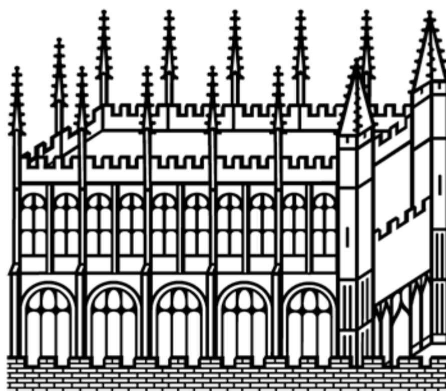

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Laughing Truths by Carl Spitteler

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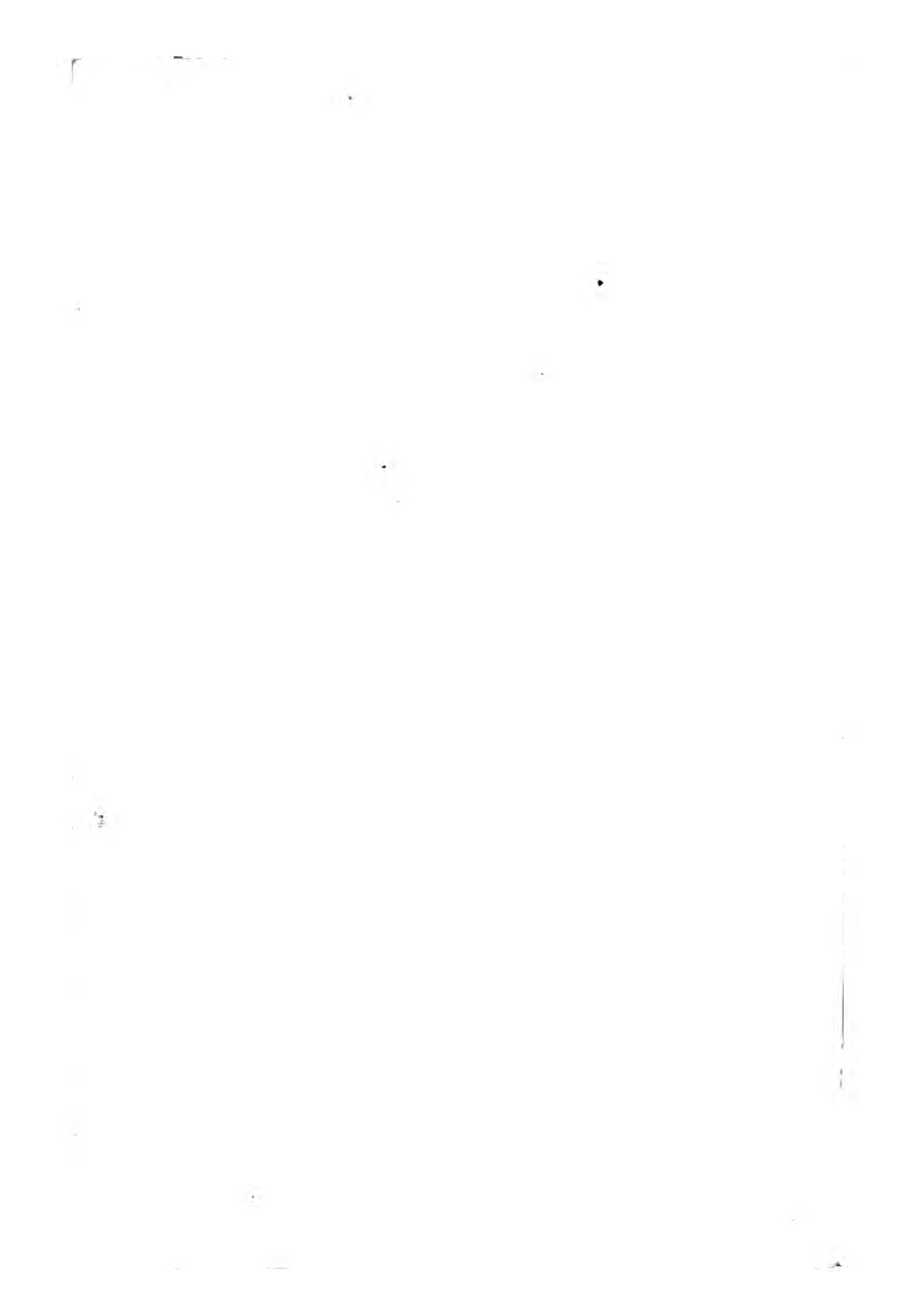

LAUGHING TRUTHS

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CARL SPITTELER

HE is the greatest of you all. Never has your land—the honourable soil of sacred individuality and freedom—produced such a hero of art and thought. . . . Permit a stranger (though so long your guest as to feel for his part that he is no longer a stranger, however you may feel on yours) to honour, now that he has joined the dead, Our Homer, the greatest German poet since Goethe, the only master of the epic since Milton died three centuries ago. But a more solitary figure amid the art of his day than either the one or the other of these.—ROMAIN ROLLAND. Quoted by permission from *Carl Spitteler, In Memoriam.*

