to worship life, to bow down before life . . . in jubilant acquiescence." The interest, the excitement, the mystery and the glory of being alive made amends to Llewelyn for the extinction that he believed to be the fate of our personal selves, of everything in us that enables us to respond to the precious stimulus of earth-existence.

"For those of us who trust to Nature," he declares, "there is nothing to dread." And his profound conviction of the inestimable privilege of a few years of mortal life—irredeemably mortal though he believes it to be—defeats altogether the pessimism that might be expected to attend his rejection of any sort of survival after death. We should remember, too, that when he affirmed that life was abundantly worth living under almost any conditions—"So long as a man can put bread into his mouth, life is to be prized"—he spoke as one whose own conditions of life were for the most part far from what would generally be con-

sidered good. He never had much money, he was often poor, recognition of his values as a writer came slowly ; and for the last thirty years of his life he was consumptive, often so gravely ill as to be on the point of death. From the age of twenty-five when he developed pulmonary tuberculosis until the age of fifty-five when he died, he was nearly always heavily handicapped by his disease ; and his unsound digestion constantly harassed him. His very ill health, as is frequently the case with consumptive writers, heightened his awareness of life, and his zest for it. Life, because it might desert him at any moment, was enhanced and sharpened. And Llewelyn's certainty that this short life is the only one we shall have was another reason, to him, for prizing it all the more. So highly did he prize it that to miss a single instant of any sort of experience, to allow one moment's dullness or slackness or trivial diversion of perception seemed to him a folly and a betrayal. "Continually," he complains, "we are preoccupied with the verisest trifles. The accidents of our life ! Let them be what they may ! To be able to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, and to touch—there is no higher prize. Never should we look up at the sun or see a river flowing by, with the drowned hair of its green water-weeds straining for freedom, without resolving to live with a renewed dedicated eagerness."

It will, I think, be because of his appreciation of life through his feeling for Nature that Llewelyn Powys will be chiefly valued by readers of future generations, who will live in a world where Nature will still exist—at least, we hope so—but where many of the concerns that occupy the minds and exercise the art of our contemporary writers will belong to the past's dead matter. In those later days there will, I believe, be no dead matter in Llewelyn's perceptions of country sights and sounds and of the life of the creatures of the countryside, perceptions so lovingly, so romantically, and yet so realistically recorded by him, and with such close care. In his Introduction to the selections which Mr. John Wallis made from his work under the title of 'The Book of Days' there is an example—one of so many—of what Mr. Ralph Shirley has called "Llewelyn's vivid observation of minutiae."

"The other day somebody brought me a microscope that I might examine a morsel of sun-flower pollen placed upon a slide. To see this fecund dust transformed into innumerable golden eggs, as it were golden frog-spawn from a sunshine pool, startled me wide awake."

In his book of 'The Twelve Months' Llewelyn observes both

precisely and imaginatively the looks of Nature as they change under the varied influences of the year's seasons. He writes of the "genial opulence" of the month of August, and of his favourite painter Breughel's picture which represents that month, and which "treats of a harvest landscape with the corn standing ready for the sickle, as it were a solid substance of golden bread!"

In the essay on a winter month he writes that "On the Dorset downs February is marked in the natural world by two happenings. In this month the ravens begin to build their nests on a well selected ledge far up above the dizzy sea cliffs. Backwards and forwards over the wide downland valleys the black ominous lovers go, creatures with undeviating flight resolutely absorbed in their own occupations, creatures with eyes and ears and nostrils flying free through the levels of the unmeasured sky. The young of their first clutch of eggs will be hatched even before the guillemots have returned to the nesting crevices on the perpendicular side of Bats Head.

"The second happening which especially tells us it is February belongs to the night. During these weeks the foxes are mating, and the dog foxes that raise their prick ears under the starlight, or feel the brambles snatch the hair out of their red jackets, no longer give utterance to their wearish midwinter bark, harsh and husky, but instead utter calls of love, sounds that might come through a hollow fluted reed, as if the ancient hills had truly been invaded by the children of Dionysus, calling, calling to each other to come to play. The vixen's love-call has nothing classical about it. There is no yearning, no melody in her answer. It is the cry of a soul in fear, of a tortured soul utterly abandoned to a rending desire."

In the June essay—June, the month of consummation, as he calls it—there is a passage highly characteristic of Llewelyn's exalted sensuous and poetic happiness in the life of Nature: "The sap that stirred in April and ran riot in May, by midsummer has created out of the air, out of nothing, millions upon millions of new outspreading leaves. All through the winter the sun shone upon bare twigs, bare branches, bare boughs, but these are now shaded by delicate upheld hands of palest green, by living hands of marvellous fabrication, by hands that breathe and bask through the bland day-time hours, and remain during the short summer nights cool and dedicated under the dreaming stars."

Llewelyn Powys has said that "the emotions connected with love are by far the most profound that we ever experience": and in one of his later books, the book that he considered his

best, 'Love and Death,' he has evoked with high poetic force those "burning apparitions," as I once heard an Irish girl call them, of passionate love between man and woman. In Llewelyn's writings the emotions connected with love are very closely akin to the emotions connected with Nature. They have the same kind of depth, the same kind of significance. "How often have people said to me," he begins a chapter of 'Love and Death, "' You make too much of sex. It does not play so important a part in life as you imagine.' Let no one pay a moment's attention to such opinions. . . Sex is the pulse-beat of life. It is the root, the straight long cow-parsley root that reaches down to the antipodes and which even the dwarfs cannot pull up ! " If anyone had ever told him that he made too much of Nature, he would have replied, I think, in very much the same way. In 'Love and Death' there are many scenes showing his sense of this deep affinity between Nature and human passionate love. Nature is shown not merely as a background to love, the two are interfused. But the whole book must be read before the full effect of this interfusion can be realized. If there were time, I should certainly remind you in more detail of Llewelyn's picture of the Tintinhull lanes, with their "midsummer moon lovers," and of that extraordinarily potent passage describing the whirling, tumbling flight of the rooks and their settling upon the tree by which the two lovers were, together. And, at the end of the book, there is that astonishingly actual death scene, in which Llewelyn anticipates his own death.

Love of Nature as an interpreter and illuminator of human life is, then, the motive force of Llewelyn's writing. With an ardour that he did not deny was propagandist he seeks to convert others to his sense of values drawn from Nature, to his ideal of what should, under what he thought of as natural law, be made of life upon our planet. His sympathies involved antipathies, his affirmations involved denials, his passionate loves created passionate hatreds. He did not only celebrate and praise, he detested and denounced. The "life-deniers" are the objects of his frequent and vehement attacks ; the theologians and the moralists ; the persecutors and the tyrants ; the worldlings, those who bow before the false gods of money, of worldly success : "Personal ambition, what is it ? A folly to fan the appetites of fops."

Sometimes he uses invective against the enemy : "If there exists an explanation of the Universe it certainly will not be found to coincide with the complicated theological deductions

of our prosperous priests. As likely as not it is a very simple explanation with a cosmic irrationality that might well be terrifying enough to a haunted horde of saucy obsequious chomping ground-apes ! "

Llewelyn's hostilities and abhorrences were, as might have been expected, stimulated to a special intensity by the doctrines and the practices of Fascism and Nazism. The creed of " these rash, turbulent men striving after tyrannic power," as he describes the dictators, is antipodal to his own. He believes that " the quarrel between the claims of the individual and the claims of the state should always be settled in favour of the individual". " Free and happy men and women are always law-abiding and never seditious. It is the chained dog that bites the deepest." Denunciation of Nazi and Fascist criminality is no less implicit in the passage that follows : " There exist, however, certain fundamental principles of human conduct that should be honoured at all times and in all places by all men. It is important that these basic virtues—justice, compassion, generosity—should never lack the support of Epicureans."

He makes also direct attacks upon the beliefs and the conduct of those who forced on Europe the frightful devastation of the second World War. " These men," he writes, " are full of malignity and would rather that all civilization fall to pieces than live with sense and sanity." " What a cad, what a cardinal cad Mussolini is ! " " I believe down to the marrow of my bones that it is no use talking of human good or human happiness until these ancient visions of savagery have passed away like the nightmares that they are."

As early as June, 1934, he wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt, who had once written to him about his books, " asking her to beg the President to make some utterance on behalf of Democracy to which everybody of liberal opinions could rally all over the world." Roosevelt's reply to this request is of interest. " I, too," he wrote, " am distressed by the shallowness of the preachings of many of those who are high in authority. Perhaps liberal thought will best be served by letting them rave on for a while before we undertake a successful counter-offensive. . . . I think I can be of most service to the development of liberal ideas by taking one hurdle at a time. I am enclosing a copy of a message which I sent to Congress a few days ago and I hope you will like it."

" I hope I shall live long enough," Llewelyn wrote in 1935, " to see the fall of the tyrants/

It is evident from his published letters, from which I have been quoting, that he was much preoccupied with European dangers, from 1934 on. "Do not forget to read the first quarter of ' Plato and Platonism' again," he wrote in another letter of 1935. " How different their life from the life cultivated in Berlin ! "

After Munich he wrote : "It has been a bitter pill . . . and Hitler's speeches don't allow much room for sanguine hopes or prospects of any future that is not sanguinary. . . . However I look at the future, it does not seem reassuring until these crazy tyrants are tumbled off their perches."

Like all humanists, Llewelyn Powys had a hatred and horror of war, but he could never accept pacifist doctrines. " Nothing but force will stop force," he wrote to a pacifist friend. " The cat will torture until the mouse is black with her spittle and then will in the end *eat up all*. It is a very deep law."

During the last year or so of his life he saw more and more clearly what was coming to Europe. In April, 1939, he wrote : " Europe is now like a lion's den before the bones can be seen."

He had no illusions that it would be a quick and easy war. " These Germans will do a lot of mischief before they are run to earth. I can only hope that out of the bloody agony men will grow wiser and juster." " It is an old war against oppression and despotism and the enemy are sly and venomous. . . . It will surely be savage war." " I believe we should have interfered from the beginning. . . . I would rather see England ruined than that she should have left Europe to be devoured by this man-eating lion."

But he always believed in ultimate victory. " These Germans are a gross and wicked tribe, but they will overreach themselves in the end and . . . will be crushed suddenly and burst asunder."

In his published letters Llewelyn appears with remarkable clarity and completeness. Read the letters, read even a few dozen of them, and you will know him well. His poetic sensibility, his philosophy, his passionate love of life, his sensuous intensity, his realism, his religious and political affirmations, are communicated here with his own vividness, with his own force. In even the lightest of his observations in these often hurriedly written letters the tone of his voice is heard ; as when he comments on a seaside snapshot of a girl, " . . . this lovely little Rogue on Ringstead Beach. I have seldom seen a girl who looked so soft as silk or so full of irresponsible joy—the sap of life—"

Of his books I have said that his own favourite was ' Love and

Death,' which he calls "an imaginary autobiography." It is indeed "a golden book of spirit and sense." 'Skin for Skin', an autobiographical book, and 'Black Laughter,' a book deriving from his African experiences, are perhaps the most important among his earlier works ; and among his works of later date I would remind you of the 'Dorset Essays,' the 'Somerset Essays,' 'Earth Memories,' 'Impassioned Clay,' and 'Glory of Life.' Also of 'A Pagan's Pilgrimage,' which is a record of his visit to the Holy Land. His biography, written with exceptional sympathy and understanding, and with great care and thoroughness, by Mr. Malcolm Elwin, has recently appeared.

"I think," wrote Mr. Somerset Maugham, "that Llewelyn by living so long cheek by jowl with death, alone of them [that is, of the three brothers] learnt to be honest." Llewelyn did not agree with this, neither do I ; but it is in a sense true that Llewelyn is the only realist of the three, the only one whose contact with human affairs shows realization of things as they literally are, and a power of shrewd prevision arising out of that realization. Though he was, of the three, the most ailing in body, he was the toughest in mind. I have emphasized his feelings and forecastings about the recent War, because here is something that markedly distinguishes him from John Cowper and from Theodore Francis. Neither John nor Theodore has at all the same kind of contact with any reality ; such contact is forbidden to them by their natures. It is true that John, in his book 'Mortal Strife,' written during the late War, was concerned with that formidable topic ; and that, at the beginning of the first World War, he wrote a book called 'War and Culture.' But the achievement of both these books is almost wholly that of portrayal of the author in relation to the subject : the subject is little more than a frame for the portrait of the author. They have no hint of Llewelyn's objective apprehension of such matters. In 'Mortal Strife,' the figures of Mr. Winston Churchill and of "Lord Haw-Haw" are transformed into characters in one of John Cowper's novels ; and, as such, will continue to give their own delight.

John Cowper is, in essence, an imaginative writer, an inhabitant of regions created by his 'own imagination, his own fantasy. He is a teller of wild, extravagant, even frenzied and often preposterous tales ; he is one of the most subjective writers that has ever put pen to paper. He writes for his own satisfaction : to give expression to his illusions about life. He writes without

' Published in England as 'The Menace of German Culture.'

care for form or for style, without, indeed, taking any pains whatsoever in the usual literary sense. "I am not an artist," he has repeatedly affirmed. Both Llewelyn and Theodore, contrastingly, are careful craftsmen, rewriting often many times over; and it may even be said that Llewelyn's earlier work suffered from excess of care; that, before he attained the freedom, ease, and naturalness of his later style, with its delicate, vibrant power, the effect produced was sometimes of a writing too conscious, too studied, too "literary," and even, now and again, not free from "preciousness." There has assuredly never been any "preciousness" in the writing of John Cowper. He writes what is really impromptu speech. This is his natural medium. He adopted lecturing as a profession as soon as he left Cambridge and almost at once made a great success of it. Some years later he was even more successful in the United States, where he lectured, East, West, North, and South, for some thirty years of his life. I have never heard a more eloquent speaker. He spoke always without notes of any kind; if he had taken any with him on to the platform, I am sure he would have forgotten all about them. He invented his lectures as he went on with them, just as he invented his novels, without premeditation. This was the fascination of his public speaking—that you knew that he didn't know what was coming next, and at the same time you knew that whatever was to come was sure to be provocative and exciting, and not in the least suggestive of the mind or the nature of anyone else. He could hold an audience for an hour and a half. "*Super eos stillabat eloquium*" John's eloquence did not always drop with the effect of dew; it was more often like lava. His fault as a speaker was the same fault that might be found with him as a writer. He went on too long. Even his eloquence and passion could not continue to bind an audience when he went on speaking, as he sometimes did, for more than an hour and a half. So, in his thousand-page novels, there come times when the reader's attention flags perforce, no matter how deeply and how gladly he has suffered enthrallment. I have often wished, and so have others, that someone would undertake an abridgment of these novels. Skilfully and sympathetically done, it would, I feel, strengthen their value! The excessive length of them as they stand is, however, a defect of that very quality of their author's which is his prime impulse. He writes to satisfy his own need, and to *go on doing it*. This *full* satisfaction is what he puts first, not the reader's power of endurance.

But I hope that these observations of mine will not deter any

stranger to John Cowper's writings from seeking to become familiar with them. I should be very sorry to have been the cause of such a deprivation. It is only the critic who is unduly bound by academic limitations who will feel that this fault or defect, or indeed any of John's faults or defects, outweigh the vividness and power of his imagination and of the expression that he gives to it. The impromptu speech that floods his pages may lack artistic restraint, it may be wilful and self-indulgent and excessive ; but, again and again, in company with all this exuberance and anarchy, there is the creative ardour and force of genius. Reflecting that John Cowper writes, as it were, by word of mouth, one might trace his literary ancestry back to the wandering story-tellers of the earliest days of our literature. But his are not the simple heroic sagas of ancient times. He is, indeed, from one point of view, an extremely modern writer, whose novels are records of strange, twisted, complex, some would say " evil " digressions from what most people think of as normal and natural human relationships. His colossal novels—' A Glastonbury Romance,' ' Wolf Solent/ ' Jobber Skald", ' Maiden Castle,'—are full of fantastic heavens and fantastic hells of states of being, and there is more of hell than there is of heaven. The reader of them will, as I have already implied, often suffer exasperation, impatience, resentment; but he will, even if against his wish and his judgment, be suddenly carried on by a tide which he cannot resist; he will become, in an unexpected moment, as it were initiated, he will read on, and in the end will leave reading with a sense of excitement altogether new, a sense of stimulus and of unearthly revelation of the kind that come from visions induced by opium or by hashish. There is, in our time, no writer who produces the same sort of phantasmagoric effect as John Cowper Powys. His faults are flagrant : formlessness, repetitions, intolerable *longueurs*, false rhetoric, " waste lands " that may encroach largely, chapter after chapter ; gross and ridiculous absurdities very provocative to the parodist; but with all this, there is genius; a genius comparable in force with that of Webster or of Ford, or of Emily Bronte. In all his novels there is evidence of it. In 'Morwyn,' a novel of which the main purpose is an attack upon vivisectionists who are shown as the sole inhabitants of yet another hell conceived by this egregious super-fantast—even in this perhaps the most wayward and undisciplined of all his works, there are passages of the same authentic inspiration that gives its own singular life to 'Wolf Solent' and to 'A Glastonbury

' Published in America as 'Weyraouth Sands.'

Romance/ or to the more recent vast historical novel which he wrote about his ancestor Owen Glendower. In some important respects, indeed, John does not a little remind us of Owen Glendower as portrayed in Shakespeare's 'Henry the Fourth.'

It is difficult to illustrate John Powys by quotation. His effects are cumulative: you can get little idea of them from extracts. I wrote recently to him asking if he could suggest any passages for quotation, and he replied no: a good reason for this negative reply being that he can never bring himself to read anything that he has written. "I never can bear opening any book of mine," are his actual words. I think he must be the only writer of any age or country who has never read a line of his own except when writing it; though possibly this is true also of Dostoevsky. I can think of no other writer of whom it could be reasonably guessed. There are many significances in the fact that John admires and delights in Dostoevsky more than in any other modern author. Significant, too, are the reasons that he himself gives for his incapacity to read his own works. "It is partly, I think, because being an actor and self-conscious through and through and being really scared of thinking of myself or facing myself, I always run away—in fact, my whole life is a running away from myself. I live by sensations, but the 'I' enjoying those sensations is a funny almost impersonal sort of camera-bird spreading its wings in a second if attention is turned from the sensations *upon it!*" In this you see how little of an artist I am and how different from Llewelyn and Theodore whose style is the natural and inevitable expression of their personalities. I have no style—save purple patches a la De Quincey as you quite truly observed. I *hate* the idea of my "personality," whereas Llewelyn said to me once before he got his fame, 'I have nothing but my personality.' What I like far best myself in my writings are my longest novels and romances because I tell myself stories then and just ramble on, losing myself and my 'personality' in those I'm writing about—just exactly the same delicious escape from reality as when I read exciting stories of the sort I especially like such as those of Mrs. Norah Lofts. I think myself that my most lasting work is *in* my invented characters in my long books and in the excitement of the adventures that they have, and after that in certain little descriptions (*not* the purple patches De Quincey ones!) of inanimates like posts and stumps and stones rather in Bewick style, and perhaps also, not so much poetized as very carefully noted, certain unusual effects of mists. . . . But here over this blooming nature business

I am so ridiculously ignorant that I make the most incredible mistakes about—well, say about the moon and where the hell it is! and about which way it rises or sets or pokes out its 'silvery' horns!

"But what I would like you to stress is the fact that I have only one very very strong principle, conviction, or moral opinion, namely that vivisection should be abolished. On that one single point I am austere, fanatical, puritanical, and as fierce as an early Christian. Another point you might stress is that I don't like the idea of God and that I am instinctively hostile to love and to Narcissist craving for love, *personal* love. That is why I like to try to be a Polytheist and a Pluralist à la William James and Walt Whitman."

John, then, believes in many gods, whereas Llewelyn believed in none at all; and to Theodore, as we shall see, God is an idea that dominates his writings. All three of them are heretics, as might be expected, since both their father and their grandfather were clergymen. One friend of John's described him as an "actor-priest," but he has none of that priestly or pontifical aesthetic-moral unction, as he calls it, which distinguishes a certain contemporary cult.

Earlier in this letter that I have just quoted John makes it clear that his writing is an escape that he has devised for himself, an escape from reality. He is often unconcerned even with the realities of Nature—how different from Llewelyn with his studious and accurate eye! But, as to losing his personality in the people he writes about, while no doubt he feels that he is doing this and gets satisfaction from the desired obliteration of himself, yet his readers must feel that the personality of the portrayer of these invented people is never lost in them. They are all of them, these characters, John-Cowper-Powys characters, unmistakably belonging to him. He never takes an objective view of any man or woman who figures in his pages; each one of them is, you might say, "Cowperized," though that does not mean that they are not endowed with life. They *are* living, though they are by no means always real. In the peculiar fantasy of their creation there is life, as there is—of course with much difference—in the characters of Dickens, who is another writer for whom John Cowper has an enthusiastic devotion.

Least of all could I hope to illustrate by quotation his projection of his own self into the characters of his stories. Nor could I illustrate, from his critical essays, the stimulus he gives to himself by contact with writers of the past. Here again the effect is

cumulative. Thus, when you have read the whole of John Cowper's essay on Dante, that poet's genius and its vices have been set for you under a new kind of illumination, however fitful and partial it may sometimes be. And this is so although there are few sudden revealing shafts of light ; none of that brevity which is the soul of epigram and aphorism no less than of wit. John's work, whether in novels or in essays, is memorable *as a whole*. Its effect is rather like that of impressionistic oil-painting.

Of all his books it may be that future readers will regard his 'Autobiography' as the most important. If he writes in order to escape from himself, why, you may ask, did he write an autobiography ? Perhaps because the best of all escapes from oneself is to write about oneself; just as the best escape from inhibitions and "complexes" is to bring them to the light, to trace their origins, to explain them. In this extraordinary and, for John Cowper, extraordinarily short volume—it is only six hundred and fifty two pages long—the note of escape from self is struck repeatedly. "Everybody I meet seems to want to assert their ego," he writes. "I ! I ! I ! they all cry. No one seems to get the depraved pleasure I get from turning my 'I' into thin air and helping my friends 'I' to swell and swell till it's a regular balloon."

Such pleasure is, of course, intensely egoistic, and highly characteristic of John Cowper. This way that he has with his friends, and, I would add, with acquaintances and strangers, too, can never be forgotten by anyone who has seen him at it.

For those desiring a saturation with the quintessence of John Cowper I recommend the 'Autobiography' without reserve. I put it first on the list. "I am perfectly aware," he writes towards the end of it, "how indignant—on my behalf—my closest friends will be over this autobiography of mine. But fortunately if 'truth is to be served' I have an invaluable organ of research in myself which is more powerful than any scientific microscope. I refer to my *sacred and holy malice*, my wicked and creative-destructive joy in bringing down the dignified 'John' in me and exalting the living pierrot of my soul. And what, when you really come down to it, is the use of, these clever sophisticated 'Memoirs' of tedious dignitaries, who never once let you see the shivering, jerking, scratching, crying, groaning, God-alone-sees-me nerve of their central 'Libido' ? . . .

"Now where my own spiritual sincerity comes in, is that part of my soul follows close behind my 'childishness,' close behind all my manias, all my superstitions, all my peculiarities, like an

exultant demon-falcon, shrieking and fluttering, and deriving a voluptuous pleasure from catching myself acting like a sentimentalist or an idiot. I even think sometimes, when I consider how my deepest impulses are neither exactly sadistic nor masochistic or mystical or theatrical or quite sane or quite mad, that there ought to be coined a completely new formula for what I am ; *and perhaps this is true of every living soul.* In fact I would modestly offer to students of abnormality the word ' Cowperist ' to describe what I am, a word taken from my second name. . . . But this I do at least know of myself; I combine an extremely quick and mercurial intelligence with a lean, primordial, bony, gaunt neanderthal simplicity. My nimble wit is in fact the Ariel-like slave of my Caliban primitiveness, and its deadly and thaumaturgic champion against the world."

This is, I think, as brief, as compact a piece of self-exposition as John Cowper has given us.

Poetry is not, so I feel, his right medium,, so I do not direct your attention to his poems. No: first the ' Autobiography,' then the novels, then the books of critical and contemplative essays, such as 'In Defence of Sensuality,' 'A Philosophy of Solitude,' 'The Art of Happiness,' and his recent book on Old Age. And, particularly, 'The Pleasures of Literature,' a new edition of which is very soon to appear. In this book is the essay on Dante that I mentioned ; but I might add that Thomas Hardy thought the essay on Shelley John's best one and liked the Dante essay " much the least."

John Cowper's power of endowing inanimate things with a life sometimes sinister and malignant is shown in a letter that he wrote many years ago from Virginia, certainly with no thought of publication. In it he describes " a marsh by a sea-estuary among reeds and black decaying tree-trunks and indescribable mud—and on the other side of the water black cypresses. . . . The place heaved and palpitated with the life of putrescence like a horrible great heart. . . . It was the cradle of all the physical nightmares that prey on morbid nerves. It heaved with horrible death-in-life . . . with forbidden life. It was like black blood breeding *snakes*. . . . A dead tree as tall as a mast had a heron's nest against the sunset, and great shrieking cries of some sort of fish-hawks died over the water."

This strikes the horrific black-magical or black-romantic note of later eighteenth-century invention, and of Edgar Allan Poe—another of John's favourite writers. There is also in it a sugges-

' Published in America as «The Enjoyment of Literature.'

tion of some moods of Byron, as well as of the moods which often controlled Emily Bronte.

The world of Theodore Francis Powys is another world in every detail, in every intimation. He is no less unusual, no less strongly individual in his writing than either John or Llewelyn ; but I would repeat my conviction that no real, deep literary kinship can be discerned between him and Llewelyn, or between him and John. In a recent work on English Literature notice of the three brothers was compressed into a single sentence, which commented on the love of Nature which they share. True, they are all three countrymen born and bred ; each is profoundly aware of Nature ; each has, you might say, a religion of Nature ; but this awareness of each and this religion of each can be only contrasted. To Theodore the most important discovery in life is, and always has been, God. From early youth he has been a searcher after God, a meditator upon Him, upon the God that he calls " the Life that is within you." The chief service of Nature, to him, is that it brings him thoughts upon God, that it brings God nearer. The first book of his that was ever printed was called ' An Interpretation of Genesis' and was a dialogue between Zetetes, the Searcher, and the Lawgiver of Israel—this is it, it looks like a Church-pew book—: his second book was ' The Soliloquy of a Hermit/ later entitled ' Soliloquies of a Hermit.' Both these books are religious. "Man," he writes in the 'Soliloquy,' "is a collection of atoms through which pass the moods of God—a terrible clay picture, tragic, frail, drunken, but always deep rooted in the earth, always with claws holding on to his life while the moods pass over him and change his face and his life every moment. The people of the earth are clay pieces that the moods of God kindle into life."

And again : "I know how men move under the shadow of the moods of God, and I know how I move. Some try to hide in the Garden, and some try to hide in the beast's belly. I have tried to hide amongst grassy hills ; but the moods of God have hunted me out. . . . As I could not hide from God, I tried to hide from myself, and watch the moods as they passed by. To believe in God and not to believe in yourself is the first duty of a priest." "All human laws are made' to trap and snare God's movements ; men are always trying to get at ease with themselves and away from His terrible ways."

Nature, to Theodore, means God. "It is the spring, and the apple-blossom is beautiful because He is there in it. To love Him is the only good thing in this world. It does not matter if

He is true ; He is beyond all Truth. All things have breath in Him ; I feel Him in the earth. When I hammer at the rocks and break away fossils that have been there for thousands of years, I am only going a little way into His love. When I look up in the night and see the light that has left a star hundreds of years ago, I can only see a little way into His love. His love is a terrible love—terrible and deep, hard for a man to bear ; I have lived in it, I know it." " I see the awful Majesty of the Creator come into our own Grange mead, and lie down amidst a joyous crowd of buttercups and red clover."

It is impossible to write about God without restatements ; but these restatements are not those of any other writer. In this book, as in all his books, the style is extremely simple, with the power of simplicity. " This is what I care to remember. I can feel now the warmth of a perfect day in June ; I can see the bugloss on the cliff, growing in little patches of blue below the white chalk. And I remember a night in winter when I saw a white lamb lying quite dead under a clear moon. I see now the rough old black dog, blind of one eye, that used to be asleep on the green in the dog-days that are past; and its master, a wild old man with a great stride and long beard who was always hammering up pig-styles."