INTRODUCTION

IN 1887 Friedrich Nietzsche wrote to Ferdinand Avenarius, founder and editor of the *Kunstwart*, recommending Carl Spitteler as a suitable contributor for that well-known Munich periodical. He described Spitteler's æsthetic essays as marked by an extraordinarily thoughtful and keen sense for the history and criticism of art and culture, and added that ("thank heavens!") they were instinct with a delightful humour. The papers here collected undoubtedly contain much of the material that led Nietzsche to this judgment. Besides essays contributed to the *Kunstwart* and other periodicals, the volume includes various lectures and addresses.

The first collection of the essays, made in 1898, contained also some material not previously published. The present English version was made from the second and slightly altered German edition of 1905. A few of the papers in the German volume have been omitted from the English translation, either because their interest has now somewhat evaporated or because it is of too local a character to appeal to English readers.

The title, "Laughing Truths," is obviously meant to indicate that the views in the essays, though treated in a light and whimsical way, are truths that the writer really had at heart.[1] On the other hand, when the irony and

[1] The title was suggested by the publisher (Eugen Diederichs, of Jena), but, apparently, Spitteler made no objection to it.

whimsicality are especially evident, it may be interpreted as an invitation not to take the opinions expressed too seriously. To those who are familiar with Spitteler's life and writings it is clear that in no instance are the essays written to order. They represent the personal standpoint of the writer, and reflect his actual and interested convictions. There is no need to labour this point; but, by way of example, it may be noted that the views he here expounds of the epic, the ballad, and the lyric are those he followed in his own poems; that his criticism of pedantry and academicism is highly characteristic; that the musical papers represent his pronounced musical tastes very clearly; and, even, that the essay on the winter landscape might almost be taken as the formula for much of the scenery in his great epics.

Carl Spitteler was born in 1845 at Liestal, the quaint little capital of the half-canton of Bâle-Campagne, where his father held an official position.

At an early age he showed unusual gifts both in music and art; his own wish was to be a painter. Circumstances, however, prevented this; and so, after school and college education in Bâle, he studied theology and qualified himself for the church. He turned back, however, on the threshold of this career and, *faute de mieux*, took to teaching as a means of livelihood. For eight years (1871–79) he was tutor in the houses of two Russian families in St. Petersburg and Finland. This period must have been one of great significance in his moral and intellectual development; but for any detailed

account of it we must await the biography which Professor Fränkel, of Berne, has now in hand.

Spitteler's first important literary work was the prose epic of *Prometheus and Epimetheus*, published in 1880–81, at the age of thirty-six. It appeared under the pseudonym of "Felix Tandem", chosen because, in his own words, he felt happy in having at length produced something that he dared lay at the sacred feet of Poesy. This epic is in a quasi-Biblical, hieratic, rhythmical prose, resembling that used by Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*, which, however, did not appear till two or three years after Spitteler's work. *Prometheus* was received with such indifference that its author practically made up his mind to abandon literature as a career, though he published a volume of short poems, entitled *Schmetterlinge* (*Butterflies*) in 1889. In 1892, however, he became financially independent, so that for the rest of his life, spent in Lucerne, he was able to devote himself heart and soul to work on his poems, romances, and essays. Among the firstfruits of this leisure was a volume of *Balladen* (1896), which contains many admirable examples of the "ballad" as he envisaged it.

Even from the first a few competent critics recognised the value of Spitteler's work. Prominent among these was Joseph Victor Widmann, literary editor of the *Berner Bund*. It was not, however, till 1904, when Felix Weingartner, the eminent conductor and composer, published an eloquent panegyric on him, that Spitteler became known outside of Switzerland. The poet always called Weingartner his *Entdecker*, or discoverer.

The work that excited Weingartner's enthusiasm was

Der Olympische Frühling or *Olympian Spring*, the first draft of which appeared between 1900 and 1905, while the final version dates from 1910. This long epic, arranged in six-foot rhymed iambic couplets, is probably the most popular of Spitteler's works; and it was assigned as the main reason for awarding him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1919. It is full of imagination and humour, with a Keats-like beauty of diction. In 1906 appeared another volume of short poems, entitled *Glockenlieder* (*Bell Songs*), including some of the most graceful and charming of all his lyrics.