It is as a novelist and a short story writer that Theodore will be remembered rather than for his direct expressions of his searchings or his faith. These searchings, this faith, have generated his novels, his stories, his fables ; but in them he has expressed not only his sense of God, but, more variously and more notably than in his first two books, he has communicated his special, idiosyncratic vision of life, a vision both tragic and humorous, of men and women, of human desires, of the ways of human lives, of good and of evil. He is a born mystic, but he is a materialist-mystic, and he is full of the most amazing fantasies. The world of his novels and stories is not, in the literal sense, the real world ; it is a world set, as it were, at some removes from reality, but always with a true correspondence to reality, a symbolic or allegorical correspondence. There is often a strange suggestion of medievalism, of Gothic art, about his work ; his characters are sometimes like gargoyles, sometimes like sculptured jaints, but they have the same significant, interpretative relation so actual men and women that medieval images have ; they bear the same illumination. No writer could be less contemporaneous; his sense of mystery, his awe, his sense of good and evil, of beauty and of horror, were utterly foreign to almost all varieties of literary

taste in the earlier years of the present century. That was why he could never, during those years, get his books published. In 1908 his 'Interpretation of Genesis' was privately printed: in 1916, when he was forty, 'The Soliloquy of a Hermit' was published in New York, and in 1918 in London, by Andrew Melrose, who announced his intention of publishing 'Mr. Tasker's Gods,' but thought better of it. Not until 1923, when Theodore was forty-seven, did he find a publisher for his stories and novels in Chatto & Windus, who brought out 'The Left Leg' and 'Black Bryony' in 1923, following these by other novels and stories of his in rapid succession. No wonder the succession was rapid; these works had been written a good many years before. It needed the first World War, with its change of orientations, its destruction of old views and values and its revelation of new ones, to clear the way for any general appreciation of the writings of T. F. Powys. The same catastrophe was needed for the revival of appreciation of the mysticism, the fantasy, and the realism of a writer who is T. F. Powys's kinsman, both in the literal and the figurative sense, John Donne.

"I like best," Theodore has said, "a story about ordinary people, and then, for something odd to come in." And this is a mark of his own stories. They are about people who are in essentials ordinary, for all the strangeness of their presentation, and queer enough things happen to them. Readers of 'Mr. Weston's Good Wine' will remember how time stood still in the village inn. Fantastic and grotesque things happen; lovely things and things that are horrible; for the intensity of Theodore's perception of what is lovely and of what is good involves an equal intensity of perception of what is ugly and repellent. You may remember the horrible Mr. Tasker and the scene in which his father is eaten by the pigs. Theodore's loving and tender, and one might almost say pious embrace of good necessitates his savage, ferocious, perhaps vindictive revelation of evil, the saturation of his consciousness with evil and with evil's horror. In his books there is poison, and there is balm.

The most important of his novels are, I think, 'Mr. Weston's Good Wine' and 'Unclay'. Both are allegories: Mr. Weston, the wine-merchant with his light wine of love and dark wine of death, is God; the chief character in 'Unclay' is Death, the tailor. To know *how* Mr. Weston is God, and *how* John Death is Death, it is necessary to read the books. The appearances of both these figures are contrived with Theodore's own subtle craft and goblin-like or gnome-like humour. Of equal importance with 'Mr. Weston's

and 'Unclay' are the 'Fables' republished in a Phoenix edition under the title of 'No Painted Plumage.' Many will agree with the author in thinking this the best of all his books. The 'Fables,' as one would expect, are about inanimate things and beasts, as well as about human beings. Each of them reveals common events and characters as Theodore most uncommonly sees them : each shows us some aspect of usual human experience through his special vision, and each abounds in his own responses, his own intimations. The fable is peculiarly well suited to Theodore's way of writing. Indeed there is something, often a good deal, of the nature of a fable in all his novels and stories. But, in his Fables proper, his fantasy and his wisdom, his sense of the magic and the mystery of human life and of the world's ordering have freer range. I will quote a little from the Fable called 'John Pardy and the Waves'—and how much better to quote from Theodore than to talk about him ! Even though quotation is not really satisfactory ; for his effects, though they do not resemble those of his brother John in any other way, resemble them in being cumulative.

" There was a fresh wind blowing when John Pardy reached the sea. The sun sparkled and shone upon the blue waters, and John sat himself down upon the cool pebbles within a yard of two of the waves.

" He had counted fifteen hundred—the same magic number that the angel reached to when he measured with his rod the city of the Lamb—when a very strange thing happened. The waves began to speak. Not each one of them, but they all seemed to speak together with one voice, and what they said was no easy matter for John to understand, for their words were very like their usual noise and splashing. But John Pardy, who had a quick wit, was soon able to pick out what they said.

" At first the waves spoke a little angrily, as if they were displeased at John's compliment in trying to count them."

But John Pardy assures them that he had first thought of counting the rats.

" Do not mention them," said the waves, " but, as you have set yourself so large a task, we have no objection to talk with you for a little. . . . We have lived, Mr. Pardy, for so long in our own eternal beauty, we have rocked for years without number the towering icebergs and the great ships, we have made sport for the sea-serpent and the monstrous whales, and we have rolled lazily in the wide empty spaces where God lives. We have spoken to Him, and now we are willing enough to talk to you.

Indeed, we are not ashamed to say that we have often felt, even in God's company, both sad and lonely, so that sometimes we have crept inshore, to see what was a-doing, approaching the shallows of the Bay of Weyminster in little inquisitive wavelets. There we have made merry with the bare feet of children, the rinds of bananas and the little paper tickets that are given to the holiday makers who hire the summer chairs."

John Pardy asks the waves questions about his brothers and sister, and is answered.

" ' Who would have believed it ! ' he called out, ' that fifteen hundred waves, who have talked with God, should take so great notice of our little family ! ' "

Then there is the Fable of John Told and the Worm—the gentle, philosophic glow-worm whom this gross and greedy farmer, representing the World and the Flesh, holds in his hand and means to destroy. She, the worm, attempts to convert the farmer and to save her own life.

" As she belonged to a family blessed by God with a light in the darkness, she did not wish even a man to be lost in the folly of his manners.

" ' I could tell you some wonderful things,' she said wistfully.

" ' Do not be too long,' replied the farmer, with a grin, ' in telling them, for I have heard it said that the worms devour the tender stalks of the wheat. . . . It's a pleasant thing to hold an enemy in one's grasp, and as soon as I am rested I will place you in the path, and the light you boast of will guide my boot so that I can trample you to death.'

" When she heard this sentence pronounced upon her, the glow-worm remained pensive for a while, but even then she did not lose heart nor did she despair of escaping, though she remained in the farmer's hand.

" ' Have you never thought, Squire Told,' she began gently, ' that, even if we exempt virtue and goodness, there are in the world other pleasant things more delightful than a mere possession of goods ? Is there not the exquisite joy that beauty yields to its votaries, for who would wish his thought, upon such a night as this, to be occupied with the price of pork, with the manuring of a turnip field, or the killing of a little worm ? How much better to contemplate the divine loveliness of the summer stars ! Look upward and behold the glittering heavens ! Does not such a sight awake in your mind a state of blessedness ? Notice, too, I pray you, that heavy mass of blackness that is Madder Hill; see how it is set against the midnight sky. Does not the

profound darkness of the hill suit the mild and deep melancholy that can join the Creator to the creature in one large sorrow? Hark you, listen to that distant sound, that heavy fall of the sea upon the summer beach! Think of the cool shining of the pebbles and the white loneliness of the great cliffs. Consider the eternal, the everlasting look of the sea itself. Think again, Mr. Told, for a moment, upon a white daytime flower. You should know all love and sorrow when you see a meek daisy. . . .

" ' But if sublime loveliness will not enthrall you, consider the mystic longings of religion, consider the hope of eternal bliss that is promised to the merciful and to the loving. Do but allow me, Master Told, to creep safely into the grass, for indeed I promise you that none of us will ever leave the bank to rob your fields. Let me go—consider the beauty of mercy and your reward will be in heaven.'

" The glow-worm trembled, its light shone dim; but the farmer laughed heartily.

" ' The pox take your beauty/ he replied, ' I care not a fig for it. As to religion, I sit in the front pew at church, and you may be sure that a rich man who is respected here will be respected elsewhere too. God is no fool. He would never have made the earth for the rich and heaven only for the poor. What is His will in one place is His will in another. But come, it's time for me to be going. Let me squeeze out your blood upon the road.'

" ' Stay one moment,' cried the subtle glow-worm, ' if neither goodness nor virtue can please you, perhaps you may heed the voice of envy. Listen to me! Last year your wheat crop was very poor; you had only three small stacks from two great fields. . . . Now look across the way—there are five great stacks of Farmer Lord's. . . . Set them on fire.'

" ' I would gladly do so,' replied John Told, ' only I fear that the insurance company would pay neighbour Lord a larger sum than the corn would yield were it left standing. But now, hark'ee, come,' exclaimed the farmer with a chuckle, ' let me kill you, kindly.'

" ' A minute's grace I pray you to give me,' cried the worm, ' and then you may destroy me. . . . Listen! those light steps that you hear now are the steps of a young woman. . . . Pretty Nancy Squibb is returning late and alone. . . . She is coming this way. Her blood is warmed by the excitement of dancing at the fair—she is disappointed that all was over so soon. You have but to speak. . . . Here she comes! '

" Farmer Told dropped the worm and rose hurriedly, and the glow-worm slipped into the grass and was gone."

I cannot, for lack of time, quote passages from 'Mr. Weston's Good Wine' or from ' (Inclay'; I wish I could. Especially from the chapters of 'Mr. Weston' called "Mr. Bunce is insulted" and " Mr. Grunter steals a shilling," and "A drink of deadly wine," where Mr. Weston gives his dark wine to Mr. Grobe. Or from the conversations between John Death and the various characters of 'Unclay.' Or the description of the death of Mark in 'Mark Only'; and not only these.

A new volume of stories by T. F. Powys, called 'Bottle's Path,' has just been published. One of the stories is called 'Circe Truggin.'⁷ No one but Theodore Powys could have thought of such a name, one so suggestive of fantasy and magic *and* of the common earth. 'People Want Their Groceries' is the title of another story in this volume, and I doubt if anyone else would have thought of that either.

It would be hard to name any living writer of more idiosyncratic achievement than T. F. Powys. I am no less sure that he will always be read, by a minority, than I am that Blake and Donne will be.

The emphatic differences of literary character between these three brothers make it not at all surprising that each should have a quite separate and distinct following. The devotees of John are rarely the devotees of Llewelyn, and almost never the devotees of Theodore. To me, Theodore has always been the most rewarding ; then Llewelyn, with his pagan power, his revelation of the glory of life, and the beauty of his style, inherited from the past, and bringing a special refreshment in our times, when beauty is suspect. Then John Cowper, with his rare eloquence, with the strange fertility of his imagination. But each of us will have his own valuation of Llewelyn, Theodore, and John, each will be differently rewarded by them ; each, according to his individual need and taste, will have his favourite of these three brothers.

In the discussion which followed, *Df.* MARIE STOPES, F.E.S.L., said : " The speaker is to be congratulated on a stimulating lecture. I entirely concur in his estimate of the relative literary importance of the three remarkable brothers. Mr. Wilkinson rightly gives first and most consideration to Llewelyn, as the sole test of literary permanence is style, and as Llewelyn alone has that excellence which assures immortality.

But I do not agree with the emphasis put on his Welsh descent. He was in essence a Dorset man. I met him first at a dinner party at Thomas Hardy's house in Dorchester, where he was introduced to me as a Dorset author. Llewelyn was born in Dorset, reared on its borders, schooled in Dorset, lived in Dorset (though he was also widely travelled) and loved Dorset. In one of his letters to me he signed himself " your homespun Dorset admirer."

His life and work expressed a passionate joy in natural beauty, and his message is summed up concisely, with a deep message for to-day, in one of his published letters. "Love and poetry seem to me to contain all that is really of significance in life, and to enjoy these great gifts we must live quietly, honestly, simply, without that hurried stream of trivial sensations that most people demand. Contemplation, reflection, spiritual stillness is what the world requires."

THE TREDEGAR MEMORIAL LECTURE.

The Tredegar Lecture perpetuates the honoured memory of the first Viscount Tredegar of the second creation. It was founded in 1935 by his son, the second Viscount, a Fellow of this Society since 1928.

BLOOMSBURY AND BEYOND IN THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES.

By CONAL O'RIORDAN, F.R.S.L.

[Read September 11th, 1946.]

THE text for my address is taken from a poem written by the famous son of a famous father, himself the father of a famous son. It will be sufficient to call him here by his pen name of Owen Meredith.

His words are these :

" . . . Some say it is Despair
And others say it is Experience."

If the next hour bore you to tears, I shall not blame you for repeating to yourselves, stoically and not too audibly : " Some say it is despair and others say it is experience." . . . Try not to despair utterly. You may find me chasing hares in a tiresome way, but my essential theme is that Bloomsbury, if not the whole world, is a happier place to-day than it was in the Eighteen-Nineties.

Former lecturers under the Tredegar Memorial benefaction have addressed you on more academical lines, treating of an abstract literary question such as the relation of prose to verse or the dignity of English thought, or else of the work of men mostly long since dead. It may be that I too shall venture into the thin air of ideas : Primarily I am here to speak to you of dead men. But of dead men not long since very much alive, more alive than I have ever been, and likely to be remembered very long after I am forgotten. What I offer you is a brief *aide-memoire* to serve the historians of the Eighteen-Nineties by noting what was revealed of that period to the eyes of a silly but observant youth suddenly plunged into its turmoil and given some glimpses of its secrets, not all to be spoken of even

now. If he take the centre of the stage, it is only because there is no other point from which it is possible to see, much less to describe, panorama. He suffered from some illusion but never from that form of egoism, common among artists, which leads one to suppose that one's work and play is in itself of any interest beyond the walls wherein one dwells. He had just enough mentality for more interesting people to tolerate his company.

Illusions, illusions. I have used that word once already and it may be that I shall use it too often for chaste composition and nice phrasing, but Bloomsbury and that larger Bloomsbury called Britain was, I think, full of illusions in the Eighteen-Nineties. And two opposing illusions reared their crests above all the rest. One was the notion that the people of these isles had a prescriptive right to possess the earth: we called that Imperialism. The other was simply that we were all better dead. This need I say we called Pessimism. Let me confess that I wavered absurdly between the two. But in December, 1899, and a certain night in the following May which introduced a verb I shall not repeat into the English language, I sincerely felt that I might be happier on the Plutonian shore than in the Strand or Piccadilly.

Further let me avow that the picture I have to present: the picture of the Nineties as I saw that period, is a dismal one. There was plenty to laugh at of course, and I hope I seldom failed to laugh, however much the joke was against myself. But my general impression when not laughing, my common mood, was one of harsh melancholy. Such melancholy as did not assail me during the recent war though I saw this city I knew and loved so well, battered about my ears. I was less depressed by the war of 1939-45 than by that of 1914-18, and far less by that of 1914-18 than by that of 1899-1902, which brought the Nineteenth Century to an end well nigh as lamentable as its beginning. Those years were a nightmare.

Such men as the novelist Henry James have had an overwhelming sense of the past. With me this foible is almost a pathological condition. I seldom approach this building without a thought of the Trainee! Bands of London emplacing their artillery in the square out there—then the courtyard of Southampton House, to defend the freedom of the capital against the mailed hand of the first King Charles. That was three centuries ago: in November, 1642. Lord William Russell, then an infant just waddling, left that same courtyard, now of Bedford House, to mount the scaffold in Lincoln's Inn Fields—I wonder what

his executioners would have made of his descendant Bertrand ? . . . Or my vision maybe of a century later Lord Mansfield's house ablaze with all its precious books, fired by the Gordon rioters. This time the forces of the Crown have to save the city from itself while London indulged in one of its rare bouts of fanaticism. Or perhaps rather more than a generation later, about the time that Waterloo was fought, I may think I see young Benjamin Disraeli and young John Henry Newman playing horses within the square railings, now I hope gone for ever.

But, being an egocentric poor creature, perhaps I think most often how, yet two generations later, my friends and I passed to and fro along the pavement beneath these windows, going and coming from my rooms in Southampton Row, already half a century ago. All these are gone with the Trained Bands and Lord William and Lord Mansfield and Disraeli and Newman, except the youngest, least accomplished and least noteworthy. Alone of that company I remain to convey to you what the world of Bloomsbury was like in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century as seen by the eyes of a very young, instinctive Londoner, though not a born one.

My approach to this metropolis and first physical impression of it was the sight of the houses overhanging the line as the Irish Mail puffed out of Willesden Junction past Kilburn and St. John's Wood and plunged down through the bowels of Camden Town into Euston. George Bernard Shaw had arrived in much the same fashion sixteen years or so before me, and Henry James perhaps as many years before Shaw. Of the latter, so soon to become famous, I had never heard as I drifted into Euston through the morning fog of Monday, March 31st, 1890 ; but with what Henry James had written about London I was almost as well acquainted as with the London of Dickens and Thackeray and Lytton. For I had read most of the Victorian novelists at an age when many boys can hardly be said to read at all. Nor was I wholly ignorant of what Addison and Steele and Swift had said about it ; nor Pepys, nor the Restoration comedies ; and I think I had read all Shakespeare. Nevertheless, I was in a sense quite uneducated ; for, though I had started fairly well with Latin and Greek, I had been tormented into hating antiquity by the time I was eleven, and my classics are those of a backward schoolboy. Plato and Lucretius I must read as Herbert Spencer read them, in the vulgar tongue.

Twenty-six years ago I published in the *Observer* an account

of my first morning in London. One or two passages summarized from that article may recall the London of 1890 to anyone here old enough to remember it.

From the breakfast room of the Charing Cross Hotel I came down into the forecourt of the station and watched the almost incredible tangle of traffic at that point between me and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields where Duncannon Street and Adelaide Street converge upon the Strand: a street then little if at all broader than themselves. In those days the rules of the road seemed to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and I cannot remember seeing any policeman attempting to regulate the traffic. A chaos of vehicles, convulsive as a football scrum, seemed to sway backwards and forwards rather than to move in any definite direction. At that hour of the morning the buses—short fat vehicles holding, inside and out, perhaps thirty people and drawn by a couple of Norman horses—a few longer heavier ones drawn by three, and rather like the Paris omnibuses that rumble through the pages of Zola—these buses predominated over all other vehicles and made far the most noise: with their drivers and conductors all shouting at the tops of their voices, in cacophonous rivalry: "Bank, Bank, Liverpool Street. Penny all the way." . . . London bus fares, like everything else, were cheaper then than they are now. Also you boarded and left your bus at whatever point you pleased. I regret to say that too many people were pleased to do so when the unfortunate horses were straining at their collars to drag these graceless chariots up Regent Street or Ludgate Hill. Yes, I am glad the horses are gone from the streets of London, glad of everything as it is now rather than as it was in the Nineties.

To return to that March morning of 1890. . . . Out into the street I go, turning eastward along the south side of the Strand, then as I have said a meaner and even uglier thoroughfare than it is to-day. It is hardly recognizable as the present Strand, or more precisely of 1939, until you come to Somerset House and the two churches of St. Mary le Strand and St. Clement's shrine for vegetarians. Wheeled traffic could pass them only on the southern side: on the other was the literary purlieu of Holywell Street. . . . The Savoy Hotel exists but has no Strand frontage, nor has the Savoy Theatre, where they are playing the last of the Gilbert and Sullivan successes: 'The Gondoliers,' with Decima Moore, happily still living to-day, as the widow of General Sir Gordon Guggisberg. . . .

Clearer in my mind's eye than the houses are the hoardings blazoning a trim scarlet figure—Marie Tempest in 'The Red Hussar.' Little does my fifteen-year-old self dream that one day the posters in the Strand will announce Miss Tempest in a play of my own. Nor that the Gertrude Kingston billed outside Terry's Theatre with Bernard Gould, otherwise Bernard Partridge of 'Punch,' as playing in Mr. Jerome K. Jerome's 'New Lamps for Old,' will enact love-scenes of my writing with a yet unborn Basil Hallam, fated to be killed in France. At the Vaudeville across the road Winifred Emery impersonates Richardson's 'Clarissa' in an adaptation by Robert Buchanan, with Cyril Maude, not yet her husband, in a small part. At the long-since demolished Globe, under the shadow of St. Mary le Strand, Frank Benson is enacting 'Hamlet,' with Stephen Phillips in Shakespeare's own role of the Ghost. . . . At the Lyceum Irving is appearing nightly with Ellen Terry in one of those masterpieces to his own taste: 'The Dead Heart.' In it Mr. Gordon Craig, aged 18, plays his mother's son : that typically Victorian actor, the future Sir Squire Bancroft, plays the villain, and ere the curtain falls has poetic justice done on him by the rapier of the future Sir Henry Irving. The future Sir George Alexander has just left the Adelphi to go into management at the Avenue, now the Playhouse. The future Sir Charles Wyndham is still playing David Garrick, as usual, at the Criterion, and by the way I should have referred to Cyril Maude as the future Sir Cyril Maude. But except, I think, for Irving these gentle artists were all plain Misterys in the Nineties.

By now you may be saying " This is all very well: it may bear a little upon the year 1890 and about Charing Cross, but what has it to do with Bloomsbury ? "

Well, Bloomsbury comes a little later. In March, 1890, I had no thought that Bloomsbury would ever mean anything more to me than as the domicile of the Sedley and Osborne families in Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair.' I believed when I walked along the Strand that morning and crossed the Waterloo Bridge that is gone, that I was more likely to pass the days of my youth in India than in Bloomsbury ; for I was that day on my way to Germany, there to study *far* the army; and within a day or two of seeing the picture of Miss Tempest as the Red Hussar in the Strand, I was talking at Bonn-am-Rhein to a Rittmeister of the real Red Hussars who remarked to me casually that the new Kaiser was mad.

But it was a very different story when a year and a day later

I walked down the Strand again ; for now all question of a military career was vanished utterly and I was come to London to go upon the stage.

Seeing me here as I am now you must wonder what fatuity or blindness allowed such a hobgoblin to suppose that he could ever have any success upon the stage. My answer is that I never had any ambition to make an ordinary career in the theatre ; but I did believe that there was a line of character parts, however limited, that I could play as effectively as I had seen them played by anyone else, and I had been a theatre-goer from infancy. I am still of that opinion and I think I seldom or never had a bad notice. I ought perhaps to explain that, although I think now I must have suffered from congenital spinal weakness, it was not even suspected until a carriage accident in which my mother was killed trying to save me, left me with a tendency to limp when tired. That accident happened when I was four. Twelve years passed during which I played football not very well, but ran and bicycled better. Then at sixteen in a German riding school I had one or two painful bumps which, though I thought little of them at the time, definitely started my spine on a twisting course which has run on for five and fifty years. But I will beg you to understand that when I walked the streets of Bloomsbury half a century ago, it was with a nimbler step than I do now. Indeed I think my utter decrepitude only overcame me as the result of misadventure in the black-out which I regard as our biggest mistake in the war.

I must apologize for troubling you with these shabby personal details, but it seemed to me that I must do so lest you should suppose that I saw the Nineties through the eyes of an imbecile. I was never so vain as to push myself as actor nor have I ever been so vain as to push myself as a writer. May I add that though I do not love the atmosphere of a theatre, I regard acting at its best as a true art and, if kept in check, a valuable education even for those who do not look to any form of art as a profession. I do not regret my little hour upon the stage.

Authorship ranks above acting and perhaps above everything else ; but acting—begging the question of physical limitation—came to me instinctively. To this day I have not learned how to write after the fashion of genuine authors. This feeble essay has taken me many weeks in the making ; though it cover such familiar ground. The mere sight of a pen has always made me tremble lest I be tempted to add to the vast mountain of idle

words. . . . I fell. . . . A woman tempted me and the first vain imaginings trickled from my pen that were to find themselves pilloried within the covers of a book. That was in Bloomsbury.

Bloomsbury. . . . My life as a London citizen did not begin in Bloomsbury. My first rooms were in Beauchamp Place off the Brompton Road, lit up at night in that wet summer of 1891 by the first searchlight that ever shone over London. It came from the Naval Exhibition at Chelsea. That autumn I was on tour in Scotland. In February, 1892, back in the same rooms for a few weeks I made my first public speech to be snubbed by the chairman for my simplicity. The chairman was Oscar Wilde. In the autumn I was back again at the Brompton Road rooms and was brought by Israel Zangwill to the dress rehearsal of Bernard Shaw's first play, 'Widower's Houses.' Then for a little while I shared rooms with my only brother in Jermyn Street: a house long gone except for the few readers of my novels. While there I made what I imagined was a success as an actor. But I could not afford to live in Jermyn Street; so, when my brother went out of town I removed to Bloomsbury. That was in February, 1893.

Bloomsbury. . . . Sitting here, coming regularly into the heart of it, I suppose we all know clearly what we mean by the geographical term Bloomsbury, though it is mighty hard of definition. It is not an administrative district nor a parish but an historic tract divided between the parishes of St Pancras and St. Giles.

I never laid eyes upon it until that grey and misty morning of March, 1890, when I drove in the type of four-wheeled vehicle, then called by the precise a fourwheeler, by the police a hackney cabriolet, by the devotees of poetry and history a Clarence, and by vulgar realists a growler, from Euston station to Charing Cross by way of Gower Street and through Seven Dials by the same route as a taxi would follow to-day; though in 1890 the Soho part of the journey might scarcely have been considered safe or even perhaps practicable; for Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road had been but recently channelled through purlieus more Alsatian in a sinister sense than Notting Hill and its north-western slopes to-day.

I had a very poor opinion of Bloomsbury as I drove through it on that first morning from Euston to Charing Cross. And I thought even worse of it when I moved into Bernard Street from St James's. . . . Now I think of Bloomsbury as the

holy land whose heart is that cradle of what spiritual liberty we possess : the British Museum Reading Room.

A few days since, to be precise upon Thursday, the 29th of August, being in town for two separate meetings of the National Book League, on which I have the honour to be your representative, I found the opportunity to pay a flying visit to that part of Bloomsbury I had once known best of all but had not seen for many years ; and on the spur of the moment I took the Piccadilly Tube to Russell Square. Now I am often accused of using coincidence rather too freely in my novels, and I can not deny that I do make free use of it, but not more often than it seems to crop up in my own life. It may be that subconsciously one acts in a way to induce coincidence. Now I knew that Russell Square station is immediately underneath No 3, Bernard Street, where, in the high summer of 1893, that is to say about the time of the loss off Tripoli of her Majesty's ship " Victoria," and the wedding of that royal Duke who, seventeen years later, became the loved and respected King George V, I commenced to write my first book. But it was not in my mind as I bought a tuppenny ticket at the Green Park station, that my first book had been called ' In the Green Park,' because the whole action in it was the dream of a man who had fallen asleep upon the very ground beneath which is the Green Park station now.

I don't know whether anyone present here to-day is old enough to remember that the site where the Ritz Hotel stands now was in the Nineties occupied by a block of mansions called Walsingham House, possibly with some vague reference to Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's ambassador to Charles IX, with whom Philip Sidney took refuge during the massacre of St. Bartholomew's. I fear that I digress a little.

But in some ways our recent years may seem closer to 1572 than to 1890. Some may think in fact that the world has rolled backwards since the Nineties. I reject the idea fiercely, if any fierceness were left in me. If the world of to-day is no happier than the world of the Nineties, that is not because it is worse off, but because it is more sensitive : because we are more troubled by our neighbours' troubles : less insistent on telling him that he has only himself to blame. For all the slaughter and reckless waste of every kind since then, I believe there is more innocent merriment in the world to-day than ever before. And I submit that laughter with nothing vicious in it is the surest sign of happiness. For who can be gay whose mind is not for the moment at ease ? . . . Laughter roused by

knock-about farce is not the merriment I mean ; for it is the enjoyment of the discomfort and humiliation, though it be but a simulacrum, of the unfortunate. Nor is that exalted happiness we feel when Falstaff calls for a bawdy song to make him merry. Falstaff well played commands our laughter, but T hold it to be a dangerous habit to laugh with him. I think we might not love him so well if his king had not treated him so scurvily. Harry Plantagenet had small right to be censorious.

The many who see life through the distorting glass of news-print, unchecked by the study of history, may wonder at my preferring this age of the atom bomb and perpetual labour unrest to the gentlemanly military adventures and quickly suppressed strikes of the Nineties. . . . Well, as for labour, the base mechanical of to-day may work shorter hours than his grandfather and be less ready to grovel before his boss ; but, having the chance to become a better man, he has, in my opinion, not wholly failed to use it. I believe him to be a better husband and a better father. There may be loss and gain, but the gain exceeds the loss.

As for the atom bomb, I welcome it. For, if men must quarrel over their ideals in the future as they have quarrelled over their greediness in the past, it is better they should annihilate themselves impersonally with high explosives than wrench out each others entrails with bayonets in the fashion so admired by Mr. Kipling. Let me confess that in my own youth I defended the bayonet in blood-curdling prose and verse. That was when my pessimism and my imperialism mingled in one foul gutter. That was in the Nineties.