Among his prose works were several imaginative romances, such as *Conrad der Leutnant* (1898) and *Imago* (1906). Of the latter Spitteler himself said it represented in everyday and concrete life the same theme as that handled poetically in *Prometheus and Epimetheus*. *Die Mädchenfeinde* (1907), or *Girls' Enemies*, is a picturesque expansion of an episode of his own boyhood.[1] The little book of recollections of his childhood, *Meine Frühesten Erlebnisse* (1914), which ends with his fifth year, is surely one of the most wonderful and most convincing resuscitations of the child's point of view ever made. Two other books that may be mentioned are *Extramundana*, which might in some respects be described as an early anticipation of *The Olympian Spring*, and *Literarische Gleichnisse* (*Literary Parables*), a satirical work in verse. Spitteler himself attached no

[1] This, the only book of Spitteler hitherto turned into English, was translated by Mme. la Roquette-Buisson and published at New York in an attractively illustrated volume (Henry Holt & Co., 1922). The title, *Two Little Misogynists*, is perhaps not quite happy.

very high importance to *Extramundana*; but it is doubtful whether its readers would agree with him in this view.

Towards the close of his life Spitteler returned to the subject of "Prometheus" (just as Goethe did with "Faust") and produced a metrical version of it under the title of *Prometheus der Dulder* (*Prometheus the Long-Suffering*). This, however, though concerned with the same main theme, is no mere working over of the original prose epic. Rather do the two epics stand side by side, like two Madonnas by the same painter. The *Dulder*, shorter and in verse, represents the maturer, the more finished, the more classic form of a theme originally handled with the romantic exuberance of youth. It is the profoundest and final expression of this many-sided genius. For it was published only a very short time before his death.

Spitteler's life at Lucerne was a quiet and secluded one, devoted wholly to his work. He associated himself with no group—political, religious, literary, or academic. Self-advertisement was utterly alien to him. Once, and once only, he emerged from this retirement. The occasion was an address to a meeting of German-Swiss notables at Zurich on December 14, 1914. The burden of the speech was the necessity, in the interest of Swiss unity, of realising that racial sympathy must on no account be the determining factor in the attitude of the German Swiss to the War. The tone of the address was correct and detached; but Spitteler did not hesitate to blame the violation of Belgium or to give the Allies their due. Of our own country he said: "We owe to the English a special debt of gratitude. More

than once England has come to our aid in times of great stress. England is, it is true, not the only friend of Switzerland, but she is the most trustworthy".

The address, of a nobility that raised it far above all ephemeral political writing, was received with enthusiasm. It was felt that Switzerland, once for all, had definitely formulated the position of the small neutral countries. Spitteler, as he himself remarked somewhat ironically, became better known to his countrymen by his forty minutes as a politician than by forty years of writing. He had, however, said his say and refused all other appeals to intervene in political matters.

Many other tributes to Spitteler from European men of mark might be quoted. In 1915 a banquet in honour of his seventieth birthday was held at Geneva; and among those who expressed their sympathy and admiration on this occasion were such distinguished foreigners as Maeterlinck, Rostand, Verhaeren, Boutroux, and Bergson. The French Academy also saluted him at this time, and in 1916 he received the medal of the Société des Gens de Lettres de France. M. Baudouin, who is an enthusiastic admirer, has characterised *Laughing Truths* as one of the most attractive, most elevated, and most powerful of critical volumes; and the perspicacity and Gallic grace of these essays have been repeatedly recognised. Professor J. G. Robertson (University of London), one of the few Englishmen who have spoken of Spitteler in print, calls *The Olympian Spring* "the greatest poem in this, the last epoch of German literature", and comments on the "incredible neglect" Spitteler has suffered for his

defiance of tradition and convention. And these citations take no account of the naturally much more numerous eulogies in the German language.