May I submit to you my view of the world events of the Eighteen-Nineties as they reached me in the spiritual cosmos I call Bloomsbury ? . . . Here in Britain Queen Victoria, in the fifty-third year of her reign, having celebrated her Golden Jubilee, was in seven years further to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee, amidst the friendly plaudits of what seemed a peaceful world, though British forces under a Sir Herbert Kitchener were making their way stage by stage up the Nile to Dongola and the reconquest of the Sudan ; and heavy, costly and bloody fighting was to keep the North-West frontier of India ablaze that winter. The following spring America was to make a war on Spain, which many Americans have since deplored as a departure from her traditional policy, the ultimate result of which cannot even now be foreseen. Although the American Navy had no difficulty in blowing the obsolete Spanish fleets

off the face of two oceans, with hideous carnage among the vanquished and small loss to the victor, yet it was another story ashore in Cuba, where, if it had not been for their superiority at sea, the Americans would have been checked before Havanna as effectively as their forebears had checked Wellington's brother-in-law with his hard-bitten Peninsular veterans before New Orleans in 1814.

Fifteen months after the American and Spanish cannon had ceased to speak—the Americans incidentally using a "new weapon," the so-called Dynamite gun, which is said to have been a greater danger to themselves than to the Spanish—the policy of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, inspired by that colossal gambler Cecil Rhodes, set South Africa on fire: the English artillery were hurling Lyddite (our form of picric acid high explosive) shells from our batteries at the Boers, and the Boers were responding by capturing our batteries by the simple means of well-timed and accurate rifle fire. So ended the Nineties in a cloud of ignominy which still hung over the Empire like a miserable fog when Queen Victoria was gathered to her fathers—or more correctly to her long deceased husband's side, in January, 1901. An event oddly commemorated in lines, I hope wrongly, attributed to her then Poet Laureate:

"Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes
Into her tomb the great queen dashes."

Mr. Austin had been appointed to the Laureateship because of a remarkable piece of verse he had produced in celebration of that most unhappy fiasco in the way of filibustering, the Jameson Raid of December, 1895. An ill-judged enterprise entered into so cavalierly and abandoned so lightly as to cover its undertakers with contempt in the eyes of all thinking men. I was at that time, like many of my contemporaries, so much under the influence of Kiplingesque Imperialism that I ignored the immorality of such an incursion and was troubled only by the incompetence of its execution and pusillanimity of its abandonment. But the debauch of sheer Jingoism that followed disgusted me with imperialism for ever more—and indeed with Jingoism of any kind, whether English or anti-English. If British Imperialism meant giving the world an honest deal, as Gladstone with all his rhetorical exaggeration and intellectual limitations (I mean the sort of fancifulness that made him think Mr. Wilson Barrett's 'Sign of the Cross' an adequate disproof of Mrs. Humphrey Ward's 'Robert Elsmere') aimed at, I was

all for it; but after the Jameson Raid it became only too obvious that neither Chamberlain nor Rhodes was, in the Gladstonian sense of the word, which was good enough for me, an honest man. Indeed my Tory friends (and I can claim to have had friends in every party) acquiesced in the opinion that Chamberlain never had been. As I see him now he was in many respects a great man; immensely energetic, cerebrally most active, in a sense intelligent, liberal-minded in many things and even, by the standard of his time, humane. He refused to accept the supposed axiom of political economy that three-quarters of the people must starve to supply the rest with superfluities—Napoleon Bonaparte seems to have shared that idea with Dr. Johnson. Most people short of the stiffest-necked plutocrats accept Chamberlain's economics of riches and poverty now-a-days; but when I was a child, and more than a child, there was not a man with five hundred pounds a year of his own, outside Birmingham, who did not think it witty to call Joe Chamberlain "Jack Cade." As for military circles, Pall Mall had curses loud as well as deep for the man who, jointly with Charles Stewart Parnell, had brought about the abolition of flogging in the army.

I have spoken at this length of Joseph Chamberlain because, as it seemed to me then and as it seems to me now, he was the dominating figure in England in the Nineties: a rare stance for a man who was not, and was never to become, Prime Minister. Think of his contemporaries: Robert Cecil, third Marquess of Salisbury, honourable, intellectual, despite his scientific curiosity, a simple-minded Christian gentleman with a tender heart tucked well beneath a sleeve of cynicism and a dread of departure from the wisdom of the ancients: hampered in politics by an aloofness from his fellowmen instilled in him by his unhappy school days at Eton, where he had found favour with neither his mates nor his masters, being savagely bullied by both; so that in after years he shuddered to pass the Eton playing-fields on his road to Windsor.

He and Gladstone seem to us now like the giants of ancient days: they did not share the interests of common men: Epsom and Ascot, Lords and the Oval were not for them. So far as I know they did not play billiards or whist, they went out of the world as bridge was coming in. Temperamentally Gladstone was the more conservative, the more traditionally and ecclesiastically minded. He was also, in the traditional sense, the more scholarly, and at once more at home in the Library and in the open air. Gladstone was a man of immensely robust health—

Salisbury something of a hypochondriac : yet oddly enough the nobleman had for years to eke out his livelihood with fairly toilsome journalism: the bourgeois, though keeping most accurate accounts of his expenditure, never had to think twice about hailing a cab.

Apart from ecclesiastical and ecclesiological matters, their greatest common measure was their hatred and contempt for Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, a brainier man than either. But of him I must say no more ; for in the Nineties he was a deity in eclipse, the flame of whose memory was kept alive mainly by the vestal virgins of the Primrose League, which took its name from the illusion that he was one of those true lovers who loved the spring. If so, his passion was not reciprocated ; for the spring of 1881 killed him. He died at 19 Curzon Street on the 19th of April, to be succeeded as leader of the Conservative Party by his all too censorious lieutenant, Lord Salisbury, who five years later became for the first time Prime Minister and, with two short breaks, so remained until the end of the reign.

In the Eighties it had seemed that Lord Randolph Churchill was bound presently to take up the succession from Salisbury, as Salisbury had taken it from Beaconsfield. His only possible rival was Arthur Balfour, but the latter had not Churchill's brilliance in the House, still less out of it, I mean in politics. Balfour gave one the impression of being the sounder Parliamentarian and safer diplomatist ; but, as it seems to me, neither was among the major statesmen of modern times. For neither of them had any head for figures. The day was gone when a scion of a great house like Harry Fielding's Lord Lytton could have pressed upon him the chancellorship of the Exchequer despite his blushing avowal that he had never learnt any arithmetic. If Balfour ever learned any, it was very little indeed. You all know the story of how Churchill—Lord Randolph Churchill—coming into office for the first time, blandly displayed his ignorance of decimals, wondering what these dots could possibly mean. But not everyone seems aware of Balfour's devastating inability to attach any importance whatever to mere figures. When challenged in America in 1918 to say how many people he as plenipotentiary for the British Empire represented, he confessed himself completely at a loss even to guess at the answer, and had to fence for time to find out. Again, when addressing a meeting in his honour at Chicago, he spoke of that immense metropolis of the Middle West as " your great city of I dare say not less than a hundred thousand inhabitants."

But graver was his blunder when he hit upon the plausibly noble project of inviting the Jews to return to Palestine : oblivious of the fact that, not even packed like sardines, could that land of illusion hold them. Man cannot live by philosophic doubt alone. Arthur Balfour juggled beautifully with political ideas, but facts were always too much for him. They put him out as they did Hazlitt.

At his best, Lord Randolph Churchill had too much sense to allow himself to be seen blundering over details ; but he made his own mistake, inspired by vanity. When given the opportunity of his life as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he overcalled his hand, attempted just once too often to bully his wily leader by threatening resignation, and woke to find himself out of office with the workaday Liberal Unionist Goschen sitting resolutely in his place. By 1890 he was a spent force : five years later he died, leaving behind a Cornet of Horse, more terrible in opposition than even Mr. Pitt, and as eager as his own great ancestor, Jack Churchill, to be off to the wars. Thank God he returned from them all with solid success. But I am not sure that he was as popular a subaltern with the Fourth Queen's Own Hussars as he is now as Colonel-in-Chief of that regiment. It was all very well for him to go bolstering up the majesty of King Alfonso in Cuba, helping Bindon-Blood with the Malakand Field Force, charging with the Twenty-First Lancers through the dervishes outside Khartoum, and spending the last December of the Nineties as a captive of Oom Paul Kruger's bow and spear at Pretoria ; but where was the adjutant of the Fourth Hussars to find someone competent to inspect bits for rust if all the subalterns went gallivanting after that glory which the younger Mr. Pitt told Madam de Stael was called in plain English " All my eye and Betty Martin " ?

Anyhow in the Eighteen-Nineties no-one thought of young Mr. Winston Churchill as a future Prime Minister, or even pictured the possibility of his taking office in the Sixth Year of the coming century as head of the Board of Trade in a Radical Ministry, under a Prime Minister considered to be a pacifist and Little Englander, who half-way through the Nineties had been held up to scorn by an indignant Tory Press, and his party turned out of office because, as Secretary of State for War, he had informed the House of Commons that the magazines of England held very few rounds of cordite. So on a snap vote came to an end the last Liberal Government of the old school under the premiership of Lord Rosebery, who fifteen months

earlier had taken the reins Mr. Gladstone by the wish of Queen Victoria had handed to him, rather than to one or two others with greater claims but not welcome at Windsor, I need hardly add that the new Government did not buy a single round of cordite ; for the simple reason that cordite does not keep.

Lord Rosebery, as you all know, was the father-in-law of our late lamented President, the Marquess of Crewe, who has told the story of his career, political, social and racing—he was more successful on the Turf than in Parliament, winning the Derby twice—in a frank and pleasant book. I would describe him as the last of the Whigs, with an elegant taste in history as a literary art, and some gift of acid irony shown in his study of the Pitts and Pelhams and the lesser fry of the first three Georgian reigns. It is, I imagine, safe to say that we shall not look upon his like at the head of a Ministry again. He combined a genuine love of intellectual liberty with something not far short of loathing for democracy.

Time forbids me to speak of other politicians of the Nineties ; though I can, standing here, see in my mind's eye and hear the voices of honest John Morley with his high, but in its essentials conventional mind, Lecky an historian scrupulously fair within his ability to judge, but seeming in the House of Commons less a politician than a professor of political history, and Henry Labouchere, a genuine wit and humourist, upon whose controversial style I sometimes think our own Mr. Shaw may have modelled himself. I appeal to anyone here who has read the " Diary of a Besieged Resident," the letters Labouchere sent the *Daily News* from Paris in 1870, whether the idiom, particularly in the more grimly entertaining passages, is not almost identical with Shaw's. . . . And here I must run rapidly through some names in literature not otherwise illustrious.

On the very eve of the Nineties Robert Browning had succumbed to influenza at the age of 78, but Tennyson, though his elder by some years, did not fall until October, 1892, leaving the Laureateship vacant until given three years later, on a foolish impulse, to a gentleman whose name I need not repeat. On its next demise it was restored to honour by its acceptance by a true poet in the best tradition, Dr. Robert Bridges ; passing on his death to perhaps the most widely appreciated and beloved of all the Laureates, Mr. John Masefield, one of our Vice-Presidents here and President of the National Book League.

But in the early Nineties John Masefield was a schoolboy learning to be a merchant seaman in the training ship " Conway "

on the Mersey, later on eating hard tack as a mariner in one of the last of the great brassbounders wallowing under canvas on the high seas. His literary fame had its beginning in Edwardian days and lies outside my thesis. The sea-stories of the Nineties were "in the capable hands," as the reviewers would put it, of Mr. Clark Russell; with that greater merchantman from Krakow, Joseph Conrad, still hull-down but topmasts showing over the horizon. The major novelists of the period were the veterans, George Meredith, whose 'One of Our Conquerors,' 'Lord Ormont and his Aminta,' and 'The Amazing Marriage' all appeared between 1890 and 1896, and Thomas Hardy's famous 'Jude the Obscure' also in 1895 which, to descend from the sublime to the ridiculous, actually saw also the publication of my own second book. For, though I know it sounds like a bad joke, I too am a Victorian novelist, running neck and neck as regards date of publication with a greater writer than either Hardy or Meredith, and one whose loss, though at so ripe an age, I cannot but deplore, Herbert George Wells. We were friends for fifty years.

Even so, the literary hero of the Nineties, for better or worse, was that man of peculiar genius, the last recipient of the Gold Medal of this Society, and so very unlike the first, Samuel Coleridge—Mr Rudyard Kipling. How clearly I remember the September day in 1890 that I first heard his name on a railway platform in Ireland from a friend a few years older than myself who had just come down from Cambridge. By the end of the year I had read everything of Kipling's then obtainable.

Painstaking study of the history of war has led me to the conviction that the rank and file of the armies of every nation are, after the first excitement has died down, only too pleased to return to civil life. Even professional fighting men, with no further hope of advancement, will surrender cheerfully if they can be sure of equally good rations as prisoners of war. Military glory is a chimera of the poetasters, most of whom are horrified—I am tempted to say unduly horrified—when brought into direct contact with the gruesome facts.

In 1890 I did not think like that: rather the contrary. Though I never idealized war as anything romantically beautiful, I did not doubt that great wars lay ahead of us and I believed that peace could only be attained when one nation, or closely akin group of nations, was so preponderantly superior to^v all the others, albeit joined for the nonce in a conspiracy to defy her, that she could enforce peace by becoming at once the chancellor

and the constable of the world's conscience. It seemed to me throughout the earlier Nineties that Mr. Kipling was of the same way of thinking until at last I realized that he seldom or never thought at all, but trusted wholly to the instincts of his artistic genius ; never troubling to discover whither his worship of violence led, if not to the Teutonic heresies which all but wrecked Christendom and killed his only begotten son. So far as Kipling had any rational philosophy at all, it was Hitlerism painted scarlet instead of Prussian blue. But I repeat that he was an extraordinarily gifted artist, while I deplore the mischief he failed to see that he was doing, and for which he was doomed to pay so heartrending a penalty. A younger, saner, nobler, more typically English author had appeared in print by 1897, but his genius was not precocious and it was not until the last years of King Edward the Seventh that one heard of the author of 'The Man of Property.' John Galsworthy, as I submit, must rank below Trollope as an humorist but above him in the sense of beauty and of the humaner virtues. You may perhaps agree with me that it is one of the curiosities of literature that out of the forty-two notices his first book received, seventeen compared the author with Kipling. Also, that of the five hundred copies printed in 1897, twenty were still left on the publisher's hands in 1920. Three years later they were sold for one hundred pounds apiece. That is the humour of it.

But Galsworthy was also compared with another writer, singularly unlike himself or Kipling. That was Hubert Crackenthorpe. In 1894 he was considered a young author of great promise, acclaimed by Lionel Johnson, Selwyn Image and Edmund Gosse. In 1895 he and I sat on a committee to further popular education. Within two years two of that small committee had committed suicide. One of them was Crackenthorpe. There was no connection between the two tragedies. The men were utterly unlike and had no common interest outside of literature and humanity, and I suppose an inability to outstare the cruel eyes of the Nineties. . . . It was in the company of Crackenthorpe I met the man who typifies for me the gentler side of that harsh time—Ernest Dowson.

The life of Ernest Dowson has been set forth at length and with much detail, nearly all of which I believe to be accurate, by Mr. Mark Longaker of the University of Pennsylvania. It was published by that university in 1944 and did not have as good a press in this country as I think it deserved. Today I speak of Dowson only as I knew him. We met in the Royalty

Theatre, where Hubert Crackenthorpe lectured on Modern Fiction, Edmund Gosse in the chair. Among those whom Mr. Gosse called upon to speak were George Moore and myself. Something I said tickled Dowson's fancy. After the lecture we went to play whist at Plowden Buildings in the Temple, and when our partners fell asleep in the small hours, we talked on and on until the February morning broke and we went out to breakfast, at Lockhart's in Fleet Street. I did not like that breakfast but there began a friendship that was never broken until Ernest's death just six years later.

Some of you will have heard, some read in Volume XVII of 'Essays by Divers Hands/ the address given by Mr. John Gawsworth to this Society on March 9th, 1938, under the title of "The Dowson Legend." Mr. Gawsworth introduced his thesis with the words "It has been Ernest Dowson's ill fortune to have his memory perpetuated in the writings of his slightest acquaintances to a greater degree than in those of his most intimate friends. . . . His acquaintances have paved a road to perdition for his character with the best intentions and in the most glib phrases ; and, being first in the field, have by now established a legend that his own words, or the testimony of those closest to him will not easily dispel. . . . The reticence of his friends has already had unfortunate results. Their discretion has strengthened the case of his commentators, whose hints, hitherto unrefuted by the production of any unbowlerized documentary evidence, have been avidly seized upon, distorted, and published. Nor have those who have taken it upon themselves to write about him been above deluding themselves and weaving phantasies."

Mr. Gawsworth treats as the origin of the baser elements in the Dowson legend an article written shortly after his death by Arthur Symons and given permanent form as preface to the first collected edition of his verse, published by John Lane in 1905, a volume merely including under one cover 'Verses,' published by Leonard Smithers in 1896, 'The Pierrot of the Minute' and 'Decorations in Verse and Prose,' issued also by Smithers in 1899, superseded by Mr Desmond Flower's edition issued by Cassell in 1934.

Mr. Gawsworth is inclined to treat the statements in Arthur Symons' article as pure fiction ; but they are not quite that. Nor do I think they were written with any malicious intention, though I am sure that if Dowson had been called upon to write Arthur Symons' obituary he would have approached his subject

in a kindlier and less condescending spirit. He would have harped on Symons' grace as a writer of verse, he would have praised his literary acumen as a critic, he would have insisted on his distinction as a man of letters, he would have betrayed no hint leading the reader to suspect that he considered him ridiculous as a man. But that in point of fact was how many of us did regard Arthur Symons, while not echoing Richard le Gallienne's too slick dismissal of him as a Giovanni of the gutters. He was not that; though it was his naive form of snobbery to represent himself in many of his poems as something of the kind. It never seemed to occur to him that such a pose was rather repulsive than romantic. To appear the devil of a fellow to Cornish Methodists was to seem, technical accomplishment apart, a silly ass among London Bohemians. The Tory critics libelled Symons in terms of unpardonable insult; the more liberal praised what they felt they could say was good, and let the rest go free. After Dowson, Yeats and Lionel Johnson, he was perhaps the nearest approach to a poet (using the term in its limited sense of one who uses verse as a medium for artistic creation), among that nest of singing birds calling themselves modestly or at all events discreetly, "The Rhymers' Club." I don't know if the words mean anything now-a-days unless to a few who like the by-ways of literature rather better than the high road.

I was not a member of the Rhymers' Club, nor could I have dreamed of myself as a possible candidate even had the second and last Book of the Rhymers' Club not been at press before I became aware of its existence. The first poem—if I dare call it so—for which I was paid so much as a guinea, was written in the autumn of 1895, on board a steamer, returning with Dowson and Leonard Smithers to Newhaven from Dieppe; where in the company of Aubrey Beardsley, Will Rothenstein (later Professor Sir William Rothenstein), Charles Conder and Arthur Symons, we had been planning the lay-out of the Savoy. The curious may find in the prospectus of that periodical my pseudonym of Norreys Connell between the worthier names of Lionel Johnson and Ernest Rhys. The following day on the same trip that steamer, a new and handsome vessel called the "Seaford," collided with a fishing smack and sank immediately. Happily there was no loss of life; but I have often reflected that it might have been better for all three of us had we gone down in that ship. Best for myself because I should have been spared long years of suffering and humiliation: best for Leonard Smithers

because he might then have been remembered as a publisher of genuine literary taste (which I still think that in a measure he truly was) instead of dying miserably thirteen years later as a notorious purveyor of pornography, whose company had wrecked any chance Ernest Dowson had of bearing the weight of a bad family history. As for Dowson himself, all his best work had already been done by then, if it had not all been published, and remained for him only the infamy of becoming Smithers' hack translator of lascivious French fiction, spurious memoirs, or more ambitiously of Voltaire's most scrofulous work '*La Pucelle*': finally to be written of with contemptuous pity by persons spiritually unworthy to kiss the hem of his garment.

They say he was dirty and drunken and quarrelsome . . . I wonder if any of the poets at the Mermaid habitually washed himself. If so he was cleaner than his sovereign and incomparably cleaner than his contemporary king of France, the amorous Henry of Navarre. I wonder if any of these poets went sober to bed if he had the wherewithal to get drunk. I wonder if there was one of them that never drew sword in a tipsy quarrel. We know that Kit Marlowe perished in a drunken brawl, and that sage and comparatively sober Ben Jonson was at least once guilty of homicide.

Well, if to neglect to wash yourself is dirty, I have to confess that Ernest was dirty; but when in the early days of our acquaintance he came to my flat in Southampton Row and I might say to him: "Look here, you must have slept in your clothes last night, you'd better have a tub and I'll find you some fresh linen," he always gladly acquiesced. A quarrelsome man, or one loving dirt for dirt's sake—as some men I fear do—would have punched my nose. Dowson always gratefully accepted my suggestions. Later on, in horrible rooms in the Quartier Latin, it was almost impossible to keep clean without at least a weekly visit to the public baths; and that was not so easy to persuade him to do; for under the growing influence of Smithers he was reluctant to leave the house at all unless to go and drink. Not that he drank immensely even so: less than many a respectable Fleet Street journalist does even to-day; but he habitually drank without eating and so the alcohol quickly fumed in his brain.

If upon some very rare occasions Dowson did behave in a fashion that might possibly be described as ferociously violent, I believe that he must have been as wholly beside himself as was Mary Lamb outside herself when she killed her mother.

If he had any natural violence in his temperament I must certainly have been the victim of it; for, although so much his junior, I treated him in most of our intercourse as if I were his elder brother, properly in a position to lecture him on his shortcomings. I cannot remember that he ever once turned on me when I reprov'd him : the nearest approach to such a thing was in Paris in November, 1895, when one night he refused to come home with me at a reasonable hour—probably between midnight and one a.m. ; so I left him to it and got back to our lodgings in the Rue St. Jacques, and probably fell at once asleep. For the next thing I remember was waking at dawn to find Dowson sitting on my bed saying with some intensity, " Wake up Conal, wake up. There's something I must say to you." . . . " Well my dear Ernest ? " I answered resignedly, " What is it ? " . . . " What I want to tell you," he rejoined with solemnity, " What I've thought I ought to wake you up to tell you is that you're a Bourgeois." . . . " But," I reminded him, " I never was anything else and I hope never shall be." . . . " Oh," he said very much disgruntled, " I never suspected it until you went home without me to-night. . . . I thought you'd be ashamed." . . . " Not in the least," I assured him. Whereupon he said dolefully, " Then I might as well have stayed out." But I persuaded him to retire to bed, where he probably remained until night-fall. For, even as Francis Thompson, so far as was humanly possible he made the night his day. I believe that this is a preference common to many literary men : indeed it is a not infrequent habit of my own, which served me well in two great wars.

This is a quotation from a letter written by Ernest Dowson about a year before I met him : it is part of a long letter Mr. Gawsworth read in full in the course of his lecture to this Society in March, 1938, and I will not say that all that letter is so wise or well balanced : only that this passage illustrates the side of Dowson's mentality which appealed to me as being at once delicately sensitive and robustly sane—as I hold the real Dowson to have been. It was written from that old-world Limehouse Dock which lovers of melodrama like to picture to themselves as resembling Fulta Fisher's boardinghouse, but was actually more like Mr Peggotty's marine residence in 'David Copperfield,' had that mansion been a very little larger and lined with bookshelves.

In this letter Dowson calls it " This extraordinary place of silence with only river sounds," such too was the impression made on me when I visited him there in 1895. The letter goes

on : " What an infinitely dreary thing by the way is a London funeral. We make death more hideous than it need be. As they treated the old Vikings we should be sent out into a stormy sea in a burning ship That distressing delay, and wearisome cortege, and the pit-a-pat of earth on the coffin are cruelties which civilization should spare one. I suppose, however, that no amount of euphemism will affect the essential horror of the thing or make it a less inexplicable cruelty. I have been interested to note—I have had various occasions lately—the immediate revulsion of life against death, which occurs after the disposal of the body, amongst persons who have been weighed down by the sincerest grief: this is quite universal and well worth consideration. A sort of instinctive protest against the thought of death by healthy life : consciously justifying itself ? Or may it not be really the result of a more generous instinct—that actually death is not an essential fact, but an accident of immortality—so that what seems such cruel dishonour to a beloved person, all the corruption of death, is outside his interest or ours, I don't mean that this is rigidly apprehended—but is it not an innate feeling ? " Then he breaks off, " You really must forgive me this prosing, I shall frighten you from my society. This letter is like *Tristan and Isolde*, it has nothing but love and death in it. I assure you there are still other things upon which I can discourse."

Was Ernest Dowson a great poet ? . . . In the Miltonic sense assuredly not. In the sense of Herrick, I think not. To be a great poet you must have an immense joy in life, as had Herrick and Walt Whitman. Failing that you must have a fiery hatred of life as had Kit Marlowe and Byron. And whether you love or hate it, your love and hatred must spring from your own contact: it must not be derived from books. Dowson had no vision of life but as he read of it in books, saw it in pictures or heard of it in music. Horace wrote :

" Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae,"

and twenty-two-year-old Ernest Dowson reading this said to himself: "Beautiful, beautiful. I must try to say that in English. Let me think now how would Swinburne . . . ? " . . . And so:

" All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat
All night within mine arms in love and sleep she lay ;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey
I have been faithful to thee Cynara in my fashion."

But while there may have been real bought red mouths in plenty—I do not say there were, for upon my honour I do not know anything beyond that he lived much the same sexual life as most of my contemporaries, whether poets, players, soldiers or civil servants—but I do know for certain that there was no real Cynara. Certainly none when that poem was written. She had to be found thereafter. Superficial romanticists professed to find her in a young woman who was a child when that poem was written : the daughter of the keeper of a very humble and to my mind sordid, but I should say quite respectable cafe in Poland Street, Soho. That young woman, I do assure you, whatever her virtues, was not the Helen for whom the Greeks burnt Ilion : she was not even so much as the Dulcinea who lured Quixote to defeat by the windmill. She was at most the symbol of a symbol, imaging an ideal as preposterous as Barrie's 'Peter Pan.' In his lucid moments Dowson knew that his union with her if consummated would destroy his notion of her. He might be content to woo her for all eternity : to win her would be fatal. I believe that in his heart of hearts he knew this, and the desire to forget it may in some measure have prompted him to drink or made it difficult for him to refrain from drinking. But that was not the main reason. I think his urge to oblivion was to forget that his father and his mother too had taken their own lives in despair, perhaps partly in despair because he failed to become what their dreams had made him. For them as for him what we call the facts of life proved all imaginary. I can say positively that he imagined his surviving relatives were seeking power to lock him up as a lunatic. That was the inspiration of what I consider his finest sonnet 'To One in Bedlam.'

The last time I saw him, being then wholly sober and in his right mind, he admitted that he had wronged his family and gave me leave to communicate with them on his behalf as soon as he could be moved to my flat at Bromley, Kent, from Mrs. Sherard's cottage at Catford. But that day never came ; for death, so often kinder than life, suddenly slew him as he was chatting about the Victorian novelists on the early morning of February 24th, 1900. A paroxysm of coughing and, his heart failing, he was gone.

Yet do not believe that in his dying days he was deserted by his friends. As I quitted him for the last time with the understanding that he should come to me as soon as he felt equal to the journey, I met on the doorstep our common friend Charles Conder, the painter, dead now many years. With him was

another painter, then very young but now famous as Augustus John, O.M.

Dowson's death in February, 1900, rang down the curtain on the Eighteen-Nineties as known to me.

And so the fable ends. I say the fable because, although every word I have spoken faithfully records my memory of the Nineties, each living soul dwells in a world of his or her own: segments of its circumference may overlap with segments of our neighbours', but there can be no two centres, can never have been since human life began, two world centres that were identical.

The world as a whole is known only to its creator who sees it at once in all its dimensions of space and time. For him all the happenings in Bloomsbury are happening now: Lord William Russell's headless trunk is coming home, Lord Mansfield's books are burning, little Ben and little Jackie are playing horses and Ernest Dowson is crossing the street. The mystery of life must remain a mystery to the living: it may remain a mystery to the dead. I see no good reason why it should ever be explained to me. It is enough for me to believe—what seems to me self-evident—that the world was made for its creator's pleasure, and however ironical that pleasure may seem at times to be, I would stake my all on the conviction that there was no malice in the making of us.

Be that as it may, no two of you listening patiently to me to-day will, if you should ever think of what I have said, think of it in precisely the same sense. You may all agree in accounting me a dull and silly dog; but there will be no exact agreement as to the depths of my dullness or the degree of my fatuity. Those among you who are old enough to remember the Nineties may shake your heads and say: "He may be right about the buses in Southampton Row—little minds remember such things, but his political, his social, his literary and artistic views are out of drawing and false in colour. In fact he talked nonsense—the Nineties were not like that."

I do not quarrel with the possibility of such criticism: that is why I speak of my fable. But, admitting it to be fable, I will add the moral that fable has for me. In the Nineties I found myself plunged in a society possibly no better or worse than such society to-day; but in those days, here in Bloomsbury and in all the other Bohemias of the time, the dominant cuckoo cry was "Art for art's sake."