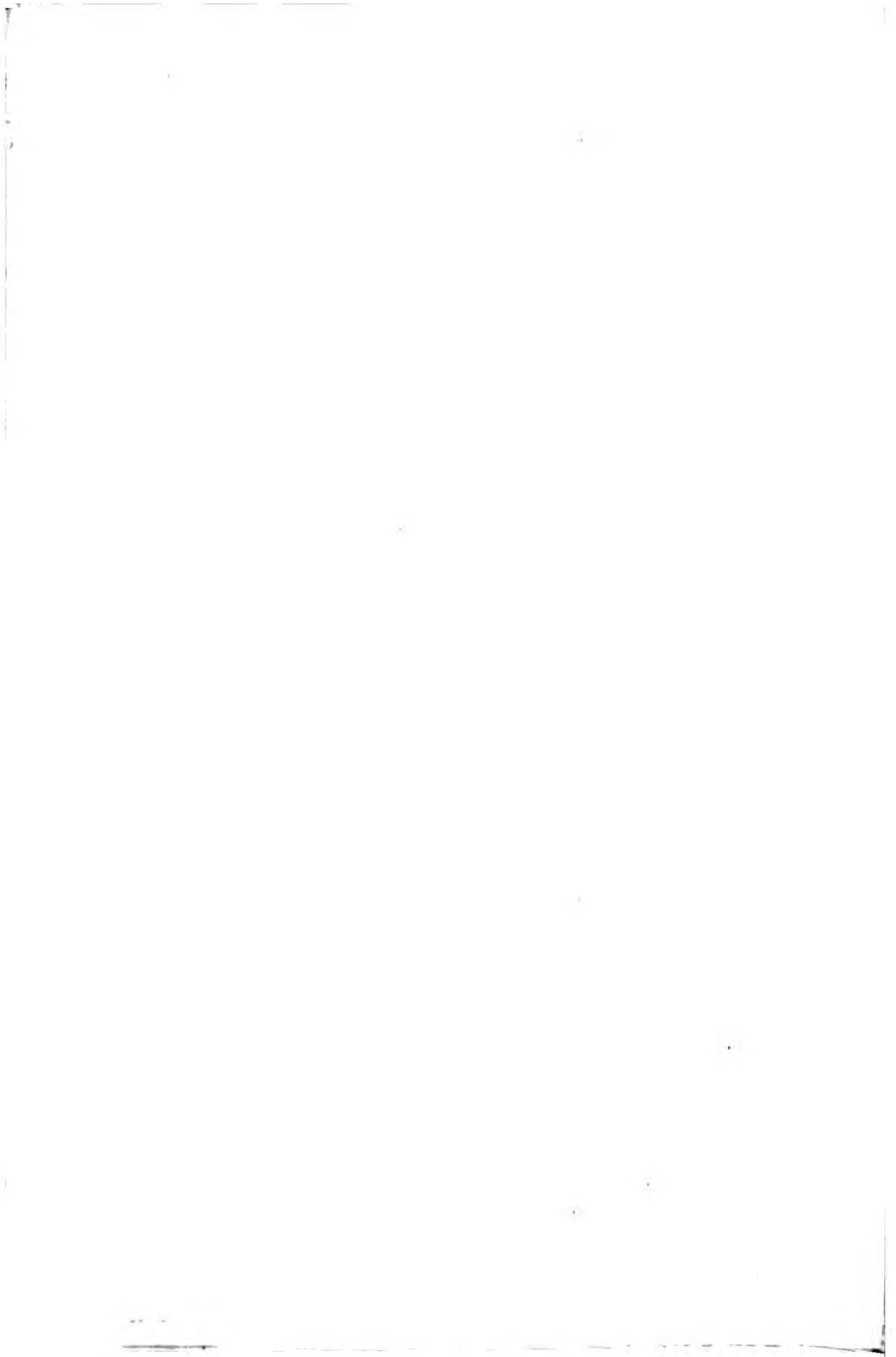
No apology need be offered for the selection of a prose work to introduce Spitteler to the British public. The translation of prose requires much less courage than the translation of poetry. The risk that the *traduttore* may prove a *traditore* is sensibly reduced. Moreover, this volume of essays covers practically the whole field of Spitteler's interests and preoccupations, not only as author but as musician, artist, citizen, nature-lover, and man. From this point of view it may in some respects serve better as an "introduction" to Spitteler than any one poem could do. And, in spite of Spitteler's own forcible plea in the essay in this volume entitled "The Forbidden Epic", it may be doubted whether the British public would at the present time willingly lend their ears to a long epic, no matter how beautiful, offered to them in translation.

Carl Spitteler died at Lucerne, in his 80th year, on December 28, 1924. He lies in a sequestered corner of the picturesque Friedental Cemetery, under a rough flat stone, inscribed simply "Carl Spitteler".

The sincere gratitude of the translator is due to Spitteler's biographer, Professor Fränkel, and to Spitteler's friend, Herr C. A. Loosli (both of Berne), whose help in dealing with difficult constructions and in explaining unfamiliar references has been invaluable.

J. F. M.

ATTACK



ART—BOND AND FREE

THERE is no more exasperating experience than an enforced recognition of the way in which our sciolistic schoolmastering has brought it about that the sweetest fruits have been rendered insipid by pedagogic bacteria and that gifts, meant to make us happy, have been turned into pains and penalties. Art is great-hearted and humane, like the beauty from which it springs. It is one of the consolations of mortal life, and raises no other claim than to work zealously for our joy and bliss. It demands neither study nor preparation, for it acts directly through the senses on our heart and imagination, so that it has ever been true that the simple receptiveness of youth has shown itself a better judge in the realm of art than the most advanced erudition. Just as we have no need to learn how to appreciate flowers and sunshine, just as we need no previous study to find the Rigi imposing or a maiden fair, so is it unnecessary to study art. It is true that susceptibility is limited, that gifts are unequally distributed, that the senses which transmit artistic impressions are sometimes keener and sometimes blunter. I have, however, never found a human being of feeling and imagination (for feeling and imagination are the preconditions, and the only preconditions, for the enjoyment of art) who did not receive immediate pleasure from one or other form of art. And that is the one thing necessary. Let each of us

at the heavenly feast select those dishes which delight his soul and enjoy them to his heart's desire, as often and as much as he likes, whether alone or (when his heart overflows) in the company of congenial friends. That is enjoyment of art. It is also understanding of art. Whoever honestly and modestly enjoys a work of art understands it as well as (and very likely better than) the man who delivers learned lectures on the subject. Just so, the artists themselves have always appealed directly to the simple people and shunned all sponsors or intermediaries between themselves and the public.