In my silliest, drunkenest hour I never echoed that cry.

If any of you should ever think of me again after you have left this room to-day, I would have you think of me as one who said that he believed the only end of the artist, whether in literature, music, colour and form, or ought else, should be to make God's creatures glad to be alive and no less glad when called upon to die.

I think the great musicians, the Bachs, Mozart and above all, Beethoven, have had the surest success. But, as a very humble bookman appealing to his betters, I ask—Might we riot all try ?

SPEECH FROM THE CHAIR DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HON.
THE EARL OF LYTTON, K.G., PRESIDENT, R.S.L.

After so long and interesting a journey into the past it is rather difficult to come back again to the present. Our lecturer has set some of us dreaming—at least the older ones—dreaming backwards, taxing our memories to find out whether they confirmed or disputed the picture we have been given of the Eighteen-Nineties.

Mr. O'Riordan apparently quoted those words of my father because they seemed to him to express his own feelings in recalling those years. His experience was in fact one of despair. That was not my experience. I was then on the threshold of life and thought it was good to be alive. I was quite unaware that I was living in " a cloud of ignominy " !

Some of the persons whom he has criticized were to me the stars of the social and political world I was just entering. I don't know whether the illusion was mine or his but, speaking for myself, I would gladly give Mr. O'Riordan the future with its atomic bombs if I could have back the security of that " miserable fog," the Eighteen-Nineties. But as we can neither recall the past nor anticipate the future we must make the best we can of the present.

I have before me here some press notices of Mr. O'Riordan's books. A French periodical says of his first book ' In the Green Park' in 1894, "Son humour toujours distingue quelquefois audacieux sans cesser d'etre gracieux," I notice that several other reviews of subsequent books repeat that word " audacious." Applied to the lecture we have just heard I would rather choose the word " challenging" ; otherwise the description might stand—certainly it never lost the quality of graciousness. I say challenging because of the criticisms of some of the 19th century characters.

Criticisms of contemporaries are provocative because the ultimate judgment of posterity has not been pronounced on the living, and opinion expressed while they are alive may seem calculated to fix their reputation, so we are pleased when our friends are praised, angry when they are derided. But when once a man has passed into history criticisms of him are rather revealing than provocative. I don't think Mr. O'Riordan's judgments will affect the reputations of the characters whom he discussed, but they were revealing of himself, and showed us a personality, so modest, so gracious, that no one could be offended by anything he said.

He has given us a picture of those vanished, years which, whether we agreed with it or not, at least recalled to us incidents in our own lives. As when I listened to Noel Coward's "Cavalcade" I found myself saying—"That was the year when I went to Cambridge and first met Sir Edward Marsh, whose friendship has ever since been one of my most treasured possessions," or "that was when I first went to Ireland and met Lord Dunsany. He was not then the lovely poet he afterwards became, but a young man with a very alarming fondness for explosives"—or, again, "that was the year when I first met Winston Churchill, and at the age of 25 he told me that I had wasted my time." Our lecturer said that in the Eighteen-Nineties no one thought of Winston Churchill as a future Prime Minister. I think that was an overstatement. There was at least one person to whom the thought had occurred. Such an eventual possibility was not I think even at that date entirely absent from the mind of the young "Cornet of Horse."

I remember very vividly both the Jubilees of Queen Victoria. To the first I came up from my private school and the crowds in the street at Hyde Park Corner caused me to miss my train back to school, so I had to spend the night at home—an unforgettable experience! To the second I came from Cambridge. My mother was then a lady in waiting to Queen Victoria and we had privileged seats in the front row almost touching the carriage of the great Queen as she sat there at the foot of the steps outside St. Paul's Cathedral. But here again what I remember most vividly, as we drove in a hansom up Ludgate Hill, was seeing a little London sparrow carrying a piece of coloured bunting to adorn its nest.

Well, as I said, Mr. O'Riordan has made the past live again for us, and that is a great service for which I offer him on your behalf our most cordial thanks.

WHICH HAZLITT ?

BY CATHERINE MACDONALD MACLEAN, M.A., D.Litt.,
F.K.S.L.

[Read April 26th, 1946.]

WHEN the Council and Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature honoured me with their invitation to speak to them on Hazlitt, deeply though I felt the honour, my first thought had a pang in it; for the invitation brought with it the reminder that the one who had a prescriptive right to this privilege, and who could best have graced it, is with us no more. I cannot think of Hazlitt at any time without poignant memory of the late Mr. P. P. Howe, and of the world of delight in Hazlitt he permitted me to share with him. I cannot speak of Hazlitt now, at this time and in this place, without first recalling the work of his incomparable Editor and faithful biographer, and paying it the tribute of my profound respect and grateful admiration—for Hazlitt and the one who knew him so well, loved him so well, and interpreted him with such exquisite scholarship and such perfect sympathy, are by this time inseparably linked together in my ever-grateful remembrance.

My second thought was of one of Hazlitt's contemporaries who loved him well, and showed an unwavering sympathy towards him when he needed it most, that is to say, when he was still contending with obscurity. On a Sunday morning in September, 1817, young John Keats wrote from Oxford to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds : " How is Hazlitt ? We were reading his ' Table ' last night. I know he thinks himself not estimated by ten people in the world—I wish he knew he is." In the realization, brought home to me by your kind invitation, that Hazlitt, more than a century after his death, " is estimated," not merely by " ten people " or a little band of personal admirers, but by the finer spirit and tradition of English literature, I found myself echoing Keats's words : "I wish he knew he is." For this was all Hazlitt meant by fame. " Fame," he said, " is not popularity, the shout of the multitude, the idle buzz of fashion, the venal puff, the soothing flattery of favour or of friendship ;

but it is the spirit of a man surviving himself in the minds and thoughts of other men. . . ." In his own day Hazlitt received little honour, and no honour at all that could in any sense be called public or official. He was, indeed, "an Ishmaelite without a fellow." Even his friends recognized that he was beyond the pale of any official recognition. In a genial paragraph in *The Examiner* in August, 1821, at a time when proposals were being put forward for forming a Royal Academy of Literature, Leigh Hunt amused himself by drawing up a list of possible members. It makes curious reading now. Some of those who were included in the list seem to have escaped the memory of the historians of literature. Among those who were excluded were Moore, Godwin and Shelley, while "as to Mr. Hazlitt," concluded Hunt, with an irrepressible outburst of spirits at the thought of his appearance in such company, "his very name would make them all ready to jump out of window."

My next thought was : "Which Hazlitt ?" Hazlitt once said, finely, that the author of 'Waverley' had five hundred hearts beating in his bosom. There are not, to be sure, five hundred Hazlitts. Still, Hazlitt, like Truth, was not one, but many—and the time would fail me to-day to speak of all the phases of his multiple being. I was encouraged when I found that Christopher Morley had confessed to a similar sense of Hazlitt's complexity. "How do you want your Mr. W. H. ?" says he, in a vivid article in the New York *Saturday Review of Literature*. "The child who lost his silver shoe-buckle on Cape Cod, and thought it better if America had been left to the Wild Indians (as it mostly has been) ? The radiant child who mysteriously became sullen at age twelve ? The boy who 'cut into the whole loaf' of literature when he read 'Tom Jones' ? The psycholept of the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury, released from stagnation by Coleridge ? The painter-copyist of the Louvre ? The man who married Sarah Stoddart because she liked sausages ? The lecturer on poetry ? The recluse of Winterslow Hut ? The agonist of that inn on the Scotch border where the road across the moors—the London-Sally road—drew from him as nerve-naked ink as man ever traced ?" Prompted by the offer of a choice among all these Hazlitts, I feel the Hazlitt I "want" at this moment is "the psycholept of the Unitarian chapel at Shrewsbury," for my quest to-day is of the Essayist, and it was at the moment when Hazlitt had his soul reft from him by Coleridge, and restored to him renewed and recreated, that the Essayist was born. Hazlitt has told us all about it. When he left the wind-swept inn on the Scots border

for his place of refuge in Winterslow Hut, he cleansed his bosom of some perilous stuff which became the source of a great and characteristic group of Essays. One of these tells of the miracle wrought for him by Coleridge in his youth. He says of himself, at the time of his first meeting with Coleridge : " [could at this time do nothing. I could not write a line. . . . " I was brutish ' . . . In words, in looks, in deeds, I was no better than a changeling." And again : " I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless." He says of Coleridge : " the light of his genius shone into my soul like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road." And then, because the thought of his love-agony and his dire frustration still possessed him, he adds : " My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied ; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to ; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge."

Hazlitt was not yet twenty when he first met Coleridge. Although the writer's soul was born within him at that meeting, in January of the year seventeen hundred and ninety-eight, the very figures of which were, he said, to him " like the ' dreaded name of Demogorgon,' " fifteen years passed before he made his first appearance as an Essayist in *The Morning Chronicle*. Why ? Because it is not enough to have the writer's soul. There are many who have the writer's soul, or even the poet's soul, within them, who yet never become writers or poets, because they never succeed in creating the instrument through which they can express themselves. Hazlitt, being a great and original writer who drew his material straight from Nature, had to create his instrument before he could play on it. What had served his predecessors—Montaigne, Bacon, Steele, Addison, Swift, Goldsmith, Johnson, would not serve him, although he knew them all and liked them all, especially Montaigne and Steele, and although the bitter prose of Swift, whom he relished almost as much as he did Burke, influenced him! profoundly. It was his task to fashion a new instrument—and he was some time over it, for he was of those who until they can do all, can do nothing. But when his instrument was ready, it was " like a seasoned violin."

In other words, before he could practise his art, he had to learn his craft, and this was not the work of one hour. His apprenticeship to the craft of essay-writing, which was not

completed until some fifteen years after he met Coleridge, had begun long before he met Coleridge. I first see him busy about his craft, although of course wholly unconscious of the lessoning he is receiving, when he is still a happy chubby little boy at Wem. In March, 1788, shortly before his tenth birthday, he wrote to his brother John : " We go to school at nine every morning. Three boys begin reading the Bible. Then I and two others show our exercises. We then read ' The Speaker'." ' The Speaker,' compiled by William Enfield of the famed Warrington Academy as an Introduction to Literature, is a delightful book. From it Hazlitt got his first acquaintance with Milton and Dry den, with eighteenth-century verse, drama and prose, and above all, with Shakespeare. He had ever afterwards an affection for many of the passages in it, including young Norval's speech in Home's ' Douglas/ which, he tells us, he used to recite " with good emphasis and discretion when at school. , . ." But what helped most to form his habit of thought was that this fascinating little book opened with several chapters of what are called " Select Sentences." These are occasional thoughts or opinions drawn from a wide range of literature and designed to stimulate a whole train of reflection in any boy who had the capacity for thinking. Among these " Select Sentences " are some that became as the very marrow of Hazlitt's being, like the one from ' All's Well that Ends Well' : " The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." In pondering over such sentences the boy William Hazlitt had his first exercises in thinking. You may perhaps agree with me that later, as Essayist, although Hazlitt now and then follows his predecessors in treating of the stock abstract themes, he tends far more frequently to make the groundwork of the Essay an occasional thought or opinion thrown out for discussion. The groundwork of the impassioned train of thought developed in the Essay, " Whether Genius is Conscious of its Powers " is the opinion : " Those who are conscious of their powers never do anything." The groundwork of the Essay which is his song of the forlorn hope, " On Guy Faux," is the opinion : " The better part of valour is indiscretion." I think there can be no question that Hazlitt's early familiarity with and relish of the interesting " Select Sentences " in his ' Enfield ' disposed him towards the choice of his approach to the Essay through the occasional thought or opinion. In after years this preference was confirmed by his admiration of the force and beauty of La Rochefoucault's Maxims. He defined the Maxim as an occasional thought " so developed as of itself to suggest

a whole train of reflections to the reader," or to contain in itself "the essence or groundwork" of an entire Essay. He has himself left us six sets of such Maxims in the manner of La Rochefoucault. He tended to make one or another of these Maxims the groundwork or integer or working-unit of his most characteristic Essays. What seems to me the most poignant of all these occasional thoughts : "No young man believes he shall ever die," was taken over by Hazlitt from his brother John's conversation, and developed by him into one of the greatest of all his many Essays, "On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth."

T next see Hazlitt, who is still quite unconscious of the training lie is receiving, in the act of learning his craft as he walks along the great North Road, on his way to visit his mother's people in Peterborough. He is now a slender stripling, whose face, although spirited, has already when in repose a hint of sadness or trouble. His prospects are cloudy. He has been withdrawn from College because of his refusal to enter the ministry. He has as yet found no other profession. To his family he seems a failure. With people in general, he says, at this time he "passed for an idiot."⁵ He has himself a painful sense that he is in danger of becoming a nondescript. Yet, as the lark mounts in the sky and the sun smites upon his youthful blood and he listens to the whistling of the ploughman driving his team afield, lie looks happy, solitary though he be, for as he walks along, mile after mile, "like one that never could be tired," he is entertaining himself in his favourite way, by soliciting his own mind. The mental gymnastic to which he is subjecting himself is far more >trenuous than the physical—for anything he sees or hears is .sufficient to set his mind on one or another of its long exacting quests. So absorbed is he by metaphysics that even the distant whistle of a thrush can send him questing for some principle which will account for the mingled feeling of strangeness and joy the sound brings to him. There is never a moment's interruption in his entertainment. "I had at this time, simple as I seemed, many resources," he wrote afterwards. ^{ke} I could in some sort 'play at bowls with the sun and moon'; or, at any rate, there was no question in metaphysics that I could not bandy to and fro, as one might play at cup-and-ball, for twenty, thirty, forty nules of the great North Road, and at it again, the next day, as fresh as ever." And again : "I lived in a world of contemplation, and not of action. This sort of dreaming existence is the JDest." When Hazlitt wrote his first published Essay, what he committed to paper was the movement of his mind in quest of a

principle with which he had so often entertained himself years before on the great North Road. His method of dealing with any theme had not only been selected, but perfected by habitual use, long before ever he set pen to paper.

Hazlitt has now all unconsciously selected his approach to the Essay, through the Maxim, and his method, through the quest of the principles underlying the phenomena, the small as well as the great, of the world around him. I think if we accompany him to Charles Lamb's fireside we shall see how he came by his highly original conception of the Essay. He is now nearing thirty. He has become a portrait-painter and a writer ready to turn his hand to anything a publisher will take, from a grammar to a biography hastily strapped together, from a compilation to an abridgement. He is earning a living, but a dim and precarious one. As he puts it himself, his "little bark" is still "'hulling on the flood' in a kind of dubious twilight." But he is no longer solitary. He is one of a group of friends. Indeed he has gained a certain reputation among his friends for his "strenuous talk." He is now the Hazlitt of whom Lamb could say: "I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending to but his." His "strenuous talk" has become one of the chief attractions at those Wednesday evenings on which Lamb entertained his friends in his rooms in Mitre Court. Mary Lamb finds him "most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man," and feels the sparkle is out of the gathering when he is not there. If Hazlitt contributed something to these evenings, they did much for him—for it was there he came to see the value of the movement of general conversation as a means of exploring truth, and to see that a subject, when treated by many minds, took on a richness of colouring it lacked when explored in solitary musing. Any subject treated in conversation with a group of friends could lead to many surprises and ramifications of thought, or even to apparent contradictions. Any evening at Lamb's an opinion lightly ventured might lead in the end to "a flight of high and earnest talk that took one half-way to the stars." Hazlitt felt deeply the value of such talk, and the charm of it. In after years, when he was an acknowledged master of the Essay, he gave some impression of its charm in his Essay "On the Conversation of Authors," and this so pleased Charles and Mary and caused such a flutter of pleasure among all old "Mitre-Courtiers" that he followed it up with an entire Essay devoted to recapturing the movement of talk during an evening at Lamb's. In this, which he called "Of Persons One Would Wish to Have Seen," we can

listen to the conversation moving easily and familiarly from name to name, until suddenly, after much rambling discussion, some of it playful, it took one of those high and earnest flights described by Procter as characteristic of it, and so ended, or rather was consumed of its own brightness, just as the morning broke " with that dim, dubious light," says Hazlitt, " by which Giotto, Cimabue and Ghirlandaio must have seen to paint their earliest works." It was from such talk, and not from books, that Hazlitt drew his conception of the Essay. As an Essayist he aimed at capturing the gradations and varying turns and conflicts of conversation, giving not only his own thought, but also such suggestions as he imagined might be made if the subject were being canvassed by a group of friends. It is this which makes his Essays as variable in their gradations of colouring as a piece of changeable silk. It is this which gives them their graceful undulating movement. It has been said that Hazlitt tends " to make his journey in a circle," that at the end of an Essay he is sometimes " much where he started," with nothing proved or concluded—but in this he only follows the true movement of conversation. While he came on his approach to the Essay, and on his method, quite unconsciously, in his conception of the Essay he was entirely conscious of his aim. He is explicit as to this in the " Advertisement " to the Paris edition of *Table-Talk*. He never claims that this is the best conception of the Essay—only that it is best for him. " Each person," he says, " should do, not that which is best in itself, . . . but that which he can do best, which he will find out if left to himself."

Hazlitt's instrument is now ready for use. Not being a " scrannel pipe," the work of one hour, but rather, as I have claimed, of the nature of " a seasoned violin," it is an instrument from which he can draw many notes, on which he can play many and varied tunes. Through it he can express all he has seen, heard, felt, endured, suffered, enjoyed, loved or hated in a life lived with extraordinary intensity, lived too, in what he felt to be " an apocalyptic chapter in the history of human nature," by the movement of which he was passionately affected. " The only faculty I do possess," he wrote once, " is that of a certain morbid interest in things."

Because he looked to the world around him, and to Nature, for his matter, the subjects which lay open to him for treatment were inexhaustible, and infinite in their variety. But no matter what subject he treated, he had one general theme, never by him forgotten for any length of time, and always approached by him

as a metaphysician. In his Essay " On the Spirit of Philosophy " he used the phrase " the Science of Man." This was his " Science," and the special aspect of the " Science " he sought to illuminate was the mixed nature of man, and the " reaction or involution " of the passions caused by the inevitable self-conflict by which human nature is rent, and conditioning the entire movement of human affairs. He may have been drawn towards this theme by the consciousness of the deep divisions by which he was himself rent, and the alternations between extreme refinement of feeling and grossness of desire ; or he may have become absorbed in it because living in an age strained by war and the reaction from war, he found it illustrated profusely and startlingly, even tragically, in the turn of events and their effects on the character of the men round him. However this may be, his preoccupation with it was constant. It seemed to him that in the course of "English literature the only author who had laid open the " reaction or involution " of the passions of man " in a manner worth speaking of " was Shakespeare, for whom as a metaphysician he had a profound respect : he claimed, indeed, that Shakespeare "was quite as good a philosopher as he was a poet." The task he set before himself was none other than to do in prose what Shakespeare had done in poetry. Numberless times, in the course of his Essays, he states his theme :

" You cannot take the measure of human nature with a pair of compasses or a slip of parchment."

OR

" You will find good and evil . . . and the shades of character running more into each other than they do in the ethical charts."

The most bitter of these statements is compressed into the Maxim :

" I believe in the theoretical benevolence, and practical malignity of man."

The most comprehensive and not the least sympathetic is given in the words :

" Man is an intellectual animal, and therefore an everlasting contradiction to himself. His senses centre in himself, hut ideas roach to the ends of the universe ; so that ho is torn in pieces between the two, without a possibility of its ever being otherwise."

Most Essayists are desultory or occasional in their commentary on life. Hazlitt's consistent interpretation of this theme gives his Essays an organic character throughout. I was much

interested the other day to see his characteristic theme re-issued from a new mint, or expressed in the verse-idiom which is the current coin of the moment:

" How much simpler if men were not striped like tigers, patched like clowns ;
 If alternate white and black were not further confused by grays and browns ;
 If people were, even at times, consistent wholes ;
 If the actors were rigidly typed and kept their roles ;
 If we were able
 To classify friends, each with his label,
 Each label neat
 As the names of cakes or the categories of meat.
 But you, my dear, are a greedy bitch, yet also a sad child lost,
 And you who have swindled your partners are kind to the cat,
 And, in human beings, this is not this, nor that quite that
 And the threads are crossed
 And nothing's as tidy as the mind could wish
 And the human mammal is partly insect and often reptile and also fish."

I quote these lines by kind permission of the author, Mr. A. S. J. Tessimond, and of the Editor of *The Listener*. I think the great writer who so often dwelt on the words : " The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together," would have found them complete.

In one of his Essays Hazlitt invites us into his workshop. " It may amuse the reader," he says, " to see the way in which I work out some of my conclusions underground, before throwing them up on the surface." Shall we now watch him working out some of his conclusions before throwing them up into two of his greatest Essays, commentaries on human nature which surely could only have been written by one who had seen it storm to its crisis during a desperate war, which deal with universals, and which therefore, if they came home to men's bosoms in his own day, come home no less surely to ours ? As we read them we feel Hazlitt was justified of his cry : " I would be glad almost to change . . . what I know of mankind for any body's ignorance" of it. The origin of the earlier of these Essays, " On the Pleasure of Hating," was something quite trivial, the appearance in the room in the country in which Hazlitt was writing, of one of those great spiders which come into the house from the garden when the weather begins to turn cold in the autumn. Hazlitt watched it with distaste, now crawling along the matted floor, now running with incredible speed, now stopping short at the sight of him, now plucking up courage and advancing towards him, until at last, as it passed him, he lifted the matting to assist its escape from the room and so rid himself of it. For most of us this would have been the end of the matter. For Hazlitt's

hunting mind it was the beginning. A century before, the reflex action of any one plagued by the restless movements of a spider would have been to crush it to death. He had passed beyond impulse of this kind. He had had no desire to kill or to crush. Yet hatred had survived in him. He had loathed the creature. Why ? What was the principle that would account for his antipathy ? Evidently that the spirit of malevolence survived the practical exercise of it. And this spirit of malevolence operated or functioned throughout Nature. This realization gave him his theme—the universality of hatred and the part it played as one of the great driving forces of the universe :

" Nature scorns . . . made up of antipathies : without something to hate, we should lose the very spring of thought and action. Life would turn to a stagnant pool, were it not roused by the jarring interests, the unruly passions of men. . . . there is a secret affinity, a *hankering* after evil in the human mind, and . . . it takes a perverse . . . delight in mischief, since it is a never-failing source of satisfaction. Pure good soon grows insipid. . . . Pain is a bitter-sweet, which never surfeits. *Lovo* turns, with a little indulgence, to indifference or disgust : hatred alone is immortal. Do we not see this principle at work everywhere ? . . . The pleasure of hating, like a poisonous mineral, cats into the heart of religion, and turns it to rankling spleen and bigotry ; it makes patriotism an excuse for carrying fire, pestilence, and famine into other lands,"

As we yield ourselves to this morbid pleasure or biting stimulant, he says:

" We throw away the trammels of civilisation, the flimsy veil of humanity. . . . The wild beast resumes its sway within Us, we feel like hunting-animals, and as the hound starts in his sleep and rushes on the chase in fancy, the heart rouses itself from its native lair, and utters a wild cry of joy, at being restored once more to freedom and lawless, unrestrained impulses. Every one has his full swing, or goes to the devil his own way."

The other Essay, " On Depth and Superficiality"¹ also had its origin in what might seem a trifle. Hazlitt had once lived in a house ruled by the caprice of a child who cried from morning to night—he says—" for spite " ; and fond to excess though he was of children, he had not enjoyed the experience. On being asked by Coleridge in the course of a discussion on the origin of evil whether he had ever known a *child* who had a wicked nature, he said Yes, and cited the child who had tyrannized over a household by its tears. Coleridge had laughed this out of court as fantastic, but Hazlitt upheld his judgment. The child—he said—had already tasted the pleasure of power and had learned to relish the exercise of it over the household more than any other pleasure. That is to say, the principle which had conditioned the child's conduct had been the love of power, exercised

for its own sake. From this statement he launched forth into his descant on the original sin that has robbed the world of its peace from the beginning of time :

" If the child had been in pain or in fear, I should have said nothing, but it cried only to vent its passion and alarm the house, and I saw in its frantic screams and gestures that great baby, the world, tumbling about in its swaddling-clothes, and tormenting itself and others for the last six thousand years ! . . . it is the downright love of pain and mischief for the interest it excites, and the scope it gives to an abandoned will, that is the root of all the evil, and the original sin of human nature. There is a love of power in the mind independent of the love of good, and this love of power, when it comes to be opposed to the spirit of good, and is leagued with the spirit of evil to commit it with greediness, is wickedness. I know of no other definition of the term. . . . Take away the enormities dictated by the wanton and pampered pride of human will, glutting itself with the sacrifice of the welfare of others, . . . and the life of man would ' spin round on its soft axle,' unharmed and free, neither appalled by huge crimes, nor infested by insect follies."

Hazlitt, shortly after he sent his first Essay, " On the Love of Life," to *The Morning Chronicle*, became the Hazlitt we know best, the dramatic critic, the art critic, the reviewer, the political commentator, the lecturer on English literature, above all the Essayist of " The Round Table," the " Table-Talker," and " The Plain Speaker." It may seem that with a general theme such as his and with such a method, inveterately analytical, his work would have been too sombre to please. But his Essays, despite their undercurrent of grave thought, are " exquisitely entertaining." This was partly due to his arrowy phrasing, constantly pricking the mind to admiration and leaving stings in it; partly due to the passionate idiosyncrasy of his style. He once described Southey's prose style as being " like clear sherry with kernels of old authors thrown into it." His own is more like " devils and burgundy." There can be but one objection to it, that it tends to destroy one's palate for writing less exciting. As Miss Mitford put it: " So poignant is he, and so rich, everything seems insipid after him." The range of his style is very varied, from the literary-colloquial to the poetic, but in one thing it is constant: it is always provocative. His manner, too, is provocative. Paradox is its distinguishing-mark. He is at all times more likely to startle or even to jar his readers, than to send them to sleep. He had no fear of repelling them. Indeed it might be said that he rapidly became a master of the art of attracting by repelling. When he wrote an Essay " On the Causes of Methodism " surely he must have expected that the readers most likely to be attracted by such a title would be Methodists. Yet he begins :

" The first Methodist on record was David. Ho was the first eminent person we read of, who made a regular compromise between religion and morality, between faith and good works. After any trifling peccadillo in point of conduct, as a murder, adultery, perjury, or the like, he ascended with his harp into some high tower of his palace ; and having chaunted, in a solemn strain of poetical inspiration, the praises of piety and virtue, made his peace with heaven and his own conscience."

Many of his readers might be repelled by this ; but few would be likely to lay down the Essay which opens with this brief biography until they had finished it.

Then, although his method was to probe the appearances of things until he came to a general principle, once he had established his principle, he took care to keep his readers " in the company of flesh and blood." This, while it added to the attraction of his Assays, made them irritating to his contemporaries, for the flesh and blood he appropriated for his illustrations was their own. He spared his friends as little as his foes. Basil Montagu found himself in the Essay " On People with One Idea," as tho man whose one idea of an opening gambit in conversation when he met Hazlitt was to say to him : " Have you really *quite* given up drinking ? " " It is not pleasant," wrote Hazlitt, grim-caustic, ". . . to be asked every time you meet, whether you have quite left off drinking wine, and to be complimented or condoled with on your looks according as you answer in the affirmative or negative." Leigh Hunt, whose political articles have a curious naive vanity, as if ho felt that when he nodded the Czar and tho Emperor could not but tremble, found himself among the excessive egotists: " Open ths book in what page you will, there is a frontispiece of themselves staring you in the face. . . . Their rural descriptions are mere landscape backgrounds with their own portraits in an engaging attitude in front . . . if they enter into politics it is understood that a hint from them to the potentates of Europe is sufficient." Elsewhere Hazlitt wrote: " Egotism is an infirmity that grows upon a man till at last he cannot boar to think of anything but himself, or even to suppose that others do." Such people, he says, " are, in fact, in love with themselves; and, like lovers, should be left to keep their own company." Hunt, whose numerous " Egos " were after all very amiable " Egos," felt that Hazlitt had been harsh to his foible. Crabb Robinson looked with dismay at the opening words of " On the Ignorance of the Learned " : " A loungee who is ordinarily seen with a book in his hand, is (we may be almost sure) equally without the power or inclination to attend either to what passes around him, or in his own mind." That night he wrote in

his Diary: "it was with mere pain . . . that I read a sentence this morning which goes home to my feeling : 'A loungers who is ordinarily seen with a book in his hand ' . . . I find other truths equally striking and equally painful in the course of reading the volume." Hazlitt once said admiringly and affectionately of Lamb : " How freely he serves up his friends ! " His defence of his own personalities was that they were really impersonalities, introduced solely because they illustrated an abstract proposition. " My friends," he said, " I conceive will not refuse to contribute to so laudable an undertaking, and my enemies *must*." And again : " If I have sacrificed my friends, it has always been to a theory." He claimed that he spared himself as little as he did his friends : " I intend these Essays as studies of human nature ; and as, in the prosecution of this design, I do not spare others, I see no reason why I should spare myself." It is true that in the course of his Essays he appears among the bores (the bee in his bonnet being the Divine Right of Kings); among the self-tormentors ; and among the croakers. I think, too, he was seeing himself as one of his own " disagreeable people "—when he wrote, with an odd touch of pathos : " It is impossible for those who are naturally disagreeable ever to become otherwise. . . . The utmost a disagreeable person can do is to hope . . . to pass unnoticed in society. With this negative character he should be contented, and may build his fame and happiness on other things "

These character-sketches which irritated Hazlitt's contemporaries even while entertaining them, are to us pure gain, for they reveal to us so much that but for them we should never have seen. What would we know of Coleridge's power to stimulate but for Hazlitt ? We might be inclined to think the tales of the effect of his genius produced on other men mere legends. What would we know of the light in Wordsworth's eyes ; of Southey's falcon glance ? Very little, for one who was painter no less than metaphysician could alone have discerned, described, and interpreted them. We should also be without the vivid glimpse of Southey coming unexpectedly on Hazlitt in a London slum, and passing him by without a word, erect, tense, sharp, arrogant, resentful; of Home Tooke sitting like a king at the head of his table, and laying down the law to his guests ; of Charles Fox at the close of one of his great speeches, drenched in sweat and tears ; of Sheridan's look that to the end was like a sword ; of Wilberforce very delicately trimming between God

and ministers ; and not least, of Charles Lamb reading from Donne : " with suffused features and a faltering tongue."

The first essay contributed by Hazlitt to *The Morning Chronicle*, " On the Love of Life," is at once delicate and powerful. Its integer is the paradox : " We may be said to nurse our existence with the greatest tenderness according to the pain it has cost us." His theme is that it is not happiness which makes us seek to prolong our lives. Those who cling to life only by the most fine agonizing threads often cling to it with the most passionate tenacity. The reason we cling to life is not that we have been satisfied by it, but that we have never been fully satisfied, and go on hoping that the future may make us amends for all our frustrations. In other words, the mainspring of life is not joy, but hope. This Essay is so accomplished it might tempt one to think there was no room in Hazlitt's writing for development. This would be a mistake. There was little room for development, in craft, but there was ample room for development in feeling, as Hazlitt's experience quickened and deepened. Especially with the tide of passion which set in seven years later and swelled to its flood in his forty-fourth year, there came to him a great extension of power. The frenzy which almost unmade him as a man, made him as a writer. The difference in quality between his writing of 1813 and the writing of the early eighteen-twenties may be seen if we compare the Essay, " On the Love of Life," with its exquisite complement, " On the Fear of Death," the most beautiful of all Hazlitt's Essays, written during his sojourn in " that domain which we call the Passions." The initial theme is the same. Hazlitt admits the longings that still bind him to life : " I confess I should like to see the downfall of the Bourbons ; . . . I should like to see some prospect of good to mankind, such as my life began with. I should like to leave some sterling work behind me." And in the manuscript of the Essay we find also : " I would have some creature love me before I die." But death no longer seems to him to wear so unfriendly a face. In the early Essay he had said : " Nothing seems to be a match " for the " general tenaciousness of existence but such an extremity either of bodily or mental suffering as destroys at once the power both of habit and imagination." Now he says : " the pains by their repeated blows have worn us out. . . ." The winding-up of the plot now appears to him almost as gentle as it is inevitable :

" To die is only to be as we were before we were born ; yet no one feels any remorse, or regret, or repugnance, in contemplating this last idea. It is rather

a relief and diaburthening of the mind : it seems to have been holiday-time with us then : we were not called to appear upon the stage of life, to wear robes or tatters, to laugh or cry, be hooted or applauded; we had lain *perdu* all this while, snug, out of harm's way ; and had slept out our thousands of centuries without wanting to be waked up , at peace and free from care, in a long nonage, in a sleep deeper and calmer than that of infancy, wrapped in the softest and finest dupt. And the worst that we dread is, after a short, fretful, feverish being, after vain hopes, and idle fears, to sink to final repose again, and forget the troubled dream of life'"

The earlier Essay is a piece of delicate reasoning. But the author of " On the Fear of Death " is to be numbered among the poets ; and the Essay itself has the healing power of poetry. Danger and difficulty and fear and pain are the most searching of critics. I found during some of the worst moments of the war-years that much literature I had once enjoyed shrivelled into nothingness when confronted by these stern arbiters. Books of any length too tended to lose their power to hold me. But among shorter or occasional pieces there were three, all of them meditative in kind, which I read over and over again. One was Daniel's " Epistle " to the Countess of Cumberland, that strong block of ethical verse, simple and noble and natural as one of the white cliffs that guard our coast, which Hazlitt read aloud in one of his lectures on Elizabethan literature, and which both Wordsworth and he loved, finding in it the soul or *Genius* of England ; the second was " The Happy Warrior," which itself owes so much to Daniel's noble poem ; the third was " On the Fear of Death," which I see from the notes on my copy [read in every crisis during these years, and which never failed to recall me to some measure of quietness. Have I not reason, then, to sign myself *Grateful and Contented* that Hazlitt succeeded in fashioning the instrument through which he could pour out to the world, as he said, the spirit of his mind ?

There came to Hazlitt in the last three years of his life another extension of power. Feeling that the forces arrayed against him were too strong for him, and that he was being driven backwards in his life-struggle, feeling too, that he had no further hope of human happiness, he began to solace himself with retrospection. " Since the future was barred to my progress," he wrote, " I have turned for consolation to the past, gathering up the fragments of my early recollections, and putting them in a form that might live. . . . I confess, nothing at present interests me but what has been. . . . I cannot solve the mystery of the past, nor exhaust my pleasure in it . . . the only wish I can form . . . would be to live some of my years over again—

they would be those in which I enjoyed and suffered most!" In his memories of these years he renewed his life. "Do I then muse on nothing," he cried, "do I bend my eyes on nothing, when I turn back in fancy to 'those suns and skies so pure' that lighted up my early path? . . . The past still lives in the memory of those who have leisure to look back upon the way they have trod, and from it 'catch glimpses that may make them less forlorn'." In this mood of intense retrospection he gathered up "the past moments of his being like drops of honey-dew to distil a precious liquor from them." It is their saturation by this precious essence which gives his last Essays their great and touching beauty. They are fragrant as the first garden of his innocence, pure as the suns and skies that lighted up his early path, bright with "the pearly dew of sensibility." In such Essays as "On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth," "A Farewell to Essay-writing," "The Free Admission," "The Sick Chamber," and "The Letter-Bell," all of them pure emanations of his own spirit and yet like "bone of our bone" and "flesh, of, our flesh" Hazlitt makes good his claim to have lived indeed, for "a man's life is his whole life, not the last glimmering snuff of the candle." In them we meet again all the various Hazlitts—the happy child at Wem at work and play in his father's house, when his path, as he says, "ran down with butter and honey"; the sensitive boy musing by the gate from which his mother, when a girl, had loved to watch the setting sun; the solitary student weeping as if his heart would break, on first seeing Mrs. Siddons act; the sullen youth whom Coleridge released from his morbid sadness; the painter-copyist of the Louvre who caught a glimpse of Napoleon and conceived for him a passion and a gallantry which all the blood that drenched Europe could not quench; the Winterslow cottager who gathered mushrooms for supper in the evening fields with Charles and Mary Lamb; all these!—yes! and the agonist of the inn on the Scots border too. The last of these Essays, "The Letter-Bell," written when Hazlitt was dying, was not published until after his death. Hazlitt once described humanity as "clay tempered with tears." I wonder sometimes what Wordsworth felt when he saw that the dying Hazlitt had remembered the look in the eyes of the young poet William Wordsworth as they watched the sun set on a yellow bank at Nether Stowey; whether the white-haired Coleridge felt the tears tempering the clay when he knew that Hazlitt, after many years clouded by hatred, had yearned at the last in his sick-room in Soho towards the young poet-preacher

with the eyes that held a fine frenzy in them, and the hair black and glossy as the raven's wing.

In one of his early Essays Hazlitt wrote of Milton : " He does not write from casual impulse, but after a severe examination of his own strength, and with a determination to leave nothing undone which it is in his power to do. He always labours, and he almost always succeeds." This might be appropriated to his own writing. I think we might appropriate to him, too, as Essayist, the words in which his contemporary, William Crowe, poet and Public Orator of the University of Oxford, honoured Milton as Poet, and say that Hazlitt is among English Essayists ". . . in doctrina, elatione animi, et materia operis sui ipse princeps." His teaching, of the absolute value of truth, is one of the wings of his writing ; his high-mindedness is the other ; while the matter of his Essays is history at its most vivid, for his life, which began, as he says, with the French Revolution, closed with the Revolution of the Three Days, and his strong prose, in rendering back to us the passion of these years, reflects the ominous fiery dawn of the modern world :

" Like a gate of steel
Fronting the sun, that renders back
His figure and his heat."

THE POETRY OF LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS,
BY MARIE CABMIOHAEL STOPES, D.Sc., PH.D., F.R.S.LiT.,
F.L.S., F.G.S.

[Read March 20th, 1946.]

THIS day, March 20th, 1946, is the first anniversary of the death of the greatest sonnet writer in English since Shakespeare. We gather to appraise, and in our remembrance to place our wreath before his image in its niche in the Hall of Fame. So long as the English language is read Douglas undoubtedly will stand among the immortals.

Who are the greatest sonnet writers of the world ? Petrarch, Vittoria Colonna, Ronsard, Shakespeare, Douglas : all creators of many superb sonnets. In England, several of our great poets have each written a few great sonnets—Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Masfield—but Shelley only one, and that, though great in thought, is raspily incorrect in form.

England has nurtured only Lord Alfred Douglas to represent a serious production of sonnets in the Petrarchan form : his place as a poet must be awarded on that work.

He began to write verses while at school, and when an undergraduate at Magdalen College his first serious poem appeared in the *Oxford Magazine* in the year 1890, when he was 20 years old. It was a lyric, and in it the influence of Tennyson is apparent, though it has independent beauty. The last two verses of this poem—'Autumn Days'—are charming :

" Though the sun be like blood in the sky
He is cold as the lips of hate,
And he fires the sere leaves as they lie
On their bed of earth, too late.

" They are dead, and the bare trees weep
Not loud as a mortal weeping,
But as sorrow that sighs in sleep,
And as grief that is still in sleeping."

The Ballad of Perkin Warbeck, written in 1894, is still admired:

" For my brothers and sisters were black as the gate •-.
Whereby I shall pass tomorrow,
But I was white and delicate,
And born to splendour and sorrow."

The early work of Douglas consisted mainly of three long narrative poems, and a few delicate lyrics ; all written between the years 1890 and 1899, that is when he was from 20 to 29 years old.

His first volume of poems was published in 1896 in France by the *Mercure de France* with a French prose translation. It was admired by Mallarmé and other French poets of the day. One is reminded of Shelley, whose first volume of poems was also published on the Continent, at Pisa.

From his Oxford undergraduate days onwards hilarious comic and satiric light verse bubbled forth ; later on, all his real poetry took the serious form of Petrarchan sonnets.

To understand Lord Alfred, both as a man and a poet, it is necessary to recognize that he had two distinct strains in his literary personality, and possessed two distinct capacities—talent and genius.

His talent gave him a sparkling swiftness, and a vivid kaleidoscopic capacity to manipulate words. His comic verses, his clerihews, his satires, all exemplify this, many were written rapidly, and with a sense of rollicking fun. Some of them are brilliant pyrotechnic displays of dangerous explosives. Some simple nonsense for children :

" The Lion is an awful bore
He come and dabbles in your gore,
Nor will he take the least rebuff
Until he feels he's had enough."

Lord Alfred himself, in the 1907 edition of the ' Pongo Papers,' says : " Writing nonsense rhymes has no effect one way or the other on one's ability or desire to write poetry. It has simply nothing to do with it at all." All the ' Pongo Papers ' verses appeared in the first instance in *Vanity Fair*, and were reprinted more than once in book form.

Though our main interest must be in his high poetry, as his talent was also remarkable, his lighter verse should not be entirely ignored to-day, for it has some present interest though posterity may decide to forget its existence.

Douglas was at Oxford at the same time as Hilaire Belloc, and it was Douglas and not Belloc who first created the verse type of the ' Bad Child's Book of Beasts.' For Douglas' ' Tails with a Twist' was written and quoted in Oxford two years before Belloc's book appeared.

In their day his books of nonsense verses, the ' Pongo Papers '

and others, were novel and popular : now their main interest is their evidence of the high spirits and dexterity of the young poet.

His satires came later. Though verbal dexterity also characterizes them, their chords strike deeper notes, for they are the almost agonized groans of a soul suffering such buffetings from fate as have seldom befallen any man, and certainly no other poet.

About the life and personality of Lord Alfred Douglas I have said something in another place (Lecture to the Poetry Society, June, 1945, and article in the *Poetry Review*, Autumn, 1945) and do not wish here to re-emphasize the features of that little sketch. Yet to understand the poet's work some indication of the major events of his career are essential.

Lord Alfred Douglas was a younger son of the eighth Marquess of Queensberry, and was born on October 22nd, 1870. He thus came to manhood in the 'nineties in the richest and socially highest circles at that sumptuous period when wealth and social position were fantastically powerful and privileged. In addition to this he glowed with exceptional, even extreme beauty. Poems were written about him both by men and women. He was the "Young Endymion" of his wife's poem, and the rapturous descriptions of young male beauty in that poem are of him. He shone in Society and in addition he had his real talent, his inherent genius as a writer, his interest in his racing stable, and in travel. Then, while he was still very young began a series of unmerited misfortunes, of wellnigh incredible cumulative malice displayed against him even in the law courts. Like confluent battering rams they knocked down his high position, till ultimately Douglas found himself in prison, impoverished almost to penury, ill, friendless, betrayed by those in whom he trusted. Most young men would have gone down under such a succession of spiritual and material difficulties, or at least have been rendered incapable of creative work. But Douglas had the elements of true greatness in him. His dominant Scottish blood kept him fighting right through fantastic disasters, and brought him out of it all with his artistic integrity not only untarnished, but brighter, and with his personality mellowed, kindly and sweet, so that ultimately in his seventh decade he was still as eagerly alert and responsive to any discussion of poetic technique as a young man, as warm in friendship and its interests as a prophet of old who gathered round him the young to whom he handed on the torch.

The progress of his soul through its afflictions is portrayed superbly in his high poetry. His bodily health and mental outlook

were affected in many ways, and his experiences in our law courts made him a forensic fighter, leading him to tilt at a number of dragons in his path. Some of them were wriggling worms. Hence his satires. They are best studied in the handsome folio volume on hand-made paper, beautifully printed in France by Maurice Darantière and published by the Fortune Press in London in 1926.

I have brought the volume, as it is very scarce and may be unknown to some here who are interested in his work.

In his Preface to this book Douglas recalls the lament of the late Lord Bryce on the decay of satire in England, saying, " Lord Bryce thought that satire was a lost art, simply because it is a fact that no leading poet except myself has written satire since Swinburne, and because the satire I have written has invariably been ignored and boycotted by the Press, which, reflecting the feebleness of this degenerate age, looks upon satire with ignorant fear and dislike." Douglas continues, " It is quite obvious, then, that satire cannot be polite or pleasant writing. If satire is to exist at all, it must be savage, fierce, bitter and, perhaps also, even occasionally unfair." Comparable with the opening speech of an advocate attacking a man in a law court.

These satires scarify many of the men who were prominent at the time. Lord Alfred himself recalls Lord Byron's vehement satire 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers/ Lord Alfred, however, had greater need than Lord Byron to defend himself by attack. The Douglas satires were written in self defence against cruel malignancy in the Law Courts and elsewhere, and one must agree with Douglas that " no poet that ever lived has had more justification for the use of satire than myself and that, considering the provocation, few have used it more sparingly."

In the past satire has seldom employed the vehicle of the sonnet, so I think one should be quoted here, a marvel of verbal skill.

It was written in Wormwood Scrubs prison, there committed to memory, and I have brought to show you the poem in holograph. It reads :

"To A CERTAIN JUDGE.

" Master of dubious arts, the sophists cloak
Rests all too aptly on your cynic mind.
Justice we know is never quite so blind,
Under her hood-winked eyes, as simple folk
Simply suppose. A deft judicial spoke
Thrust in her wheel, a crooked push behind,
Invisibly bestowed, are, in their kind,
Cantrips that cozen, jury-fogging smoke.

" England expects, when ministerial boots
 Accite subservience to the lingual task,
 Vigour and zeal. Your ludship's verbal grace
 Outshines the varnish that your tongue salutes.
 Red-robed automaton, behind your mask
 You hide (too obviously) a leering face."

These satires contain not only scorn and emotion in their corrosive composition, but show what a fine poet was he who composed them. Consider a few lines from the famous 'Rossiad':

" O England, in thine hour of need,
 When mounted Death on his pale steed
 Rides through thy ranks and with sharp scythe
 Reaps of thy noblest sons his tithe,
 When far beyond thy foam-washed gates
 The bloody fields of alien states
 Lie weltering in thy trampled blood,
 While reeling in the furious flood,
 Stabbed at by snakes of under-seas,
 Thy galleons beat against the breeze,
 Guarding thy silver-girdled shores;
 When at thy gate the mad wolf roars,
 And poisoned slime from his flecked mouth
 Taints all thy blossom-breathing south,
 Call on thy God, cast out they sin !
 The foe without, the foe within
 Are at thy throat . . .
 Two foes thou hast, one there, one here,
 One far, one intimately near,
 Two filthy fogs blot out thy light—
 The German, and the Sodomite."

This was written in 1916—it might have been composed last year.

Another sonnet-satire 'To Another Judge' beginning—

" Blackness descends on England like a pall,"

contains the line—

" We lately heard thy 'judgement.' Mark now mine."

This leaves the poet, as ever when he is a real poet, in possession of the last, and that an enduring word.

His satires are a chapter in social history : they will probably be annotated some day, long hence, for truth has a way of surviving trial by fire.

His genius, on the other hand, grave, richly beautiful, in love with the highest, worked slowly and toiled to produce, after long and loving labour, sonnets which flow with such inevitable grace that they beguile one into thinking they must have been written easily under the very hand of inspiration. As he himself said

in the 1919 edition of his poems, "All good poetry . . . is forged slowly and painfully, and link by link with sweat and blood and tears."

In his sonnets he seldom used difficult or "poetical" words. So consummate was his art that he often achieved most moving lines out of very simple words and ideas. For example, in his sonnet to Shakespeare written when he was 22, he is not ornate as his age and the much-used theme might have misled him into being, but writes :

"Most tuneful ginger, lover tenderest,
Most sad, most piteous, and most musical,
Thine is the shrine more pilgrim-worn than all
The shrines of singers; high above the rest."

And still, when he was forty-seven, clear simplicity shines in—

"I know a green grass path that leaves the field
And, like a running river, winds along
Into a leafy wood where is no throng
Of birds at noonday . . ."

He himself said in his Preface to the 1936 edition of his 'Sonnets,' that the true poet must have fire in his heart and ice in his head, must be trained as well as born.

He studied the details of technique with profound thought and care. Each poem was subjected to meticulous revision until its music ran with that limpid and apparently effortless simplicity which is the hall mark of genius.

His themes range from richly painted imagery,

"Where level lawns sweep through the stately trees
And the great peacocks walk like painted Kings/"

to the highest expressions of human love and the relation of the soul to its maker.

From descriptive pictures of beauty his poetry widens and penetrates deeper, until like a vision suddenly revealing the innermost significance of life, it portrays the poet's mind :

"Think how the hidden things that poets see
In amber eves or mornings crystalline,
Hide in the soul their constant quenchless light,
Till, called by some celestial alchemy,
Out of forgotten depths, they rise and shine
Like buried treasure on Midsummer night."

He has written so many fine sonnets it is difficult to select the best. My favourite is one of several written to his wife. That

is because it expresses the yearning of a passionate yet spiritual love in such a way as to illumine the delicacy and subtlety of human emotion :

" The barrier of flesh divides us yet;
Your spirit, like a bird caught in a net,
Beats ever an impenetrable wall.

" This is my book, and there as in a glass,
Darkly beheld, the shadow of my mind
Wavers and flickers like a flame of fire.
So through your eyes, it may be, it will pass,
And I shall hold my wild shy bird confined
In the gold cage of shadowless desire."

His early romantic passion for his wife, portrayed in the sonnet sequence 'To Olive,' was a life-long devotion surviving the treacheries of others, separations and disasters. He often spoke and wrote to me of his darling Olive, revealing how their relationship had been widely misunderstood, and how precious to him was their daily association until her death in 1944 :

" Yet surely thou wast there when life was sweet,
(We walked knee deep in flowers) and thou wast there,
When in dismay and sorrow and unrest,
With weak bruised hand? and wounded bleeding feet,
I fought with beasts and wrestled with despair
And slept (how else ?) upon thine unseen breast."

In my choice of his best sonnets, it may be that I have been swayed by my own conviction that love, its expression and experience are the first and highest of all human potentialities. But I feel confident that he himself would concur, for in another sonnet he says :

" Yet write you this, sweet one, when I am dead :
' Love like a lamp swayed over all his days
And all his life was like a lamp-lit chamber'."

Readers with different preferences will find in others of Douglas' sonnets their magnificent and satisfying expression.

To round our appreciation we should listen to a few of the many voices who have praised the poetry of Douglas. Humbert Wolfe, for instance, writing of 'A Poet and his faith,' quotes Douglas' ode, written in 1896, many years before he became a Roman Catholic :

" Rise up, my soul!
Shake thyself from the dust.
Lift up thy head that wears an aureole.
Fulfil thy trust."

This was written when Douglas was 26. Yet one concurs when Humbert Wolfe comments, "That is the diction of the mature poet, and is the true claim of poetry, not to imitate the dust from which it springs, but to lend it radiance, and through radiance, life." Of his sonnets he said, "Everywhere are scattered lines so invulnerable that it is fair to claim for Lord Alfred the position of one among the first of English Sonneteers."

G. B. Osborn wrote in 1936: "His fame as a poet has long been secure, not only in his own country but also among French critics who constitute a 'contemporaneous posterity' capable of anticipating the verdict of future generations. He has never striven to be 'original' or to ignore the teachings of the great masters of his universal art. . . . His poetry is himself, first and last, and its lasting living beauty and passion will always appeal to that giant heart of memories and tears which is England's."

In that year also his poems, translated into French by a distinguished French poetess, Mme. d'Avilla, were published in Paris. To be translated into French during his lifetime is an honour he, alone among recent poets, shared with Lord Byron.

Harold Nicolson described him as being "recognized by the discerning as a pre-eminent poet. Few living writers have possessed his sense of the tones and undertones of the English language."

G. Bernard Shaw, writing of both Wilde and Douglas in 1938, said: "Lord Alfred resembled Shelley in two particulars. He was an enthusiastic poet, making language lyrical with a born mastery which showed up the artificiality of Wilde's metrical manufactures when the two were placed in contrast."

Sir A. Quiller-Couch held his poetry in the highest esteem, and wrote to me of him in 1939, "I always held his sonnets the finest written in his time."

His real fame was won without any assistance from his aristocratic name, or high social position, for his first volume of sonnets, 'The City of the Soul,' was published anonymously by Grant Richards in 1899 and at once recognized as remarkable.

The outstanding quality of these sonnets was widely acclaimed before it was known by whom they were written. Francis Thompson wrote that they had cunning and iridescent diction, and "all have a rich, youthful passion for beauty which is itself an inspiration." They were recognized by Crosland as "far beyond any contemporary poetry."

In this sequence Douglas was concerned:

" Only to build one crystal barrier
 Against this sea which beats upon our days;
 To ransom one'lost moment with a rhyme
 Of passionate protest or austere demur,
 To clutch Life's hair, and thrust one naked phrase
 Like a lean knife between the ribs of Time."

That is the eternal aspiration of the real poet, expressed and re-expressed with poignancy and various beauty, especially by Shakespeare, who was for Douglas the high topgallant of the world.

Yet in spite of his intense veneration for Shakespeare Douglas composed only one sonnet in the Shakespearean form, that was his first, written when he was 20 years old and beginning :

" As a white dove, that in a cage of gold,
 Is prisoned from the air, and yet more bound
 By love than bars, and will not wings unfold"

All the rest of his sonnets are in the Petrarchan form. About this Lord Alfred lays himself open to a gentle chiding for he says " the more difficult Petrarchan form " and repeats this potential disparagement of Shakespeare. He was quite incorrigible about this and could never accept the idea I often put to him (as one who uses about equally the Shakespearean and the Petrarchan forms), that as regards " difficulty " they are equal. Their alternative use depends on the content as well as the nature of the appeal the poet desires to make. Indeed, I think that the summing up of a whole sonnet in what should be a memorable rhymed couplet is more difficult than the building up the themes and music in the octet and the return wave of the easily rhymed sestet of the Petrarchan form. But Douglas was obdurate, reiterating that of course Shakespeare " *could* have written the more difficult Petrarchan form if he had wished to do so."

Yet Douglas intensely enjoyed Shakespeare's and all good sonnets in this form. To the 1935 edition of Douglas' " Sonnets " his Preface on the structure of the two types should be read by, and will delight, all true poets.

Douglas chose the Petrarchan form just because he really did feel it to be the more difficult. He had a true instinct about the value of difficulties imposed by precise form in enriching and intensifying a poet's creations.

To the very last he retained his youthful and passionate poetic integrity, and the technical value of every syllable mattered to him so much as violently to excite him. It required considerable temerity therefore to approach him with the idea that one of his most admired sonnets, the very sonnet moreover selected

by Quiller-Couch for the 'Oxford Book of English Verse,' contained a faulty line. But it did. And I dared.

The third line of this famous description of the loveliness of London—

" See what a mass of gems the city wears
Upon her broad live bosom ! Row on row
Rubies and emeralds and amethysts glow—"

contains a stress and a syllable wrong, and also the conjunction of "*and amethysts*" is ugly, making a false caesura, jolting any sensitive ear.

At first he was highly indignant with me, maintaining that for forty years the critics had been satisfied, and I was the first person to notice anything wrong with it. I persisted for I knew that he would see the point in time, every real poet must. He did, and wrote to me: "Seven years ago in my own author's copy opposite the line 'Rubies and emeralds,' etc., in the margin I wrote, 'This line is a syllable too long.' It's odd that I had never spotted it before. It was written nearly fifty years ago, when I was twenty-three. Seven years ago it was impossible to correct the printed line, so I just made a mental note that I would put it right the next time I had a new edition. Nobody else except you apparently has ever noticed it, I suppose because the alleged critics are so used to modern 'poets' having lines of eleven and twelve syllables mixed up with decasyllabic lines that they accepted it as a matter of course and they probably have no idea that it is wrong. Yeats, for example, does it all the time. But to me it is of course anathema."

I suggested "sapphires," and in another letter he replies, "Of course, 'Sapphires' is the word I want for that line. Anyhow, the lights of London at night are more often like sapphires than amethysts, 'Rubies and emeralds and sapphires glow'." In the latest edition, the miniature reprint of his 'Sonnets,' published by the Richards Press in 1943, that is how it appears.

If one goes very carefully through every line of every one of his sonnets, how very few are the blemishes of any sort, how often the lines have not only satisfying beauty, but also that inevitableness of a perfection that cannot be improved.

Yet just as the minutest black fleck on the pure perfection of a lily is noticeable, although it would go unobserved on the common groundsel, so, a few trifles that one would pass in a less consummate poet, are noted for one desires to flick them away as one would a soot on the nose of a marble Venus.

Here and there are a few little blemishes that obviously origi-

nated in a typist's or printer's error overlooked. No more than a few freckles on a lovely face. They are of no structural significance.

There is, however, one, and only one, characteristic structural flaw I notice in his sonnets : an excessive use of the word *and*. I hold that *ands* should be avoided so far as possible by writers of sonnets. The fourteen lines must be compact, and packed with the rich ore of thought and beauty. " *Ands* " in a sonnet are colourless, in general wasting a potentially vital syllable. A sonnet with many *ands* is weakened thereby.

Moreover, *and* is always treated as a monosyllable by all poets, but to my ear it is not exactly that, a-nn-de it has to be pronounced in many juxtapositions. To me it always has a dull, leaden sound, not to be incautiously introduced into a peal of silver bells. There are, of course, times when this peculiarly dead sound and void meaning have a colour-value, but this is not apparent in most instances of its use. Generally *ands* are peppered about loosely in such a way as to show that they were scarcely considered.