Art bondage begins when pleasure in art is conceived of as a duty. It is no more a man's duty to love beauty and art than it is for him to find sugar sweet. Art is nothing more than a gracious permission and an urbane invitation; you can either take it or leave it. Happy he who knows enough to appreciate and accept it; we may pity the man who cannot do this, but we are not entitled to scold him. Genuine artists and simple lovers of art are always good souls; but does the fact that experience tells us that art has an ennobling effect justify us in using it as a means of education? "Yes", if we stipulate that the word 'education' is used in the sense of a century ago, when its aim was the training of an all-round man, and that the tomfoolery of the pedant is excluded. When "William Tell" is read in the original, the schoolroom becomes a green and breezy hill, and little ragamuffins are converted into a group of amiable and enthusiastic lovers of poetry. But if the reading is followed by discussion, if the drama is analysed, and illustrated by parallel passages, and written about in

essays, much of the gain will be lost. So our answer is "No", if the presupposition is that examinations are the be-all and end-all of education, that it means the same thing as teaching and learning. In art there is nothing to teach, except by artists to artists, and little to learn. The ennobling and educative power of art rests, not on knowing, but on enjoying. Indeed, knowledge of art may in certain conditions impair the susceptibility to enjoyment of art. This is sure to be the case when self-conceit or priggishness appears on the scene; for self-conceit is the antipodes of that attitude of the soul implicit in every artistic enjoyment, which is one of modest and self-forgetting surrender. The attempt to carry over the idea of "culture", which means knowledge of a somewhat desultory and superficial cast, into the realm of art, is really an unhappy confusion. The conception of art from the "culture" point of view leads at its best to superficiality, quite usually to self-deception, and at its worst to emotional hypocrisy. One should therefore give up, once for all, the hope to attain the unattainable. Art is far too rich, and the individual far too poor, for him to master the colossal sum of its beatitudes; he should without any doubt restrict himself to the delights most akin to his own soul and enjoy his intimate communion with those. Such a resolve frees him from the most oppressive bondage of the modern world, the serfdom of culture, that burdensome and deleterious form of poll-tax. This resolve, moreover, costs no more than resignation to the fact that we cannot enjoy all the rays of the sun on all sides at once; there is enough and more than enough

for the needs of the individual when he contents himself with his own proper share. The sense of need is the proper regulator of joy in art; when it is silent, we should let art alone.

Many make the mistake of confounding the external call or invitation with the inner need. "We must take the opportunity". This conclusion, however, is just as false as if we believed it was necessary to eat every time we read of a tempting menu in the newspaper. In normal persons the craving for art has its pauses; it is periodic; an everlasting wolfish hunger for art is itself a sign of a morbid condition, where the diagnosis indicates pseudo-culture. We must learn, therefore, to pass by concert programmes, theatrical posters, museums, and even Campi Santi with as much sangfroid as if they were shop-windows, for the fact that an article is brought prominently before our eyes is no proof that we need it. Even the rarity of an opportunity is no reason why we should avail ourselves of it, for a man is not a pelican and he cannot stow away undigested impressions for which no craving has arisen.

He who consults his cultured conscience instead of his actual desire, who believes it his duty to take advantage of every artistic opportunity in every field at every moment, is a man rather to be avoided than to be envied; the wise will give him a wide berth. For he is inspired, not by the free and noble Goddess of Art, but by the Art of the Schools. This pretentious, and at the same time so sterile, branch of knowledge is answerable for the insincere contortions of art-culture. There is, however, an excellent antidote to it, *viz.*

the simple phrase "I don't understand a word of it". What a relief these words bring both to the hearer and the speaker! Really everyone should learn to utter this phrase, the pronunciation of which somehow seems a little difficult, though it expresses an obvious truth, since nobody can assume to be cordially and comfortably at home in every field of art. Of course the confession carries with it the danger of incivility from an ill-mannered interlocutor; but even this may rank on the credit side, as it will teach us not to enter into conversation with every Tom, Dick, or Harry. I call it bad manners for one man to make an unpleasant remark to another on account of his real or supposed insusceptibility or ignorance in artistic matters, for, as no one is bound to enjoy art, so no one has any right to put another through an artistic inquisition. It would be very desirable if the ideas of politeness in this connection could be somewhat improved, for in most cases the restless and disturbing craving for artistic culture originates simply in the dread of the superficial inquisition in society, railway carriages, and hotels. As soon, however, as we relegate cultivated impertinence to the same class as boorish rudeness, the terribly high level of the culture flood will sink with great rapidity, just as those nations in which a high degree of conversational tact prevails hardly know the meaning of artistic hypocrisy.