This detail in the construction of sonnets had not drawn my attention to itself until less than two years ago re-reading for the many-eth' time, one of Douglas' most famous and moving sonnets I wondered what it was that made it just fail to satisfy me. Suddenly the " *ands* " glared out at me : I counted them. Ten of them I Ten *ands* in fourteen lines, with four of these opening the lines. I found that six of them at least could easily be eliminated, and thereby the beauty and meaning of six lines strengthened. With these *ands* in mind consider this justly famous, really very wonderful sonnet.

It was written about Oscar Wilde a year after his death :

" THE DEAD POET.

" I dreamed of him last night, I saw his face
All radiant and unshadowed of distress,
And as of old, in music measureless,
I heard his golden voice and marked him trace
Under the common thing the hidden grace,
And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
Till mean things put on beauty like a dress
And all the world was an enchanted place.

' In ordinary life it is often necessary to speak of events which have happened an uncounted but large number of times : at present, owing to the lack of a word in our language, it is usual to exaggerate and say " the hundredth time " or the " thousandth " time, or to be reduced to the slang " umpteenth." As the need of a pleasant-pounding general word is apparent I propose the use of " many-eth," spelling it thus till its meaning and usefulness have become generally realized, when perhaps it would be better spelt " manieth."

" And then methought outside a fast locked gate
 I mourned the loss of unrecorded words,
 Forgotten tales and mysteries half said,
 Wonders that might have been articulate,
 And voiceless thoughts like murdered singing birds.
 And so I woke and knew that he was dead."

Alas, Douglas himself had died before I had mastered enough courage to tell him my ideas about ands in general in sonnets, with special reference to his own work. I am sure he will now forgive me, even agree, if we look into the ands further, for it is due to you and to his memory to be not blinded by idolatry. So I counted every and in all his sonnets, finding five, seven, nine ands in many of his earlier sonnets, and very few with only one or two. Then I counted the ands in his more mature sequence, 'In Excelsis': none contained more than five, several only one or two. One sonnet had none at all, that magnificent one beginning—

"I follow honour, brokenly content,
 Though the sick flesh repine, though darkness creep
 Into the soul's unfathoirable deep."

So it is clear that whether he was conscious of it or not, as his mastery of the sonnet matured the number of his ands diminished.

What about other famous sonnets? I turned to a few of Shakespeare's best known, counting the "ands" in them. Twos, a good many threes—fours—a few fives. The sonnets beginning—

"O never say that I was false of heart,
 Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify,"

and

"For shame, deny that thou bear'st love to any,"

none at all. The average much below Douglas's earlier sonnets and about the same as his 'In Excelsis' series.

In Milton's sonnet to his Deceased Wife only three; but the very inferior sonnets to Cyriack Skinner and to Mr. Lawrence sprout seven ands apiece.

Four each only in Wordsworth's 'Westminster Bridge' and the one on 'Freedom' beginning—

"It is not to be thought of that the flood
 Of British Freedom, which, to the open sea
 Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
 Hath flow'd . . ."

Yes. It is clear. The great sonnets tend to eliminate "ands." Alas, Lord Alfred Douglas was already too ill before this idea had crystallized so far in my mind.

The theme of the elimination of ands in sonnet structure would have afforded us such vividly alive discussions that I regret deeply that I had not felt brave enough to plunge into that exhilarating sea while there was still time. He was always illuminating and delightfully eager when considering the technicalities of poetry.

He spoke to me a number of times about the composition of his 'In Excelsis' sequence. These sonnets were written in Wormwood Scrubs prison in 1924, where he had been sent for a libel on Mr. Winston Churchill. They were first published in the *London Mercury* in that year. The sequence has a deep interest both for its technical accomplishment and as a revelation of his spiritual growth.

When composing these fine sonnets he laboured under conditions which would have deadened any ordinary aristocrat ground under the heel of prison. He told me, what should be remembered by posterity, that though he was allowed a little writing paper while he was in the prison, he was warned that all that he wrote would be taken away from him before he left. It was. So he had not only to compose these sonnets, but to memorize them completely or they would have been lost. The callous Home Office kept—or destroyed—what was (or is if they still have it) one of the world's great manuscripts. All efforts on the part of Lord Alfred and his friends to retrieve the manuscript have failed.

What gallantry it was that calmly wrote to posterity in such circumstances,

"I keep the steadfast gaze of tear-washed eyes."

In another of this series he asks—

"But who can so set up his reason's throne
Above the accident of mortal hap,
As to embrace disparagements and mocks,
Encounter suffering without a groan,
Lie like a nursling in affliction's lap
And realise the saintly paradox?"

Here came to his aid his simple, child-like faith in Christ. He had become a Roman Catholic some years before, in 1911 when he was 41, and was sustained by a translucent mystical belief in the personality of God, with Christ as his personal Saviour.

He knew and cared nothing of theological argument, scientific discovery, or sectarian dispute. His faith, like his life, flowered in love :

" For such is love, a great good every way,
 Bearing all toil, making all burdens light:
 To its internal vision the dark night
 Shows clear and shining as the dawn of day :
 Being born of God it still denies to stay
 With less than God, but evermore takes flight
 To the belov'd on wings as swift as sight,
 A torch, a vivid flame, a lucent ray."

One does not need to share the details of his faith's material expression to feel the upward surge of the soul in this immaculate poetry.

His time in prison nearly killed his body and permanently weakened his health, and though ' In Excelsis ' in 1924 was not his Swan Song, yet he wrote but few serious poems after it.

One outstanding sonnet, however, is dated 1934 :

" If you came back, perhaps you would not find
 The old enchantment, nor again discern
 The altered face of love."

For some years before his death his muse had been nearly silent, for he felt, not a weakening in his interest in poetry and every detail of its technique, but a waning of his own creative fire.

Thereafter he lived in sadness the experience he had portrayed in a sonnet as a younger man :

" This is deep hell, to be expressionless,
 To leave emotion inarticulate."

In 1941 he wrote several trenchant political and satirical sonnets. His defence of Col. Blimp brought praise from the then Minister of War, his Beelzebub satire £20 from the *Evening Standard*. This sonnet he sent to me in holograph before it was published, and I have brought it that anyone interested may see how firm and good was the handwriting in which he wrote the last of his published poems. His fighting spirit and his power to barb scathing words had neither waned.

But he was a tired man, with a weakened heart. A year after his wife died he spoke often of how he longed to run

" Back to the golden house a golden boy."

He told us that in Heaven he would choose to be a child. As in his manhood he had been so repeatedly wounded by wanton cruelty he sought a state where gentleness is protected.

The depth of suffering long experienced by his sensitive mind is reflected in one little incident. In 1941 by a curious coincidence he and I, unaware of what the other was doing, each wrote on the same evening a sonnet on Winston Churchill. We sent off the sonnets in manuscript simultaneously to each other, and by chance my reply to his got lost in the post. He wrote most disturbedly, thinking that I had been offended. When I told him that my letter was merely lost and I had been delighted by the coincidence, he replied, "Of course, it would be *impossible* for you to be so small as to be annoyed by my sonnet coinciding with yours. I ought to have known better than to think that your failure to acknowledge my sonnet could *possibly* be due to such a cause. But I was genuinely puzzled by your silence and I thought it just possible that you might be offended with me. . . ."

What sensitiveness, and what a degree of past wounding by others who called themselves his friends this reveals.

Many people who never met him owe to him the great experience of being stirred to exaltation by his poems ; one, for example, was young Lieut. Raoul Pugh, who found Douglas' sonnets thrilled him more than any poem since he had first read 'Lycidas.'

A sonnet which pleased Douglas sums up my view of him, and its octet may help to crystallize this brief attempt to present a balanced view of a great poet :

^{kt} Incomparable merit wreathes your brow
 For out of turbulence and spirit's stress,
 Lowering darkness, arid bitterness,
 You hammered beauty that adorns you now.
 The grave devours what poets disallow,
 But beauty carved in words all must confess
 Rises above our mortal littleness
 To glitter like the pointer in the Plough."

M. C. S.

One of his enchanting personal characteristics was his clear sighted self criticism, expressed quite objectively and often with humour. His own comments on his Churchill sonnet illustrate this delightfully. He wrote to me :

⁶⁶ If you wanted to criticize my [Churchill] sonnet as I could have done a sonnet by someone else you might have pointed out *hostility* and *charifa*/ do not really rhyme well (same consonant sound) and that I have condemned similar rhymes in one or more of my own prefaces ! If you have got onto that—(I

noticed it myself of course and was too lazy to change it)—I would have been obliged to say *touchè*"

On p. 26 in the 1935 'Sonnets,' the third line reads—

"Even unto the foolishness of quick returning."

In one of his letters to me about "sapphires" he drew my attention to this saying, "Strange to say I have a similar blemish in the sonnet 'Lust and Hypocrisy.' (This sonnet had not been reprinted since 1896 till 1935.) The third line is a syllable too long, but in that case it is just a slip of the pen in writing 'unto' instead of 'to.' The line 'even unto, etc.,' should be 'Even to the foolishness of quick returning.' ('Even' is here one syllable as in Shakespeare *passim*.) I corrected it in the margin of the page 7 years ago at the same time as I noted the error in the 'Rubies and emeralds' line."

It is printed correctly now in the miniature 1943 edition of his 'Sonnets.'

In another letter to me (1942) he wrote: "I don't see why anyone should be able to write great sonnets now when I can't do it myself. I *did* write a few great ones, but I'm afraid I've lost the art. The last 3 are nothing like up to my best stuff. They are merely *vers d'occasion*."

These are the three satires all of topical war-time interest added at the end of his last volume, the miniature reprint of his 1935 'Sonnets,' published in 1943.

One must reluctantly concur in his own estimate of these last three sonnets, the 1941 political war-time series. There are none between these three and his last great one, dated 1934, that fine and sorrowful one, 'The Wastes of Time':

"But if I cried to you, 'Return! return!'
How could you come? How could you ever learn
The old ways you have left so far behind?"

In the intervening years, however, his mind was much occupied with the Principles of poetry. The 1935 edition of the 'Sonnets' has a short but valuable essay on the structure of sonnets, and in the 1935 edition of the 'Lyrics' a preface on the art of poetry in general, wherein he re-emphasizes his view that "To be a poet you have not only to be born one, but you have to take infinite pains to acquire the art and the technique," and, moreover,

¹The last of these is incorrectly dated 1942: it appeared in *Truth*, September 26th, 1941.

the poet " must necessarily be preoccupied with beauty . . . spiritual beauty, because poetry is an affair of the spirit."

He was ever ready to discuss the technique of poetry, writing in 1938 in ' Without Apology/ I am prepared to give reasons and discuss them with anyone whom I recognize as an intellectual peer.

Then, at long last, in 1943, he embodied his fundamental views on poetry in a lecture before the Royal Society of Literature entitled " The Principles of Poetry," wherein he affirmed the fundamentals of high poetry, and made spiced and peppered mincemeat of the pretensions and products of T. S. Eliot and his school. He postulated the necessity for inspiration, sincerity and technical skill in a true poet, calling on the young to fight for the great tradition of our national art of poetry.

In February, 1944, he wrote another piece of literary criticism, a preface for my own volume, ' Wartime Harvest.' This is the only preface he ever wrote for the work of any poet, though he had been pestered for years by generations of would-be poets eager for this honour.

This Preface contains, among other interesting *dicta*, a criticism of Wordsworth. Douglas wrote : " If I had been a contemporary and friend of William Wordsworth and if he had sent me all his sonnets one by one as he wrote them, and invited me to express my judgment about them, I would have been impelled to reply that I did not have a very high opinion of the great majority of them. [In a private letter to me he wrote, " by that time he would have taken a deep dislike to me."] Wordsworth wrote about two hundred and twenty sonnets, and among them are about half a dozen superlatively fine poems. Of the rest some are fairly good and no more, and a large number, probably a majority of the residue, are simply very bad."

His admiration of the other work of an author, his friendship or affection, never blinded him to faults in technique, or made him soften his judgment on any performance of what was to him the sacred art of poetry. Nor had his deeper emotions and tragic sufferings blunted his sense of humour as is shown in the following quotation from a letter to me in 1942 :

" With regard to Oscar Wilde's sonnets there are no really great ones only almost a dozen pretty good. One of the best is ' The Sin was mine, I did not understand/ which he told me was about me, but I subsequently discovered that he wrote it before he met me ! You know what I am about sonnets ! It is no use pretending, is it ? "

The second-rate, the ephemeral, have had their revenge on this great man for his outspokenness. Mr. G. B. Osborn sums the matter up: "There can be no doubt that his sonnets are as exquisite as any in the language, indeed we have no more complete master of the Petrarchan form. Yet they were never accepted by 'our grandmother *The Spectator*' during the long reign of the lesser Strachey. It is easy to understand why Douglas is excluded from the anthologies of contemporary verse which exist to glorify the ultra modern opponents of form. It was hardly to be expected that a fraternity of frogs rehearsing their 'brekekekex Koax Koax' in a pond, would admit a nightingale to their orgies of noise."

The Royal Society of Literature exists to honour and preserve what is great in our English poetry. I invite you to acclaim the work of Lord Alfred Douglas.

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GIFF EDMONDS MEMORIAL LECTURE.

This Lecture perpetuates the loved memory of Lieutenant Nicholas Gifford Edmonds, of the 2nd Black Watch, who was killed at Magersfontein, his first battle, December 11th, 1899. It was founded by his sister, Miss Sophia Edmonds, a member of this Society since 1919.

ON RE-READING MATTHEW ARNOLD.

BY THE HON. HAROLD NICOLSON, C.M.G., F.R.S.L.

[Read June 26th, 1946.]

(1)

WHY is it that Matthew Arnold, although not in the front rank of our English philosophers or poets, should to the modern mind be one of the most interesting of the Victorians? I can suggest two answers to that question. In the first place he provides us with an almost perfect example or exhibit of that conflict between character and environment with which our current curiosity is so much concerned. In the second place he strove throughout his life to explain, in terms of the nineteenth century, problems which only became acute or generally perceptible problems in the twentieth century. Thus, on the one hand, we flatter ourselves that our newly acquired acquaintance with the subconscious—an acquaintance which is perhaps too slight, too recent and too superficial to justify complacency—enables us to understand Matthew Arnold better than he understood himself. To the pleasure of investigation, to the joys of discovery, is added the delight of self-esteem. On the other hand, we are startled, and a trifle awed, to find that here at the very climax of liberal materialism was a man who refused to share the contemporary optimism, and who asked himself—confusedly perhaps, but with sincere insistence—whether the word "democracy" could rightfully be applied to a system which was based upon political, but not upon economic or social, liberty. Having explained the eccentricities of Arnold's temperament in terms of the subconscious, we are faced with the fact that he possessed a singularly conscious mind. Having defined him as a perfect specimen of Victorian self-deception, we find that the beam of his intelligence pierced the haze. Whereas, therefore, it is possible to explain Matthew Arnold; it is not possible to explain him away. And this, you will admit, is a most interesting experience.

The facts of his biography need not detain us ; they were monotonous. Born in 1822, he was the eldest of the nine children of Thomas Arnold of Rugby, who in a short but aggressive life managed to do permanent harm to the English system of education. After a none too brilliant career at Winchester and Balliol, Matthew Arnold travelled to Switzerland where, at the Hotel Bellevue at Thun, he met the French girl, Marguerite, with whom, for a very short time, he fell in love. He thereafter became Inspector of Schools and remained Inspector of Schools for thirty-five years. He married, held the chair of Professor of Poetry at Oxford, acquired considerable influence as a writer upon religious, literary and political subjects, delivered lectures in America, was granted a Civil List pension by Mr. Gladstone, and died from a heart attack at Liverpool in 1888. Viewed externally his life was that of an ordinary industrious, domestic and penurious Civil Servant. It is his inner developments and conflicts which arouse our interest.

In his boyhood and early manhood the conflict within him took the form of one between pressure and release, between the rigid and the flexible. The pressure, and it was powerful, was supplied by his father, Thomas Arnold. The influence which this dynamic zealot exercised upon the minds of the young has been described to us by many fervent pens. He inspired in his pupils a lasting and most disconcerting mood of "nervous priggishness." His muscular Christianity, his violent earnestness, created in his pupils and his sons an almost overwhelming sense of moral responsibility. The weaker natures among them collapsed under this premature burden. The stronger characters either survived undamaged, or reacted in terms of denying the serious. The effect of Thomas Arnold upon his eldest son was peculiar ; it was a dual effect. Externally, Matthew Arnold reacted to this pressure by adopting the posture of the dilettante, the dandy and the wag. He curled his hair, he scented his whiskers, he wore an eye-glass, he acquired expensive clothes ; he laughed uproariously, he made mock of the respectable, he so derided moral earnestness that there were moments when his contemporaries received the horrid impression that he was deriding morals themselves. Yet the internal effect of his father's pressure was durable and profound. "Through thee I believe," he wrote in *Rugby Chapel*, "in the noble and great who are gone." The "radiant vigour" of Thomas Arnold, the "fervent and heroic" quality within him, left upon his son the impress of an influence which was "zealous, beneficent, firm." It gave him that sense of personal responsibility, that sense of

mission and function, which at worst induced a strong didactic, almost paedagogic tendency, but which at best impelled him to instruct and enlighten his age. While reacting against moral earnestness, his whole mind was impregnated, in whatever it approached, with a belief in moral purpose. The inner seriousness of Matthew Arnold, his profound faith in the validity of virtue, was acquired, not in the Board of Education, certainly not in Switzerland; it derived from *Rugby Chapel*: it was the centre of his inner excellence and strength. It was to his father's precept and example that he owed his abiding sense of duty, his extreme intellectual honesty, and the somewhat contemptuous austerity of his personal standards.

On the other side was the element of release. In reacting against the violent rigidity of his father's doctrine he became more and more attracted by the flexible and the humane. His dislike of all tight and narrow dogma turned his mind to the more human letters and the more universal formulas. His hatred of exclusiveness in any form rendered him sympathetic to inclusiveness in any form. Whereas his muscular Christianity was strong enough to make him detest the flabby, his loathing of violence made him love the gentle, even when, as with the Du Guerins, Joubert or even Amiel—it was ineffective gentleness. Thus while he sneered at Keats' love letters and snarled at Shelley, he was profoundly influenced by Obermann. And above all the sterilizing and limiting results of his father's moral fanaticism led him to believe with Plato that the ideal man is the man of fully integrated personality and that true virtue consists, not merely in doctrinal or dogmatic austerity, but in the full expansion of every given quality of mind and soul.

The influences to which he succumbed in youth, and which remained dominant throughout his life, are illustrative of these reactions. There was Wordsworth, whom he met as a boy, who taught him that the vague and undefinable certainties of natural beauty provided more lasting intimations than any of the precise and combative certainties of periodic dogma. There was Goethe, whose "wide and luminous view of life" suggested an Olympian detachment from all current controversies and an integration of modern personality with all the virtues and the wisdoms of the past. There were the Greeks, and especially Homer, Epictetus and Sophocles, who provided him with the ideal of moral and intellectual symmetry as opposed to the unbalanced harshness of contemporary zeal. There was George Sand, who taught him that love, even human love, was more creative than any hatred.

There were people like the Du Guérins, Joubert and Sénancour, who taught him that detachment, even effortless detachment, was preferable to ardent pugnacity. He came to realize, as he studied the great contemporary writers of French prose, that intellectual integrity was an element at least as important to the integrated personality as theological orthodoxy. Ernest Benan taught him the value and beauty of free mental enquiry; and Sainte Beuve, whom he described as "one of my chief benefactors," taught him that the "sinuous, unpolemical, easy style" of French criticism was infinitely preferable to "the highly-charged, heavy-shot" style of traditional English criticism. It was Sainte Beuve who rendered him both inquisitive and urbane.

It is not surprising that Matthew Arnold, afflicted as he was by such a father, moulded as he had been by such reactions and influences, should have displayed to his contemporaries a seemingly diverse and contradictory appearance. Here was a muscular Christian, who regarded Keats' letters as "underbred and ignoble" who dismissed Shelley as "an ineffectual angel," and yet one who, at least in his younger years, was obviously much affected by the "poisonous honey" of French literature. Here was a man of the utmost gentleness, a man in whose presence, as J. D. Coleridge remarked, "envy and jealousy withered," who was yet capable of the most cruel sarcasm and the most wounding irony. Here was a teacher whose "sad lucidity of soul" rendered him both religious and sceptical, both emotional and philosophic. Here was a man who detested the Dissenters, yet did not seem to believe in established dogmas or even in a personal God. "Mr. Matthew Arnold," Gladstone remarked, "combines a sincere devotion to the Church with a faculty for presenting it in such a form as to render it recognizable neither by friend nor foe." Here was a liberal who derided liberalism, a believer in order who decried conservatism as "the barren optimistic sophistry of comfortable moles," a man who had deep sympathy with "the armies of the homeless and the unfed," yet one who spared no pain to voice his fear of the populace. Here assuredly was a child of the old learning lost in the complexity of the modern spirit; here, without question, was a soul—

"Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born."

Here was a man who denounced all bitterness, and put into currency the word "acridity," and yet one who attacked with venom the most sacred illusions of his own countrymen. Here

was a dandy who saw life " through a haze of gentility " and yet who attacked the very gentility which he sought to emulate. Here was a man of almost jaunty arrogance, a man who could dismiss the Shelley circle with the words " What a set! " and who preached continuously the virtues of " tone, bearing and dignity." Here was a poet of the utmost flippancy of manners, who yet wrote poetry of solemn self-depreciation. Here was a writer who advocated symmetry and yet whose own poems were not even metrical. Here was the apostle of enlightenment who could condemn Bishop Colenso ; here was a dissenter who stigmatized dissent. It is thus not surprising that his Contemporaries should have regarded Matthew Arnold as an eccentric phenomenon or that (being unable to question his sincerity of purpose, his complete intellectual integrity, his utter disinterestedness) they should have dismissed as " Matt's waggishness " the contradictions, the inconsistencies, the apparent paradoxes, which they failed to understand.

Yet we to-day, who do not hold their doctrines, who are not startled by his heresies, can re-read him with a new appreciation. We can see that he was seeking, with amazing foresight, to describe our modern problems in terms of his own century. And we can find, both in his poetry and in his critical and polemic writings, a gift of clarity, a beam of vision, which in that it sought to probe the future by illumining the present, helps us to discern some aspects of our own doubts and apprehensions reflected in the prophetic mirror of the past.

(2)

To those who wish to explore this curious subject in all its detail I recommend the book on Matthew Arnold which was written and published by Mr. Lionel Trilling in 1939. It is far more than a scholarly study of a single English writer; it is an exploration of the mind of an age. I should place this book in the very forefront of modern critical biography. It is from Mr. Trilling that I have learnt much of what I wish to say. It is from him, that is, that I have learnt how to disentangle what was incidental in Matthew Arnold's thought from what is permanent and applicable to-day. What, therefore, is valid to us to-day in Matthew Arnold's thought and poetry ?

I shall devote but little space to Matthew Arnold's religious opinions, since the controversies which he sought to mitigate, and sometimes to kindle, are now forgotten controversies. The

conflict of his age was one between science and religion, between knowledge and dogma. It was a conflict which bewildered Tennyson and drove Clough, and stronger men than Clough, into private spiritual torments. Arnold brought upon himself the vituperation both of the rationalists and of the champions of revealed religion, by implying that what mattered was the teaching of Christ and not his miracles. He believed that human experience proved that the Christian religion corresponded with certain spiritual facts and that these facts were impervious to all historical criticism. All men, for instance, were able to recognize and admire goodness and in so doing they admitted "God." To him religion was little more than the connection between imagination and conduct. It was philosophy touched with emotion. Without such emotion all knowledge was insignificant. He accepted the value of science, but he regarded it as subsidiary to the humanities. "It will," he wrote, "be *knowledge* only which they (the physical sciences) give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense of conduct, our sense of beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, for the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying."

A similar moral generalization colours and informs his view of politics. He believed that States could be saved only if their rulers strove to inculcate the true, the pure, the just, the elevated and the amiable. His favourite quotation was the Epistle to the Philippians, IV, 8: "A failure in justice," he said in America, "is a source of danger to States." Yet although his general approach to politics was thus a moral approach, his views on the nature and function of Democracy were more realistic, perhaps even more pessimistic. To his contemporaries these views appeared so startling and so sardonic that they strove to dismiss them as paradoxical; to us they are of real topical value, since they enable us to examine our modern perplexity from a different angle, and to reconsider our twentieth century problem in terms of the nineteenth.

Although calling himself a Liberal, or more precisely "a Liberal of the future," Matthew Arnold did not share the current liberal illusions regarding the inevitability of progress. He had slight faith in the perfectability of the masses and was in fact saddened by what he called "that poor, inattentive and immoral creature—man." "The world being as it is," he wrote, "we must surely expect the aims and doings of the majority of men to be at present very faulty." Yet this distrust of what he called

" the populace " was not due to any reactionary or class feeling. On the contrary, Matthew Arnold was in a sense a revolutionary socialist. He regarded the aim of civilization to be the " humanization of man in society." " With such inequality as ours," he wrote, " a perfect civilization is impossible." " Free political institutions," he wrote again, " will not guarantee the well-being of the toiling classes." He attacked the " metaphysical phantom of property," he was in favour of the distribution of wealth and the nationalization of land, he wished to abolish all titles and privilege. The only complaint he had to make of the French Revolution was that it had been too French ; almost openly he sympathized with the Paris Commune of 1871.

He was convinced, none the less, of " the hard doctrine of the unsoundness of the majority." Unless that unsoundness could be withstood, or diluted, then ruin would result. The only hope lay with the gifted minority or what he called "the remnant," and what we with Pareto would call " the elite." If this elite or remnant could be rendered sufficiently numerous, then " the lover of wisdom may come out from under his wall and the lover of goodness will not be alone among the wild beasts."

But from what section of society is the elite to be drawn ? It is here that Matthew Arnold is faced with his major predicament. Not from the aristocracy, certainly, who were to his mind " barbarians " and who had no conception of the true needs of the community. Not from the middle classes, who constituted " that great Philistine power " which he loathed. They, the middle classes, had become tainted with materialism ; they were " testy, absolute, ill-acquainted with foreign matters, a little ignoble, very dull to perceive when they are making themselves ridiculous." To him their self-satisfaction was " retarding and vulgarizing," their mental indolence was a product of their self-conceit. The philistines of the middle class had become the enemies of the children of light; they were, of all people, the most inaccessible to ideas and the most impatient of them; the word " curiosity " in their mouths had become almost a term of reproach. " The born lover of ideas," he wrote, " the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country that the sky overhead is of brass and iron." " Unless," he warned them, " your middle class becomes more intelligent, you will tell upon the world less and less, and end by being a second Holland."

If, therefore, the populace were too ignorant, the aristocracy too detached and the bourgeoisie too stupid to form an elite, of what, then, could Matthew Arnold's remnant be composed ?

The logical conclusion of his theory was a system under which a cultivated minority, governing with love and knowledge in the interests of the populace, should impose their will upon the unsound majority by force. Such a totalitarian or Hegelian conception of the State was undoubtedly in the background of Matthew Arnold's mind ; he believed even in the dangerous and fallacious doctrine of race and blood. To him, as to Plato, the ideal State would be one in which Philosopher Kings, or Balliol graduates, ruled oligarchically in the true interests of the organic community. This was a conclusion which he hesitated to avow ; he fell back, therefore, upon his formula of Culture and Anarchy. It is this formula which in the confused world of to-day is so suggestive.

Matthew Arnold foresaw and dreaded the class struggle. He believed that it could be avoided or mitigated only by the fusion of " the best self " in every class. Yet how could the leading individuals in each of the three classes be encouraged to respond to " the possible Socrates in their breasts ? " Only in a State which was guided and formed by Culture.

It is most important to realize that Matthew Arnold used the word " culture " not in the narrow and almost derogatory English sense, but rather in the German sense of an integration of spiritual and intellectual energy. To him culture was more than reason, since it contained an emotional element and implied an inward condition. It was more even than religion, since whereas religion aims at the cultivation of certain specific human powers, culture aims at the perfection of all human powers. He was conscious of a contrast between what he called " Hebraism," namely, the ascetic questioning of life, and what he called " Hellenism," namely, the joy of life created by personal integration. England, to his mind, had chosen the wrong path in adopting Hebraism, which is concerned mainly with obedience to a law of conduct, and in repudiating Hellenism which implies spontaneity of consciousness or " seing things as they are."

Only a Culture expansive and all-embracing, only a Culture providing " sweetness and light for as many as possible " could protect the State against the destructive violence of mechanical revolution. This material and mechanical violence he called " Jacobinism " and he contended that whereas Jacobinism ignored the moving current of history, Culture sought to navigate it. To him Jacobinism represented " a violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the

smallest details a rational society for the future." This, to his mind, constituted an outrage upon the organic nature of society ; to him, as to the Greeks, the word " Democracy " represented a balanced and constantly developing adjustment of interests ; it was Culture alone which could provide the community with a sense of its own organism.

The implicit conclusion which Matthew Arnold reaches is useful if idealistic. It amounts to this. No section of the community, even if it represents a majority, should govern in its own interests : the dictatorship of an élite of wise men ruling in the interests of the whole community is not a practical proposition; the only hope, therefore, of avoiding anarchy is to spread culture, or at least " sweet reasonableness," throughout the whole community.

(3)

I have dwelt at this length with Arnold's political theory, since it is through this that his main doctrine, the doctrine of " integration," can best be apprehended. The same theme inspires and dominates his critical and creative work. The essence of his poetry, as Trilling has well remarked, is " a plangent threnody for a lost wholeness and peace." Fundamentally Matthew Arnold had lost his faith in God as well as in nature ; as his own Empedocles he had also lost faith in his fellow men. But he never lost his faith in " man's unconquerable mind," and the ideal which always remained to him was that of a high Olympian intelligence in which reason and emotion were supremely blended. It was in great poetry that this fusion attained its highest expression and for this reason poetry would last eternally owing to " the instinct of self-preservation in humanity." " More and more," he wrote, " mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." The poet to him must be " euphuës "—namely the " finely touched and finely gifted man." But he must be more than that. He must possess, not sincerity only, but " sincereness " ; he must aim at a " high and rare excellence " ; he must aim at seriousness ; and he must be concerned with moral ideas. " A poetry," he wrote, " of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life ; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is of indifference towards life." And since poetry, to his mind, owed its power to " the refining and elevation wrought in us by the high and rare excellence of the great style " it was by adhering to the great style that the poet could give to his fellows that " model of grandeur " which they had lost.

How far did Matthew Arnold apply his principles to his practice? His poetry, without question, is serious, elevated and sincere. Yet it was the very consistency with which he applied his critical principles which robbed his poems of their popular appeal. His inspiration, it is said, is defective; his emotion is the emotion of the intellect only; his poetry is based upon some—

" hidden ground
Of thought and austerity within.*'

His constant endeavour to dilute imagination with reason, emotion with intellect, creates a tone of duality, of uncertainty, almost of hesitancy. One is conscious throughout of a certain caution, a certain reticence, a certain failure in spontaneity. One is conscious—and this consciousness interrupts communication between the poet and his audience—that his fastidious sincerity is a private sincerity; and as such blurs full expression. One is conscious that Matthew Arnold's feelings were always becoming entangled in his thoughts, and that his thoughts, although alert and active, obstructed any unity of impression. Again and again as one reads, or re-reads, Matthew Arnold is one reminded of his own famous stanzas from the 'Grande Chartreuse':

" Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride—
I come to shed them at their side."

He himself believed that his poetic diction was one of pellucid clearness. He aimed confessedly at producing "the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky." He believed in "regularity, uniformity, precision, balance"; he believed in "correctness." At times these his theories of the components of the great and grand style did in fact produce what is almost major poetry. Nothing in our literature exceeds the clarity of 'Sohrab and Rustom'; seldom has the English language been used with such exquisite simplicity as in 'Thyrsis' and 'The Scholar Gipsy.' Yet Matthew Arnold did not, in fact, possess a sensitive ear. Only a person gifted with a very delicate appreciation of the vowel sounds of English should attempt free verse; Arnold's many experiments in this medium are definitely ugly. His determination to eschew the luscious movement of Tennyson drove him all too often to write poems which have in fact no movement at all. His "correctness" becomes arid; his "elevation" detaches him from the atmosphere of ordinary

human feeling ; he becomes, even to the intellectual reader, frigidly remote.

He possessed, of course, what Leslie Stephen has called " the quality of adhesiveness," namely, a gift for coining lines and phrases which remain in the memory. In his prose work his trick of repetition, his didactic habit, is apt to become irritating. But again and again in his poems one comes across sudden phrases, phrases such as " the unplum'd, salt, estranging sea "—which instal themselves in the mind. There are few people to-day who could quote to you the whole of any of Arnold's poems ; at the same time there are few people to whom certain of his lines are not affectionately familiar.

Such criticisms are incidental. The true value of Matthew Arnold to-day is that he reminds us that divisions and dissensions (whether in poetry, in politics or in religion) are dangerous and debilitating ; and that the " wholeness " and integration which he preached, and the loss of which he so poignantly regretted, are the true aim and manifestation of the civilized community. In his prose homilies he sought to persuade his generation that the unifying element should be sought for in an expanding acceptance of " sweetness and light." His poems (in so far as they do not express self-commiseration at the severance between himself and his age) seek to " animate and enoble " his contemporaries with a glimpse of his own vision. Yet that vision was often clouded. It is when Arnold expresses his despair of finding any sweet reasonableness in the modern world that his poetry loses its stiffness and that he speaks with his most authentic voice. It is, then, as in the poem on Dover Beach, which to my mind is the most inspired poem he ever wrote, that we realize what a great poet Matthew Arnold (had he been a little less intelligent) might have been—

" The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar.

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true,

To one another ! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night."

LETTERS IN FRENCH BARBARY: A WAR DESPATCH, 1943.

BY JOHN GAWSWOETH, F.R.S.L.

(D616gu6-G6neral de la Soci6t6 des Ecrivains de l'Afrique do **Nord**)

[Read November 27th, 1946.]

I.

FROM a vantage-point on a high deck of the troopship, in the gathering dusk I peer at the long lithe coast before me and a verse begins to form in my mind. I pencil lines in my N.A.A.F.L note-book :

" So that is Africa, that umber rule
Dividing inner sea from outer sky . . . "

It is the second week of November, 1942, and we are entering Algiers' roadstead, a vessel of the Allied landings.

It was obvious that the occasion demanded that writing must, temporarily at least, give place in one's thoughts to the more pressing emergencies of War ; and yet, I reflected there would inevitably be hours of relaxation wherein the mind might be exercised, if books were chanced upon.

Gazing upon the fretted silhouette of Atlas mountain-poaks, I was already intimidated by my ignorance of the literature of this portion of a continent that rose before me promising me an unveiling of its mysteries and a novel knowledge to be acquired.

And so, as our First Army Campaign progressed and I was swept with it, either in our vanguard Spitfire Squadron, or temporarily detached, and came to know the towns of the *littoral*, ia my spare hours I began my quest for books and authors . . . in Algiers and Setif, in Djidjelli and Philippeville, in Bone and Qoastantine, in Souk-el-Arba, Souk-el-Khomis, and Le Kef.

A transfer to the Desert Air Force of the Eighth Army, changing my field to the Sahel, I continued my search . . . in Sfax and Sousse, in Kairouan and Enfidaville, in Hammamet and Nabeul, finally finding parcels of prizes on our entry into Tunis, where the German-Italian Commissioners had singularly, and

happily, failed to remove from the bookshops most significant modern evidences of indigenous French culture.

In these seven months preceding the victory, I had encountered more than a score of writers. Four distinguished poets—Jules Roy, Edmond Brua, Just Calveyrach and Albert Lentin, and three novelists—Arthur Pellegrin, Gustave le Bozec and Jean Turin—had been particularly helpful and informative, each providing me with pointers for my notes, addresses of fellow authors, and introductions to them should I chance to arrive in their vicinity.

During our advances, too, either in billet or in tent, I had made an examination of books by some three hundred North African writers publishing since 1830, rescuing their often water-logged, mud-fouled volumes from devastated and deserted villas, borrowing them from sympathetic *colons*, or purchasing them, a pack-load at a time, from the infrequently encountered book-seller.

Gradually my notes took some bibliographical shape and an impulsion came upon me. I hazardingly decided I would attempt to write a despatch from an Allied Front that possessed a literature practically unrecognized by the world and render it to a Society which, disproving the young Macaulay's unprophetic and malicious attack upon it, one may, nearly one-hundred-and-thirty years later, still regard as a bastion of English Letters.

My impulsion came upon me primarily, I confess, because I held the opinion that there were few of us who knew anything about the subject and, secondly, because it might be proper for us to consider it.

This despatch is not at all what I should have wished it to be. It is, alas, merely the result of such researches as one, on very mobile active service, could make ; but if a tithe of its disjunctions and rugosities are overlooked, and it is patiently remembered who is alone responsible for its pioneer findings, its composer will be most generously rewarded for his pains.

I reiterate the word "pains" ; for I must admit in the case of the birth of the pages that follow, there was absolutely no possibility of a Caesarean alleviation of the labour.

1 ii.

The Modern Literature of French North Africa. When we consider this phrase, before our insular eyes there may perhaps float a shimmering mirage, certainly no clear-cut image. The vision may be soberly penny-plain, and we will think of occasional

writings of "Don Roberto," Mr. Norman Douglas or Mr. P. Wyndham Lewis. Or, more probably, it will be twopence-coloured and, with the *bravura* of the march from 'L'Arlesienne' or the lilt of an air from 'The Desert Song' in our ears, we will recall the flamboyant Africa evoked by the fictions of 'Ouida,' the late Major Wren, Miss Hull or Mr. Hichens. Or, again, if we are film-minded, in memory we will mount the interminable Kasbah steps of Algiers to find' Pepe le Moko 'photographically portrayed by either M. Gabin or M. Boyer. And, then, of course, the mirage will fade ; for we know well that these are no more evidences of the true literature of North Africa than are the more excellent writings of those enthusiastic French visitors—Dumas *pere*, Fromentin, St. Arnaud, Feydeau, Flaubert, Cherbuliez, Loti, de Maupassant, Geniaux, Myriam Harry, Duhamel and Gide, who are learned, who extol, who have unique and various values, but who are not of the African soil, are not possessed of *I'dme Maghrebine*.

To-day, Mogreb comprises the three French-administered territories of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

In 1830, the city of Algiers was taken from the Turks, the remainder of the province capitulating to the French by 18-47, when Algeria received the status of a Colony, a status that later was raised to that of a Department of France.

In 1881, Tunisia came under French protection, while it *preserved* the hereditary line of its Beylical family.

Morocco, with its Sultan, followed suit in 1912 ; its utter pacification being considered complete in 1925.

It is necessary to bear these facts in mind when reviewing the literature produced since the French occupation of North Africa, for the literary output of each territory would seem to be almost exactly in ratio between the number of years of its colonization and its actual geographical size.

One hundred and fifteen years of French influence in Algeria, the largest territory, has produced almost three times as much writing of value as sixty-three years have done in Tunisia, the smallest. Morocco, as yet, in thirty-two years—thirteen of them spent in internal warfare—has hardly become culturally active : which might well indicate that France's civilizing powers burgeon most gloriously in peace.

Nevertheless, fine literature has always been a heritage of Mogreb since the days of Terence, Apuleius, Manilius, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine and Ibn Khaldoun ; and, though no

work remains to testify to the literature of Carthage, we possess 'The Golden Asse,' 'The Confessions' and 'The City of God,' and 'The Book of Examples,' Latin, Christian and Arab masterpieces to bear witness to ancient Barbary to all ensuing centuries.

To these great works I would now add, tentatively, as distinguished modern French North African books, four volumes of prose and two of poetry. I refer to 'Cagayous,' issued by Auguste Eobinet under the pseudonym "Musette," to 'Pèpète le Bien-Auni' by Louis Bertrand of the French Academy, to 'Notes de Boute' by Isabelle Eberhardt, to 'Chroniques de l'Oued Melhouf,' published by le Pere Robin under the pseudonym "Stephen Chaseray," to 'Le Jardin des Dieux,' poems by Edmond Gojon, and to 'Les Poemes d'un Maudit' by Marius Scalesi. The first five books by Algerians, the last by a Tunisian, they are all undisputed *chefs d'oeuvre* of the first flowering of the imaginative French spirit, warmed and blossoming under the African sun.

Not unnaturally after the conquest of Algiers, the first books punished by the French were not tentative works of imagination, but concerned the history of their campaign, archaeological discoveries and the variance between occidental and oriental life. Even travel-books, descriptive essays, and fiction paid tribute to the Occupation, volumes of a propaganda value ever obtaining publication precedence ; for while Mogreb was in the melting-pot, the colonists disturbed by Berber risings in Kabylie in 1871, in Khroumerie in March, 1881, and at Sfax in June of the same year, its publications in the French language could not be other than of the surface, brilliant and colourful perhaps, but superficial nonetheless.

Algeria, the largest subdued territory, was the first to proffer a flower sprung from the conquered earth, the initial of my six selections, 'Cagayous,' a fictional work issued in 1894 by Auguste Eobinet under his pseudonym, "Musette."

"'Cagayous' le voyou Algerien & la langue composite et truculente est le seul livre de litterature coloniale originaire," Pierre Mille announced in France. "Sette oeuvre marque une date dans le mouvement littéraire Nord Africain," Arthur Pellegrin proclaimed in Tunis.

The speech of 'Cagaydus' was the decadent cosmopolitan speech of France's Barbary-coast territories and, with its acceptance, the first barrier against the production of a virile new literature had been swept away. Sabir, the language of the Mogreb sea-board, a mixture of French, Italian, Spanish, Maltese and Corsican, had been admitted into letters. The realists and

the close-observers of prevailing manners and customs were emancipated and could now proceed untrammelled by the niceties of purist French. "Musette" had acquired them as elastic a linguistic freedom as ever Mr. Joyce acquired for his contemporaries. Indeed, M. Robinet founded something of a School, for, in the next thirty years Arthur Pellegrin, appreciator of 'Cagayous,' created his delicious Tunis urchin, 'Ragabouche,' generally considered as likely to remain his most representative work, Edmond Martin his 'Sabirs de Kaddour Ben Nitram,' and Edmond Brua his inimitable 'Fables Bonoises,' books that have been widely popular far beyond their native localities.

Indeed, with 'Cagayous' an interim folk-lore speech of Mogreb had been regarded, mastered, and perpetuated.

There were two further problems, however, that faced the pioneers of North African regionalism. There was the necessary proper introduction into literature of the Neo-Latins, those frequently passionately anti-Semitic colonists who had built "l'Alger moderne" and, despite the jealousies and tyrannies of the administration then governing them, were attempting to build a second European coast on Africa's shores. And there was also the expression of a proper understanding of the Berber and Arab to be achieved.

Louis Bertrand, ancien professeur au Lycée d'Alger, elected to the French Academy in 1924, essayed the former task in the novels of his youth, 'Le Sang des Races' (1899), 'La Cina' (1901), and in, perhaps his greatest book, 'Pepete le Bien-Aimé' (1904); while four fellow Algerians, namely, "Stephen Chaseray" in his 'Chroniques de l'Oued Melhouf' (a book which Charles G^niaux declared merited wide celebrity), the poets Louis Lecoq and Charles Hagel in their collaborated 'Broumitche et le Kabyle,' and Robert Randau in his 'Cassard-le-Berberie' attempted the latter experiment, that of giving honest expression to the psychology of the original inhabitants of the conquered terrain.

Thus far the indigenous literature had mainly concerned the *littoral*. It remained for "La Grande Nomade," "L'Errante" Isabelle Eberhardt to unlock the gates to the veiled Sahara, and perhaps the greatest prose inspired by Algeria is hers. A sister-in-experience to our Lady Hester Stanhope and Gertrude Bell, and to Freya Stark, this young Russian musulmane arrived in Algeria in 1897 at the age of twenty. Living with the nomads the retired life of the *Zaou'ias*, she was killed tragically in 1904 in the floods at Ain Sefra, her salvaged and dried manuscripts, edited by Victor Barrucand and Rene-Louis Doyon, all appear-

ing posthumously : ' A l'Ombre Chaud de l'Islam ' in 1906, the superb ' Notes de Route ' in 1908, ' Pages d'Islam ' in 1920, and ' Mes Journaliers ' in 1923.

But, as the spirit of a country and the soul of its people are nearly always the conquered provinces of the national poet, greatly attained by him and intimately inwoven into the very fibre of his verse, the major portion of the paragraphs that follow must be given as their right to the lives and works of Edmond Gojon of Algeria and Marius Scalesi of Tunisia, the greatest poets in the French tongue that Mogreb has yet produced.

Certainly, with both dead in exile and buried far from the African earth they loved, their humble and aspiring lives provide a more interesting theme than does an effort to compress a volume of critical bibliography into a reading of an hour, an infliction I am attempting to avoid.

I would recount first the history of Edmond Gojon.

III.

The year is 1911. In the company of the Princess Edmond de Polignac, whom he is instructing in literature, a young poet of twenty-six is staying in a cottage near London, composing his poem-cycle ' La Grenade,' with which he is to gain, the next year, the Archeon-Desperouse prize of the French Academy, a prize won formerly, at the same age, by his *maitre*, Henri de Regnier.

He is writing--

" au milieu des roses du cottage,"

this troubadour, with a scarlet stock adorned with a Louis-d'or pin, his wide-brimmed felt hat crushed down on his brown curls, his ample cloak obscuring his slender body. His friend and fellow Algerian, the poet Albert Tustes, provides a vignette : "Il est romantique d'allure, Parnassian de forme, et doux de caractère."

There are English themes at this moment in Edmond Gojon's mind. He is far from insensible to his rustic surroundings ; and he is very much in love. Two years before he had met Mile. Rose in Montmartre ; a year since, he has declared his passion, and now Rose is with her parents—in London! Within three years they will be wed.

There are notes for poems upon his garden-table in the rose-arbour. Looking over his shoulder, lines for the English cycle in ' La Grenade ' may be glimpsed—

" O beau cottage ancre comme un vaisseau de roses "

and—

" O maison sans volets, douce maison anglaise,"

and, again—

" O Londres, rose et grise."

He is in happier case, this young exquisite in the sunlit scented English garden, than was Verlaine, tutoring at Bournemouth or lodging in Howland Street, Tottenham Court Road.

In seven years he has laid the foundations of a reputation, counts among his friends and acquaintances Henri de R6gnier, Anna de Noailles, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Paul-Jean Toulet, Francis Carco, Claude Farrere, Jean Marc Bernard and Tristan Dereme, and has lately been presented with Le Prix des Quarante-Cinq by Catulle Mendès for an unpublished manuscript of verse, 'Le Visage Penche,' which de R6gnier finds " èmotif et sentimental."

And his English visit is fated to be the turning-point in his career. As Kipling, writing in India in his youth, found his public in England, so Edmond Gojon, future Poet of the French Empire, momentarily writing in England, is about to discover his appreciators in France. Within nine years he is destined to receive the Prix Femina-Heureuse for his 'Le Jardin des Dieux' ; and, within eighteen years, Le Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique du Nord.

His pupil and patron, the Princess Edmond de Polignac is not unimpressed by him and his anglophilia. Indeed, I like to fancy that perhaps it was he who suggested to her the founding of the de Polignac Prize that was given through this Society the next year, a prize that honoured our then emerging poets, Walter de la Mare, James Stephens and Ralph Hodgson.

Gojon's path is smoothing in this year, 1911 : advancement and fame lie ahead. But he has had to struggle. He was not born to the *salons* of Princes or to the *fauleuils* of Academies. He is an African of France, and with almost the elegance of a Catullus or of a Propertius, he is claiming Mogreb as his province as imperially and imperiously as any Caesar.

" O mon pays tigre, pareil à la panthère.
Sous le rayonnement de tes rayures d'or,
Je sais bien à présent quelle couleur la terre
A des tours de Négrine, aux grottes de Nador,"

he declares in 'Le Jardin des Dieux' ; and, again, in that volume:

" Ma terre, il faut vraiment l'extase des dieux mornes
D'ivresse solaire hébétés,
Pour oser affronter le silence sans bornes
De ta stérile immensité."

But of his "sterile immensity," Gojon knew next to nothing. The Algeria of the Bedouins was a closed book to him, and it remained so. He is the poet of the Mauritanian *littoral*, and of the mountains, of "l'harmonie sereine des rivages." His domains stopped short at the Sahara edge, at the point where Isabelle Eberhardt's wastes began.

Edmond Gojon, born in Philippeville, the third port of Algeria, on April 11th, 1886, was the son of poor, working parents.

His father, Joseph Gojon, originally of Sainte Genie d'Aoste, Savoy, at the time of the poet's birth, was the sergeant-gate-keeper of Philippeville Military Hospital, married to an Algerian, Mile. Jaubertie.

Four years later, in 1889, the family left Algeria for France, where it remained until 1901. Its first home in the 'Metropole' was the Military Hospital at Perpignan, where it dwelt till 1893, Edmond attending his first school, le College St. Louis de Gonzague. Then followed seven years at Amelie-les-Bains and six months in Val-de-Grace, Paris, where the boy's schooling progressed at the College de la rue des Petits Champs.

The shoots have appeared, the time is opportune for transplanting to the warmth of the sun.

To Algiers, to the Hospital of the Dey, Joseph Gojon and his family proceed one March day in 1901.

Edmond is enchanted:

"Et devant la splendeur des nuits magiciennes
J'entendrai Sophonisbe au-dessus des remparts
Meier sou cri royal a l'aboiement des hyenes."

he writes later in 'Le Jardin des Dieux.'

From the College de Notre Dame D'Afrique he soon proceeds to the Grand Lyce d'Alger, where he secures his Certificate. It would almost appear an happy omen that this school then contained two French Academicians-to-be, Louis Bertrand and youthful Pierre Benoit. And he is soon fortunate also, this lad of seventeen, this *élève de rhétorique*, in the enthusiastic support of the Algerian press, *La Depeche Algerwne*, *La Voix des Jeunes* and *Annales Africaines*, which print the first products of his pen ; Ernest Mallebay of the last journal, indeed, electing him his Secretaire de Redaction.

In 1904 Gojon publishes his first book, 'Antiquailles Dorées.' It is Parnassian and dedicated to, and greatly influenced by H6r6dia, who died the next year. But though he has begun well,

the position is not wholly satisfactory. He desires to complete his education at the Sorbonne and, like many a young poet before him, to "commence author" in the capital.

With these ends in view, in October, 1907, he returned to France, where he was destined to remain for three struggling years. 1907 saw the appearance of his second book, 'Cendres de l'Urne,' offered in the Preface to Henri de Règnier, with a reference also to Hèredia :

" Fidele a ta memoire, O maitre harmonieux,
Je degrossis, j'egrise et je pollis encore
Le nocturne granit de cette urne sonore
Qui lourne avec ses Hois, ses heros at ses Dieux."

In his verse, Gojon is far from immediate realities. Resolutely rejecting the narcotic of the Orient which Africa has proffered him, and will again, he attaches himself to the Greek ideal. Soon, with the classicism that such an attachment demands, and with a neo-romanticism that evokes reminiscences of the pictorial art of Delacroix, he will set himself to translate lyrically the urgent African scene. But the moment is not yet.

From 1908 until 1910, the poet was "surveillant à l'Institut National des Sourds-Muets," until rescued by the Princess de Polignac, an admirer of his two volumes of verse and his contributions to young Jean Cocteau's new review.

Gojon's English visit at an end, 'La Grenade' was published, dedicated to his betrothed. The poet's style had changed and strengthened:

" O lumineuse orange, 6 grenade allumée,
Beaux fruits de mon pays
Qui laissez a la fois la bouche parfumee
Et les yeux 6blouis,"

he sings; and, further, "avec le délire enivré des premières luxures ":

" J'aurai fait mon voyage au fond des chevelures,
Aliene, fauve, indompté,
Avec les cris et les clameurs et les allures
Farouches de la Volupté."

In poems, in 'La Grenade,' such as 'Lesbos,' 'Hermaphrodite/' 'La Captive Sirene' and 'Le Lethè,' Gojon attained a peak of his poetic execution.

Returned to Paris, in 1912, the poet found congenial employment, acting as secretary to Georges Lecomte, President de la

Société des Gens de Lettres. With his marriage to Rose in view, Gojon was economizing painfully. In May, 1914, they were married ; and, then, three months later, like a thunderclap, came the Great War. As the young husband was an Algerian, it was necessary for him to go back to Africa and report for service in Algiers. He returned there immediately, and was rejected by the authorities. He had insufficient weight for full military acceptance.

The sword denied him, there remained the pen. But how was he to use it ? 1915 saw him pay two brief visits to Paris, in January and November, and travel in Southern Algeria in August ; and then, from February, 1916, until January, 1917, he served as one of the Press Delegates of the Governor-General of Algeria, when he was transferred as Administrateur Delegate de la Bibliothèque Nationale, an employment he held until December, 1919, when he became editor of *L'Afrique du Nord Illustrée*.

He did not escape uniformed war service utterly, however ; for three months in 1917 he was a " cannonier auxiliaire a la caserne d'artillerie des Portes du Sahel," at Algiers, until demobilized by " une circulaire Clemenceau."

The war years had been greatly formative, Gojon in 1919 was at the height of his literary powers.

The manuscript of ' *Le Jardin des Dieux*,' over which he had toiled in the Palais d'été in Algiers—later the scene of Admiral Darlan's assassination—confirmed his reputation, on its publication the next year, with *Le Prix Femina-Heureuse*.

" Gojon ? Qui-est-ce ? " literary Paris asked in the *salon* of Mme. Fernand Gregh.

" Un petit Algerien retourne en Afrique," she replied. But that Gojon was not so little, Henri de Regnier was quick to attest in ' *Le Figaro*,' where he selected him as the most gifted representative of one land and one race. Gojon, in ' *Le Jardin des Dieux*,' had attained " la plus parfaite expression Africaine," de Regnier declared.

Furthermore, the poet had reached calm waters, and France was not unmindful of him. He was summoned to Paris in June, 1921, to the Office of the Algerian Government as an *attaché* charged with Press Relations and the Tourist Traffic. It was an ideal employment, and he performed his duties conscientiously and well until his unhappy death in March, 1935.

With sufficient leisure and no material worries, in six years Gojon produced five volumes : ' *En Algerie avec La France* ' (1927) ; ' *La Légende de Barberousse* ' (1929), awarded the *Prix*

Artigue of the French Academy, a work of orientalism more living and exact than Flaubert's 'Salamambo' it has been claimed; 'Cent ans d'effort français en Algerie': 'Boufarik' (1930); 'Le Marchand de Nuages' (1931); and a volume of images in exquisite prose, worthy to stand beside Louys' immortal 'Aphrodite,' 'L'Empire de Ceres' (1933).

It would almost seem as if Gojon was impelled to write, as if he sensed his end. The tragedy of his early death is only now fully realized. A fall on a Paris tramway platform delivered him, in the winter of 1934-1935, to the Laennec Hospital. Soon the symptoms of general paralysis appeared. With fortitude he met his calamity, writing on the band of a journal, on the last day he had the power to hold a pen: "Lorsque mon corps glissera dans les tombes, O Seigneur, donnez a mon ame pour monter plus vite vers vous la rapidite du faucon."

Towards six o'clock in the morning of March 30th, 1935, he died.

In a far cemetery, in the neighbourhood of Thiais, under the veiled sky of the Isle de France, among forgotten humble graves, lies the great "nostalgique de l'azur."

His friend Lecomte provides a fitting epitaph: "Sans contestation possible, Cojon a etc la plus haute expression poetique de l'Afrique du Nord, l'ecrivain le plus complet, le propagandiste le plus resolu et le plus enflamme de notre Empire d'outre-mer."

It is for England now to recall his passage through her streets and gardens and to remember his poems in her honour.

IV.

It is the afternoon of May 16th, 1943, nine days after the Allies have entered Tunis; in the cobwebbed basement smoking-room of the "Marsaletta" tavern in the lane "des charcutiers" in that capital, I am sitting sipping muscat and talking of poets with M. Arthur Pellegrin. We are sitting at the table at which Tunisia's national poet, Marius Scalesi, sat with my companion twenty-two years before. Outside, the pedestrian traffic of this quarter of the old Arab town, above the new French city, passes as then. And we are discussing the same poets. Particularly where literature is concerned, I reflect, Time is merely relative.

My companion is silent, his *petit verre* slowly turning between his thumb and forefinger, as he collects his thoughts. Suddenly he embarks upon his subject:

One day in the late autumn of 1921, one of Marius Scatesi's brothers came to see me.

"Marius has been in the Garibaldi Hospital for three days. He is ill—in the head," he said.

Marius ScaMsi mad ! The news shocked and grieved me more than I can say. I was aware that my old friend had been depressed, perhaps more than usually depressed, though his was always a sad nature, given more to melancholy by reason of his infirmities—he was a hunchback and tubercular—than by his unenviable conditions of life. His physical misery affected him far more strongly than his life-long material want, which he now, in his thirtieth year, hardly remarked, so usual it was.

The week before we had spent an half-hour down here ; yes, at this very table. In spite of his habitual pessimism Marius was usually an interesting conversationalist. But I remembered now, receiving his brother's news, that, at this last meeting, I had found his train of thought a little confusing, if not confused.

At the time, I had attributed this lack of clarity to the potency of the wine we were drinking, since he had tossed two glasses off and had probably not eaten.

He spoke volubly. Some phrases made me uneasy; they were so unlike him, who in character was so essentially simple and retiring.

"In town, they're all talking about me just now. I have enemies everywhere. Tell me, what are they saying ?" he enquired.