As art exists for the pleasure and not for the discipline of man, we must not regard a great master, however long he may have been dead, as a sort of bugbear, created to impress or even oppress us, but rather as a

friend and benefactor. Affection is the only suitable feeling we can have for a master, and it must be an unembarrassed affection, free from bashfulness or antediluvian respect. Every creator, even the greatest, is content with this kind of homage, for the homage of the heart is the finest of all. Gratitude will naturally accompany the affection; and conscientious effort finds in this the best reward for the toil and trouble it has had to go through.—Admiration is the tribute paid by professional artists to the master. The layman is not called upon for this; and, anyhow, it does not sit very well on him, for he can have no idea of the difficulties that have been overcome in the production of a work of art, or of the problems that have had to be solved. Let him be satisfied with gratitude and affection; that will be more natural and more modest.—No artist acknowledges any duty of compulsory deification, any nervous taboo vis-à-vis of illustrious names, any bar to an honest affirmation that the august swellings of the Immortals may be nothing more or less than goître. These are the impudent inventions of presumptuous creatures, who busy themselves with the unjustifiable exploitation of a dead master, eager to monopolise him, and in so doing make themselves intolerable by their use of the glory they steal from him. By grovelling before one great man, they flatter themselves that they have earned the right to refuse the due meed of reverence to all the others. Every creative soul hates them with a holy hatred.

POET AND PHARISEE[1]

WE may twist, handle, and call it what we like, the fact remains that in art and poetry everything depends on belief or the want of it. Belief in this connection means a firm conviction of an ever-present and effective spirit of beauty; unbelief is the idea that this spirit marches off gaily, quite apart from the present time, to bivouac at a distance of at least a generation back. And each conviction is based on experience. The believer is full of his belief; how can he fail to note it? In the unbeliever there yawns a gray desolation, therefore he cannot but regard the present as a sterile Jurassic-limestone period.

The believers of the highest order are naturally those whose whole activity is determined by faith as a motive force:—the creators, the originators, the masters. Wherever a master dwells, hope shines and encouragement beckons. At a mere rumour of his presence the brave raise their heads; his example kindles in every corner of the globe; his name acts as a challenge to the noble; his fame muzzles the lie about contemporary inferiority. Whoever gets into personal touch with a master bathes in a fountain of youth. While the wailing women chant the coronach of talent in the streets, while every pulpit announces the closing of the gate of poetry, while every village journal bans the vineyard and every bell chimes for evensong, he, the

[1] This paper was written in 1886 or 1887, when the German "Idealists" were at the height of what Spitteler calls their "sinful blossoming" (*Sündenblüte*).

Master, points to the sun of Homer, indicates brother-eagles on the horizon, and waxes eloquent on the inexhaustibility of the beautiful, on the short span of life, on the little that has been so far garnered, on the incalculable harvest still to be reaped. At the cross-roads the hoarse voice of the village constable continues to croak: "Back; hands off! You're too late! Nothing is left!" The Master stands at his hospitable door and greets us in friendly wise: "What has hitherto been achieved is only a beginning".

But faith is needful not only for the creation of the beautiful, but also for its reception, *i.e.* for its instant reception, for its appreciation before it has become legend; because, when it has become legendary, even the numskulls accept it. In this connection also the artists are far in front of all others, because they are not only at once creator and instrument, but also a sounding-board. Everything that is beautiful awakes in them a full-toned echo, unmuffled by any sullen mistrust or by any carping reservations. A special organ of the soul enables the master to recognise the gold-dust in the sand of the most discouraging flood, to select unerringly what is important in the most devastating swarm of books. This is the feeling of kinship, which presents itself uninvoked the moment anything great enters the field of vision. Outside the circle of artists, the judgment of even the most intelligent needs crutches: comparison with precedents, fundamental principles, the verdicts of earlier masters, and so on. I grant you these are very admirable crutches, but they are crutches all the same; and, moreover, they have

the fault that they are apt to fail when the need of them is greatest, when the original is not like the standard models, when the great does not please the little, when the new brings with it no sanctifying touch of the old. The judgment of the artists is also a loving one, taking kindly note of every valuable quality; there is no more grateful public for the gifted than other great men—the greater, the better. By reason of these qualities the older, already recognised masters at any given period, are the natural protectors of the younger, who are still struggling for recognition. The necessity of removing the worst obstacles out of the way of a successor, which costs merely a frank word of commendation, lies too near to be other than a general rule. The reverse occurs in the history of art and literature only as a rare exception. About the mutual relations of mature artists many unpleasant things have been whispered. If, however, we examine the records more closely, we shall find that in every single case the disagreement arose from the provocations of the followers of the two great men. Even gold may be converted into an acid through incessant boiling and stirring, and by the use of hydrogen, chloride, and sulphur.

Besides the artists there are two other classes of believers to mention, or, rather, a class and a condition. The CLASS consists of the best kind of women. The well-known impartial susceptibility of women to beauty of every sort, of every form, and of every name, is part and parcel of their nature, is inherent in their very being. In distinguished individuals it is a deeply felt longing, a real thirst. Other people, too, like the beauti-

ful, assert that they desire it, and believe that they seek it; but woman alone utters a spontaneous cry of joy when she sees it. The female judgment, like the artistic, rests upon instinct, which must always be the most valuable foundation, because it is not open to influences. The woman's instinct is, however, limited to the "beautiful" in a narrower sense; it is of little avail in distinguishing the derivative from the original, the pretentious from the really great. Lovely Titanias, who cling to a boorish ass or perfumed ape, in the belief that they have found a godlike genius, will continue to present themselves to our astonished gaze. If, however, woman often takes a frog for a fish, she practically never takes a fish for a frog. Still less does she make it a reproach to the fish that he is not a frog. This is a noble trait and no common virtue; it may be unreservedly recommended for our imitation. And then, what loyalty to the object of belief, once it has been chosen! What selflessness! What a marvellous freedom from moral cowardice! Woman waits for no signs or permissions, regards no prohibitions, laughs at scorn. Her star is not extinguished by the most hopeless defeats; its gentle, joy-bringing beam penetrates the blackest storms of night. Afterwards, when the victory has been won and the skulkers in the bushes break out into obtrusive jubilation, she draws back; for she does not fight for pay. Philosophy may judge of woman as it will or must; art owes her reverence, gratitude, and love. If it were not for woman, we should long ago have been estimating works of art by logarithms and measuring poetic force by the coprometer.

The CONDITION above referred to is Youth, that wondrous glaze, which for sundry years glorifies even souls of common clay with a lustrous bloom. By youth I mean only those of the male sex, since the young girl is otherwise occupied in posing as a model for the imagination and with the possibilities of marriage. Male youth, in my sense, extends from the earliest boyhood to adolescence. The interplay of enthusiastic acceptance and creative divination, of humble adoration and confident self-esteem, lends the idealism of puberty both its charm and its value; the enormous number of the participators and the stormy character of its expressions of conviction give it its force. The arrival of new regiments of youth always means a reinforcement for the artist, an increase of reverence for the creative, a strengthening of the fame of enduring values. Like oxygen, youth attacks only rusty iron and rotten wood; it protects the precious metals from dust. The most salutary function of youth is, however, the blowing up of the Babel towers of scholasticism. It is true that the digging and piling up of the earthworks begin again at once; but, all the same, it does one's heart good to see the pagodas and the parsons all scattered to the winds together.

We have now completed the list of the lambs and come to the goats. And the goats bear a singular family-likeness to those described in the New Testament. The New Testament distinguishes two main classes of unbelievers: on the one side, the people, on the other, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes, with their disciples. In the language of art the people is

known as the "public". Under either name it betrays its well-known characteristics. On the one side, vacillating opinions and desires and mental sluggishness; on the other side, good-nature and a fallow and usable spirit of readiness. To condemn the public as a whole is neither seemly, nor fair, nor wise. In the first place, it does no good; in the second place, men have more urgent duties on earth than to educate the public; and, in the third place, in this checkered group some really noble souls are found—*e.g.* the leading masters of the ancillary arts, persons, like queens, to whom we owe at least respect, and, lastly, persons, like our own brothers and sisters, to whom no well-brought up man would try to play the schoolmaster. The chief trouble caused by the "people" or "public" comes from its blind belief in its teachers; if to this blindness be added zeal or bigotry, we have the "faction" of the Pharisees. The farther we get from the schools, the more this danger dwindles, the more harmless and manageable the public becomes. Therefore it is that the masters now, as two thousand years ago, reveal a marked preference for the company of publicans and fishermen.

It would be quite easy to find in the realms of art titles closely parallel to "Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes". This, however, is not my task, as I have to do with synthesis, not with analysis. For this synthesis I deliberately choose the name of the Alexandrians, a name indicating a common spiritual home. Whoever wishes to deal fairly with the Alexandrians must distinguish between the natural aspect of these people

and their sour looks when confronted with a miracle or a real creation. The Alexandrians were and are in themselves very worthy personages, respectable and respected, deserving well of education and science (and therefore rewarded with titles and offices), the best instructed antiquarians of their time (and therefore occupying the highest seats in the synagogues), full of zeal for the education of youth and the public, guardians of the temple and the law (art and literature), filled with unbounded, almost idolatrous veneration for the holy scriptures (the "classics"). Unable to do enough to show their enthusiastic appreciation for the writers thereof, they "build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous"; they shun every criticism of the scriptures, every opinion differing from that of the prophets, as if it were an abominable blasphemy. Their only fault is that they believe that the source of revelation has dried up, that they teach that the Holy Ghost had instituted a short entr'acte of a century or so in their time, that they address their cheerful prophecies to the end of the world, that the whole of their feeling and thinking is dominated by the assumption that the present has no more admirable duty than to polish the finger-nails of the past, and that living men have no more important task than to embalm the dead. The only genuine balsam is, of course, that furnished by Messrs. Caiaphas & Co.