This vault-bar, where we are now sitting, became light at that moment, I remember. The thick spiders' webs by that grimed fanlight glittered silver and, as he ceased speaking, a sunbeam caught his lean face. I saw a strange and unusual light in his eyes. A light of drunkenness ? Or of madness ?

It had been that of madness.

Marius Scatesi was mad.

The next afternoon I went to the Italian Hospital. A nun led me through long corridors to the poet's little room. She opened the door, said "He is in there," and went out quietly.

"He is in there !" In a corner of the cell, the walls of which were padded with red American-cloth, Marius Scal6si was perched on a low stool, its grimy varnish glittering between his crooked legs.

Without troubling to rise, he turned his pale, aquiline, unshaven face towards me. His eyes, which had the fixity of those of a bird of prey, regarded me mistrustfully

The room being in semi-darkness, but little daylight filtering through the skylight in the roof, at first he could not recognize me. I held my hand out to him.

" Good afternoon, Marius. How are you getting on ? " I asked.

" Ah, it's you, is it ? You don't forget your friends."

He stood up on his bent legs, and, without a further word, walked round his prison. Sitting down once more, he murmured :

" An odd situation, eh ? " He passed his fingers through his uncombed, thick, black hair. " Me, here, like a convict or some accursed . . ."

He laughed harshly, then recovered himself.

" I'm without a cigarette, old fellow. They want to send me completely mad."

I handed him the packet I had brought for him, and he lit a cigarette and smoked it with evident satisfaction.

Leaning back against the padded wall, since there was no seat for visitors, I watched my unfortunate friend's expressions, for his countenance, glances and gestures showed the disorder of his mind far more pointedly than did his words. A vertical furrow scored his flat forehead and his ears occasionally twitched nervously beneath his matted hair.

From time to time, he muttered dejectedly. I attempted to console him, holding out the hope of an early recovery. He listened to me without interruption ; but, after a minute or two, I noticed that his arms and legs were trembling and that his glances were becoming fiercer and more intense.

Suddenly alarming thoughts flashed through my mind: " Marius is mad. A crisis is due. He will throw himself upon me and attempt to strangle me. We are alone."

He read my thoughts with that intuition given to the mad and, locking his hands on his knees, said :

" You have nothing to fear. It's an attack of fever. Tuberculosis eats into my bones."

I was almost ashamed to have feared and doubted my friend ; and I sought again to cheer him by saying :

" You will transmute this trial in a poem and your suffering will pass transfigured to remain a joy."

He smiled naively :

" Verse. I have written verse. It is odd, but I have been a poet."

There was a discreet knock on the door. It opened and the nun entered, carrying the poet's evening meal—a bowl of soup. It was time to go.

I shook hands, and promised Marius to return on the following Sunday. I never saw him again. For, on the following Wednesday, the hospital authorities, without informing anyone, shipped him to Palermo, where they placed him in a lunatic asylum.

Five months later, we learned of the unhappy man's death on March 13th, 1922.

We heard later that his body had been thrown into a communal grave. It was as if the Gods wished to crown with horror his tragic destiny.

As M. Pellegrin concluded his terrible and instructive reminiscence, it appeared obvious that here, in the person of Tunisia's greatest French-writing poet, there was another elected to the company of the world's truly accursed masters of verse, that Scalesi was akin to the phthisis-slain Keats and Dowson, to the insane Smart, Cowper, Clare, and de Nerval, to the wretched Beddoes, Mangan, Poe, John Davidson and Richard Middleton, to the dead-young Dermody, Kirke White, Shelley and Lionel Johnson, and to the graveless Chatterton. Scalesi was also akin to Richard Middleton in that he, too, had not managed to issue a volume while alive, the first publication of his ' *Les Poemes d'un Maudit*' being a posthumous piety of his friend Pellegrin who, not content solely with that loyal testimony, on January 29th, 1937, under the patronage of the Resident-General of Tunisia and in the presence of the poet's beloved mother, high Government officials and the Regency's most eminent men of letters, unveiled a plaque on his *confrere's* modest birthplace, before the company adjourned to the Municipal Theatre for further commemorative ceremonies.

And this little " Ragabouche " of a Marius Scalesi, who had run without shoes and with an empty stomach in and out, in and out, of this humble doorway now honoured with a marble bearing his name and fame, until at five years of age meningitis bent his legs and, his spine fractured by a fall, his head became buried in his shoulders, who, and what, had he been ?

Born on February 6th, 1892, at 31 rue Bab Souika, Tunis, Marius Scalesi, a sixth son, came of mixed parentage, his father being a Sicilian tramway-worker of Syracuse, his mother a Maltese road-sweeper.

Italian-speaking as a child, it was not until, deformed and embittered, he began his schooling at an *ecole primaire frangaise* that his language and his destiny were revealed to him.

And with the years his bitterness increased. His famous line—

" ame contre son corps sanglotant l'anathème,"

it has been said, is the touchstone of his genius, and from it his pitiable drama may be sensed.

Frequently hungry, ragged, shoeless, his early comforters were his mother and the volumes of de Vigny, de Lisle, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Rimbaud that, untroubled and oblivious, he read in the National Public Library in the Souk el Attarine, a library he afterwards immortalized in a poem.

A revealing picture of his youth is glimpsed in the last three stanzas of a minor verse, entitled ' Révolte ':

" Ni pain, ni feu. La vie est sombre.
Je me résigne a l'execrer.
J'ecouto des enfanta dans l'ombre
Pleurer.

" Alors, ma soeur la plus petite,
Face emacioe aux yeux doux,
Me dit: ' J'ai la pour toi, prends vite,
Deux sous.'

" ' Que faut-il t'acheter, grand frero,'
Ajouta son timbre calm,
' Veux-tu du pain ? '—Non, mais un verre
De vin."

His pain is evident in everything he writes : in ' L'Epopée du Pauvre,' in ' Les Mains,' in ' Lapidation.' But it is in his supreme ' De Profundis ' that he is particularly self-revealing :

" Je ne puis que jeter, du profond de l'abîme,
Le sanglot jusqu'ici comprimé dans mon cœur,
Vers le Seigneur lointain dont je suis la victime,
Vers Dieu qui me choisit pour chanter sa gloire."

And again :

" Sevré de tout cela, dont la terreur s'enivre,
Las de voir les printemps mauvais s'épanouir,
J'existe cependant, mais j'existe sans vivre :
Je suis le trépassé qui veille pour souffrir."

In a sacrilegious sonnet, ' Communion,' which is not to be found in ' Les Poèmes d'un Maudit,' but which should be preserved nevertheless, his agony is even more painfully vocal:

"Autrefois, autrefois, mon âme en un soupir
Volait jusqu'à tes pieds t'offrir ses fleurs vaines.
Seigneur ! J'avais la foi des âmes primitives
Et je te pensais bon, ô Dieu qui laisses souffrir.

"Judas, en te vendant, t'apprit l'art de trahir,
 Ton beau ciel, ton soleil et tes douceurs fictives
 Nous rendent son baiser du jardin des olives . . .
 Je crois encore en toi: j'ai besoin de hair.

"Envie par Marie et sa cour sèraphique,
 A la table où l'on sert le pain eucharistique,
 Je t'attendrai, sournoisement agenouille.

"Ma bouche recevra l'hostie au teint de neige,
 Et dut ton sang rougir cet instant sacrilege,
 Mes dents broiront ton corps comme tu m'as broyé."

That is strongly put; but the validity of Scalesi's misery and the sincerity of its expression may not be questioned. A contemporary Tunisian critic, Camille Begue, who sees him as "un prophète d'aubes étincelantes de clarté," would explain his greatness thus: "Il est un grand poète parce qu'il a fremit à l'appel *dps* forces primitives qui entraînent la conscience humaine et parce qu'il les a animées de sa chair et de son sang en révolte contre les meurtrissures. . . . A tous il apporte non pas un leçon d'indifférence ou de résignation, mais un message de lutte; à tous il enseigne la volonté de puissance dans la justice."

Certainly, there was a core of essential bravery in Scalesi's character, for his life was an unbearable burden to him. Indeed, in a poem addressed to his mother, he admits it was only the thought of the grief that his death would cause her that restrained him from throwing himself on the live-wires of an electric train. His surviving friends, too, all bear witness to the fact that the seat of his masochistic introversion was not easily reached, or his mind easily consoled. And loyal friends he had. Apart from Pellegrin he admitted into such intimacy as he would suffer the minor poets Ferdinand Huard, "Rene Rochevillars," Henri Nicolas and the poet-novelist Maximilienne Heller. But, from them, a little sympathy and understanding were all that, in his pride, he would accept.

He dreamed of a Laura, but convinced himself that his deformity forbade his entrance to all tourneys of love. If he risked a rebuff as cruel as that which Pope received, it is not recorded. He states his amatory position clearly:

. "Je suis le sultan du s'rail des mortes."

And so, in his dreams, he remained.

A series of minor accounts-clerkships in Tunis business-houses served to gain him his bread and to assist his family. But often he was out of work to the extent of starving, it is now thought.

One fact, however, brightened his last years—the publication of his work in Pellegrin's first journal, *Soleil*, and the regular appearance between 1915 and 1921 of his poems and criticism in *La Tunisie Illustrée*, the chief source from which his manuscript 'Les Poèmes d'un Maudit' was enlarged after his death.

To Frédéric Wèber, the master-printer who conducted this regretted journal, a great share in the credit of founding Scal6si's reputation must be given, as well as gratitude to him for at one time employing the crippled "Scarron of Tunisia" as that "Ministre des Muses," Armand Guibert, has named him.

De Nerval . . . Scalesi: history is repeated strangely in diverse places. It is a far cry from la rue de la vieille Lanterne to the Sicilian madhouse. Yet Scalesi speaks for all "les maudits":

"Contrairemeiit au Christ, le sauveur ineffable,
Qui naquit dans l'étable et mourut sur la Croix,
Je suis nè sur la croix, et je meurs dans l'étable,
Ou les cris du bétail étoufferont ma voix."

V.

The Literature of French North Africa is obviously an extremely wide subject, one which demands a comprehensive volume of critical bibliography at the least, and one which in fact, even in Mogreb, still lacks such a work.

I declared earlier that I would attempt to avoid the infliction of bibliographical catalogues. To that end I have provided at the outset two dollops of biographical jam—unsweetened quince these sketches of two poets' lives may have appeared—but I must follow them now with a bolus. For it may well be that I have erred, and will now be found wanting for having decided to focus particular attention on two poets and four prose-writers merely, though after much reflection I held them not only to be the 'est, but also the most representative of their place and time.

Most critics are extremely fallible, and the enthusiastic amateur pioneer is probably the most fallible' of all. It is clear that mention must be made of other significant work produced in French Barbary during the last half century, if the vista of the subject is in any way to be considered complete. I ask, then, both for patience and indulgence while I treat, as briefly as I may, of the other indigenous writers in French whose books have brought the modern literature of Mogreb to its present position,

after planting its roots firmly and loosing a Gallic fragrance upon the African air.

Unique volumes of scholarship, novels of more than competence, and poetry of an unexpectedly high order have been published in France's three North African territories in the last fifty years, but since the individual literary rivalry of each region has resulted, since the 1914-1918 war, in schisms between Societies of Writers—National Prizes being founded in competition—and not a few hard words and harsh articles, the writer who would assess them must tread as delicately as Agag. Indeed, it is the course of wisdom to examine the products of each territory separately.

Who, then has Algeria produced beyond "Musette," Louis Bertrand, Isabelle Eberhardt, "Stephen Chaseray" and Edmond Gojon?

I would say, in science and learning, five great *savants* at least: Emile Maupas, world-reputed biologist; Stéphane Gsell, author of the formidable eight-volume 'Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord'; William Marçais, eminent linguist and the philologist of 'Les Textes Arabes de Takrouna'; Augustin Bernard, geographer of 'L'Algérie', recipient of Le Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Algérie in 1930; and Emile-Felix Gautier, explorer-author of 'Le Sahara,' "erudit si peu banal, malin comme une forêt de singes, qui possède le métier d'un géographe, la curiosité d'un historien et la fantaisie d'un essayiste," as Charles-André Julien rightly claims.

In fiction Algeria has been even more prolific; at the very least there are thirteen novelists of more than competence to be considered, nine of them already worthy recipients of the Algerian Grand Prix Littéraire.

To name them: They are Ferdinand Duchene of 'Aux Pas Lents des Caravanes'; Robert Bandau of 'Cassard-le-Berberé/' "vieux vagabond des tropiques, d'un style tumultueux, le romancier Algérien le plus authentique peut-être"; Magali-Boisnard of 'L'Alerte au Desert,' "romancière du Sahara"; Maximilienne Heller of 'La Mer Rouge,' "styliste de premier ordre, musicienne du silence, hantée du rythme et du chant intérieur"; Jeanne Faure-Sardet of 'Deux Femmes' and Marie Bugeja of 'Nos Soeurs Musulmanes' feminists of Moslem; Albert Truphémus of 'L'Hotel du Sersou,' novelist of the people; Laurent Ropa of 'Le Chant de la Noria', Bonois, originally of Malta; Ely Leblanc of 'Le Manage de Mile. Centhectares'; Guetav le Bozec of 'L'Homme et ses Dieux'; Gabriel Audisio of

' Trois Homines et un Minaret'; Renè Janon of ' Les Salopards ' ; and Emmanuel Robtes of ' Travail d'Homme."

To poetry, Algeria has also added a not inconsiderable sum.

Six of the novelists I have already mentioned in preceding paragraphs, namely, Louis Lecoq, Charles Hagel, Robert Randau, Magali-Boisnard, Maximilienne Heller and Gabriel Audisio must also be included in the sixteen most distinguished poets that the Department has so far produced—if we except as major poets, Edmond Gojon and his probable successor Jules Roy. The others, and I admit my list, if indicative, may also possibly be arbitrary, are Albert Tustes, Claude-Maurice Robert, Edmond Brua (three further recipients of the Algerian Grand Prix Littéraire), Léo Loups, Jean Pomier, Albert Lentin, Just Calveyrach (winner of Le Prix Guillaume Apollinaire in 1941) and the modernists, Marcello Palm, "théoricien du synchronisme" and creator of "le roman sans personnages," Marc Brimont, author of 'Poèmes pour l'Homme Futur,' and "Jean Amrouche," formerly El Mouhoub Amrouche, the young Christian Berber aesthete whose work is probably known to English readers of Max-Pol Fouchet's contemporary Algerian review *Fontaine*.

I have suggested that Commandant Jules Roy, of the French North African Air Force, "poète de la vengeance," author of 'Trois Prières pour des Pilotes' and 'Deux Chants pour un temps d'épreuves' and lately a contributor to Mr. John Pudney's anthology, 'Air Force Poetry,' may succeed Edmond Gojon as Algeria's second major poet. [I have done so because ever since I had occasion to write in the French press that "as an airman myself, I believe Jules Roy speaks for all flying men, and that his work has a universal application, one that will not date with the cessation of bombardments and the restoration of peace, for

¹ Within a fortnight of delivering this 3½-year-old pronouncement aloud, I noted that Mr. John L. Brown's article, "Readers and Writers in Paris," published in *The New York Times Book Review* of December 1st, 1946, revealed that M. Robles also received the Prix Populiste in 1945. Mr. Brown further refers to two new novelists of North Africa, Claude de Fremenville, author of 'Bunoz,' and Albert Camus, a writer lately published in translation in England, claiming that together with Jules Roy, "who may become a new Saint-Exupéry," Amrouche, and Audisio, "this North African School may be bringing something fresh and vigorous into the bloodstream of contemporary French writing." As Mr. Brown sees this group, "it represents, in a sense, the invasion of metropolitan refinement and weariness by the youth and the audacity of a colonial culture." The members "form a warm-blooded, enthusiastic band, a free association based on a common background and memories rather, than on a set of aesthetic or political doctrines." How far Mr. Brown's 1946 Paris findings—with regard to Jules Roy, Amrouche, and Audisio—agree with my 1942 African ones, later references in this paper will demonstrate in some measure.—J. G.

the humanity in its philosophy is both honest and deep founded," I could envisage a time when this still-young poet of the very highest promise, with a greater body of work to his credit, might attain that stature. Certainly I still find him by far the most interesting and significant poet to-day published in white Algiers.

In the quality of its French writing, although naturally not yet in the quantity produced, Tunisia is well able to compete with the longer-colonized Algeria; for learning has flourished there since 1881, local *savants*, such as Delattre, Poinssot and Carton, in archaeology, and Monchicourt, Grandchamp and Despois, in history and geography, having added much to human erudition.

It is, however, with the person of the late Charles Nicolle, the Director of the Pasteur Institute in Tunis, winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1928, as the world's foremost authority on typhus, a natural philosopher and a novelist of calibre, that the Regency in all probability makes its most generous contribution to knowledge.

Nicolle, with his virtuosity, indeed, reminds us of our accomplished Sir Ronald Ross of malaria fame, who was by turns scientist, Georgian poet, novelist, essayist, mathematician and composer. And to-day, Nicolle's successor at the Institute, his former assistant, Etienne Burnet, novelist of ' *Sous l'Etoile Rouge* ' and ' *Loin des Icons*, ' is scarcely less distinguished than was his master. Two other Tunisian scholars also deserve mention. They are the Arabs, Abderrahman Guiga, the lexicographer of the justly-celebrated three-volume ' *Dictionnaire Arabe-Frangais*, ' who collaborated with Algeria's great philologist, William Margais, in ' *Lea Textes Arabes de Takrotina*, ' and the eminent jurist and writer of *conies*, Maitre Tahar Essafi, recipient of the Grand Prix Litt'raire Coloniale.

But, outside scholarship, it is undoubtedly to the novelist Arthur Pellegrin, the *fidus Achates* of Marius Scalès, that imaginative Tunisian literature owes its greatest debt. " Un homme aux idées très larges, très modernes, très sérieuses," as Robert Randau has described him, Pellegrin since 1918 has struggled titanically to co-ordinate the literary forces of all Mogreb. In his manifesto of that year he wrote : " Par la littérature nord-africaine j'entends une littérature qui tire son inspiration et sa raison d'être de tout ce qui est nord-africain, une littérature qui ne demande à la Métropole que la langue française pour exprimer l'Afrique du Nord," No statement could be more clear. To

foster, conserve, and reward that embryonic, envisaged literature has been M. Pellegrin's single aim. To raise its products to world level and attention has been his sole purpose. He has always been utterly determined that the culture of French Mogreb shall hold the respect of all thinking peoples. Nor has he utterly failed. He has kept his journal, *La KaMna*, a veritable *Nouvelle Revue Française* of Tunisia, in publication for more than a quarter of a century, only voluntarily suppressing it during the German-Italian occupation. He has written a 'History of Tunisia/ now in its third edition, that will not soon be superseded. He has founded a widely-catholic and powerful Society of North African Writers, and, modestly, slavishly, acted merely as Secretary to it. He has caused a Grand Prix de Carthage to be founded for the benefit of deserving Tunisian authors and, further, induced Marshal Lyautey, during his administration of Morocco, to found a similarly-intentioned Grand Prix du Maroc. Further, as I have already described, he "discovered," published, and "in difficult days" financially-aided his country's greatest poet, Marius Scalèsi; and, on that unfortunate's death, assembled and issued the greater part of his verse, later obtaining National recognition for his memory.

Indeed, in M. Pellegrin's journal, and in his 'Editions de la Kahuna,' it may be claimed that the true face of Tunisia's literature in the French tongue is reflected; the rival Tunis editions of 'Les Cahiers de Barbarie,' edited by a transitory resident, the modernist poet Armand Guibert, not competing in such patriotic service in any way, since they preferred to represent living writers of all countries—*except* Tunisia!

Plainly, M. Pellegrin's concern, to nurture the seed of his earth, is noble. And it is evident that he had long agreed with Mr. James Laver's assertions that "the French soon forget an artist who is not working in their midst and for them the first requisite of a work of art is to have been produced in Paris," when one reflects upon his vigorous combat against France's apparent lack of interest in her North African literary productions.

He will not, however, enlarge upon his efforts when they are under discussion, but, typically, will point out that he was not the first in his country to hoist the standard of Tunisian letters, declaring that that credit should go to the minor poet, Ferdinand Huard, who inaugurated French literature in the Regency when he issued the first number of *La Revue Tunisienne* in 1885. When one recalls who originated the Prix de Carthage, one is not surprised to hear that its first award went to the veteran M. Huard.

It is difficult to pay tribute handsomely enough to M. Pellegrin. A more disinterested and passionate lover and server of letters than he, it would tax one to find the world over!

Tunisia is not a region to encourage the novelist. It lies further from the influences of France, and is more sultry than Algeria. Swooning beneath the delightful oppression of the white jasmine of Hammamet, a writer thinks rather of poems and little jewelled essays. Or, parched, traversing some wide dry salt-lake, he thinks in terms of image or epigram. It is only in Tunis or Bizerta, Monastir or Sousse, or in some Sahel town, once dusk and the heat have fallen, that prose of any length may be achieved.

Pierre Benoit, Tunisia's one representative in the French Academy, deserted. Tunis once his initial schooling there was completed and, though in later youth he attended the Grand Lycée d'Alger with Gojon and, together with the minor Algerian poets Lecoq and Tustes, founded *La Revue Méditerranéenne*, once he reached France, he wrote little concerning the country of his childhood. Likewise, Henri Fauconnier, who, in 1925, settled in breeze-swept Rades to write his 'Malaisie,' which won him the Prix Goncourt in 1980, has yet to pay his dues to his chosen place of residence.

It is with one Tunisian-born Frenchman and three Jews, therefore, that the Regency must assert its claim to the novel and fiction generally. The Tunisian-born Frenchman is our ubiquitous Arthur Pellegrin, with his 'Fille d'Islam,' 1925, 'Les Aventures du Ragaboucho,' 1932, and 'Ragabouche de Tunis,' 1935. The three Jews are Ryvel, "le Panait Istrati des ghettos africains/who, with Vitalis Danon, later novelist of 'Aron le Colporteur,' and "J. Vèhel" (Jacques-Victor Levy, who formed his pseudonym phonetically with his three initials: J.V.L.), produced 'La Hara Conte' in 1929. The strength of this trio undoubtedly lies in its union; although Ryvel was singled out to receive the Prix de Carthage for his 'L'Enfant de l'Oukala' on its appearance in 1931. Of lesser significance are the Tunisian novelists "Cesare Luccio," (M. de Montis), Louis Groisard, Lucien Delmas, Pierre Hubac and Jane Valriant, and the prosateur Mahmoud Asian.

"Beneath the delightful oppression of the white jasmine a writer thinks of poems. . . ." At El Azib, near Bizerta, the second poet of Tunisia, M. Paul-Auguste Nicolas dwells quietly on his farm. As I came on this phrase recently reading through

this 3½-year-old script, in my mind I had to change " dwells " to " dwelt," for I had then just learned of M. Nicolas' regretted death in Tunis on February 22nd, 1944. In him the Regency has lost a considerable figure.

In the same essay in the French press in which I looked forward to the future of Jules Roy, I am now happy to remember I testified—if somewhat half-heartedly, being by then a staunch Scalesian—to the greatness of M. Nicolas, and to the importance of his work in Tunisian Letters.

" M. Paul-Auguste Nicolas," I wrote, " born in Paris, in 1874, did not arrive to become the Georgic-composing Vergil of Bizerta until 1901, since when, for more than forty years, he has been Tunisia's most faithful son by adoption, receiving Le Prix de Carthage in 1926 for his ' Sur les Traces de la Louve.' " But this note, nevertheless, was extremely inadequate homage to the poet of ' Heures d'Afrique,' ' Les Travaux et les Jours,' ' La Sieste sous l'Olivier,' a work crowned by the French Academy, ' Le Double Destin ' and ' Lettres d'un Colon,' the poet of " belles fresques d'une Forme pure et classique," to quote Jean Vignaud ; and now I must regret how, in favour of Scalesi, I disregarded at first the quieter and less impassioned tones of M. Nicolas, failing to sense the true value and integrity of his poetry of the earth. Certainly, his place will be hard to fill, such representative Tunisian poets as Clodion Bauquier, A. M. Firpi, " Rene Rochevillars," Guido Medina, Henri Nicolas and Albert Trouchet, distinguished as some of them are, falling far below the high standard he set himself from the first, and consistently maintained.

For the student of Tunisian letters there are two invaluable (and, indeed, complementary) books of bibliographical value to which attention must be called, for together they treat most comprehensively of the first fifty-six years of the Regency's intellectual life. The first, Albert Canal's ' La Litterature et la Presse Tunisiennes,' appeared in 1924 ; the second, designed on M. Canal's death to carry on his projected history, is Yves Chatelaines ' La Vie Litteraire et Intellectuelle en Tunisie,' a work covering the years 1900 to 1931, that thoroughly deserved the Prix de Carthage that it gained its author.

If M. Chatelain would only embark upon companion volumes for Algeria and Morocco, what infinite labours he would save posterity! For, to date, those territories have no comparable works to his ; Charles Tailliar's ' L'Alg'rie dans la litterature francaise ' paying more tribute to the writings of visiting French

tourists than to those born of African soil. Up to the present, indeed, bibliographical research on the subject of the literature of Mogreb is arduous and difficult, and its results incomplete and unsatisfactory.

While it is too early to foresee the course that modern Moroccan literature will take, a certain number of books have already appeared that are worthy of scrutiny.

To-day, French writing in Morocco is at rather the same stage as it was in Algeria in the 1800's, thirty years after the conquest of that region. For the Morocco that inspired the love of the visiting Pierre Loti and the brothers, Marius and Ary Leblond and Jerome and Jean Tharaud, is now engaged in producing such books as Alexis Chottin's 'Tableau de la Musique Marocaine,' which was awarded the Grand Prix Littéraire du Maroc in 1918, Jules Griguiet's 'Histoire des Dynasties Marocaines,' Paul-Max Odinet's 'Maroc Disparu' and Joseph Vattier's 'L'Aine Maghrébine/ all useful works, no doubt : but—by their titles ye shall know them !

And the fact that Morocco contains several centres where congregate *savants*, art-historians, geographers, Arab and Berber scholars, such as Terrasse, Colin, Celerier, Laoust, Ricard, Hardy, de Cenival, Funck-Brentano, de la Chapelle and Michaux-Bellaire, would provide little hope for imaginative literature if Rabat did not also contain, since 1927, Gabriel Germain, author of 'Colonization et Civilisation,' 1934, and, infinitely more important, poet of 'Chants pour l'Afrique/ 1936, a book that leads one to expect that a great poet is about to arise in Morocco, one superior to his predecessors, the Moroccan poets Alphonse Meterie of 'Le Cahier Noir' and 'Nocturnes' and Georges Rollon of 'Pour les Amoureux du Bled' and 'Embardees.'

Yves Chatelain has analysed these 'Chants' of Gabriel Germain, and I can hardly do better than to give you his considered opinion of them. "Us sont d'une substance si riche que nous ne pouvons les négliger," Chatelain writes, "Germain s'est appliquée avec passion à connaître les Berbères et la terre africaine. On ne comprend que ce qu'on aime ; aussi est-ce un amour profond pour l'Afrique qui s'épanouit dans ces poèmes écrits sous forme de psaumes ou de sourates rappelant le verset élaudelien. Germain aime l'Afrique non seulement de toute sa pensée et de toute sa sensibilité, mais par tous les pores ; il l'embrasse au sens plein du terme, la hume et s'en imprègne totalement."

Gabriel Germain and Jules Roy are undoubtedly, I think, at

this moment the two younger poets of Mogreb with the greatest futures.

The loss to Moroccan prose occasioned by the comparatively recent death of Maurice Le Glay has not yet been made good. 'Baada, fille bsrberre' is, in all probability, the best known of his books, since it received the Grand Prix Littéraire Coloniale. But all Le Glay's recits restent simples, vèridiques, émouvants." First novelist of emerging Moroccan literature, he deserves the memorial to him that is now proposed.

In the preceding pages I have attempted to evoke a pageant of the literary figures of modern Mogreb and to place them in their several stations. But, I have only given a hint here and there that might suggest their background, their Africa.

What set them writing is known to Louis-Alexandre Bergounioux : it is "la seduction d'Alger, l'emprise delicate des paysages du Sahel, la charme des crepuscules sur les coteaux abrupts dominant la vague latine, l'inoubliable splendeur des nuits africaines, l'ardente et lumineuse des Hauts Plateaux, jusqu'à la couleur particulière du sol, cette teinte violente, d'un brun roux qu'ont les terrains oxydés par le fer, la somptuosité inouïe de la mer, qui telle une fabuleuse étoffe, semble recouvrir tout l'espace, toute cette fête de couleur, toute cette volupté des yeux qu'offre tour à tour la fastueuse vision du Sahel, du Tell, ou du Sahara"

Mogreb has to be seen to be believed, lived in to be understood, and left to be loved, as Scatesi and Gojon knew at the end
And as I now know.

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