If we ask in what obscure corner of the soul originated this extraordinary impulse to depreciate the present by superstitious veneration of the past, and to treat despitefully the children of the very prophets before

whom they grovel in the dust—an impulse as natural to all the Alexandrians as breathing and pulse-beat —the answer is obvious and conclusive. It arises from the instinct of self-preservation; that is why it is so tough and so stubborn. The whole importance and high social position of the Alexandrians rested on an interim or temporary vacancy of the papal chair; on the fact or assumption that no great men existed in their day. Otherwise they would have had to climb down from their throne and put the foot-rule, which they used in so masterly a manner, into its case. They had, however, nestled down snugly in their lofty position and had found their seat very comfortable. This explains their unconscious, but none the less zealous hostility to every living art and to every claim in the creative field. A parable may make this tendency even clearer. When, on the death of their master, the servants have taken over the inheritance and are managing and enjoying it in his name, are they likely to welcome with effusion the news that a relative of their late lord is approaching, and will they meet him humbly to hand over their bunch of keys? Not so, they will declare themselves ready to yield the heritage to the rightful heir, but in each individual case they will assert that the claimant is an impostor. Eventually, no doubt, they would produce documents to prove that their lord had died without children or other relatives. The same situation, translated into unfigurative speech, is as follows. The Alexandrians must declare war on all that is original and great, when it is alive, at hand, and incarnated in an individual, because it menaces them,

because it forces them to step down from their position as custodians of the Holy Grail, because the new arrival will undoubtedly have a view, a voice, a judgment, behests, and all kinds of curious dislikes of his own. The whole care of the Alexandrians is therefore directed to ward off the arrival of a dominant personality; and, in the unlucky case that he comes in spite of their teeth, they will set to making breakwaters to avert the injurious consequences. For this purpose the instinct of self-preservation contrives an extensive system of defence, with outworks more ingenious than the most perfect efforts of the beaver or the white ant.

First of all a calendar is prepared, based on the position of the moon with regard to the earth, showing that no great talents can appear in the next hundred years. The critics assume the responsibility for the assurance that that law of nature cannot be transgressed. In any case nature has endured such a strain in producing the great classics that she must inevitably be allowed a period of relaxation. So she is forced to take a vacation, whether she wants it or not. The diagnosis has been made, the danger of consumption is imminent; the opinion of the doctors cannot be trifled with. It is sharply impressed on the contemporary world that an unimpeachable method of recognising extraordinary gifts, which one man can judge of as well as another, is that (as experience shows) every genuine man of talent goes about with a monument at his feet. Naturally, this doctrine may also be applied, by inversion, to false talent. The Ministry of Health issues a circular pointing

out that deserved recognition, and still more glory and honour, is poisonous if enjoyed during youth or in the prime of life. Everyone is therefore exhorted to exercise anxious care to ensure that anyone who, contrary to nature, attains distinction in his youth, shall be guarded from the dangerous influences just mentioned. For bunglers and dabblers, on the other hand, prominence is a help at every time of life, as it gives them encouragement. Promising masters, who are either young or still robust in their maturity, should, accordingly, be immediately isolated on their appearance and subjected to a lifelong quarantine, until a medical board testifies to their approaching death or at least the near advent of their seventieth birthday. In this case the examining committee of the Alexandrians calls a session, to discuss their eligibility for the literary senate. Only one, of course, can be admitted to the senate at a time; and great care must be taken that the reception ceremony be so regulated that the recognition of one man shall have the character of a depreciation of all the others. Tact must determine this in each case. The shout of welcome must be so loud as to overbear any antagonism, and so the sole right of veneration is effectively pre-empted. The constitutional Council of the United Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes has the honour to inform an estimable present and future that the said Council has determined to transform the aristocratic republic of artists and poets into an elective monarchy. Dead senators are alone eligible. Eventual competitors for the position of poet-prince have to hand in to the signatories of this notice (not later than

the end of the month) their testimonials, a list of their works and unpublished letters, and their curriculum vitæ, together with their name, their address, and the registered number of their tombstone. Any application not provided with an official certificate of death will be ignored. Artists, authors, and poets are not allowed to vote. Insubordination towards an elected poet-prince, in the form of unseemly comparison of him with anyone inferior to him in rank and office, shall be considered as high treason. The immortalised poet-prince is to be provided with a council or regency, possessing unlimited powers and chosen from the ranks of the Alexandrians, which will carry on the affairs of state in his name.

So far, the Alexandrians. What has the artist or poet to say about it? Well, he simply goes his own way, producing his works and doing his miracles. If the Alexandrians become a little too troublesome, he may turn his gaze on them for a moment and clear the air with a metaphor. To-day he leans to images drawn from the class of the higher vertebrates. Formerly it was "Oh ye generation of serpents, hypocrites, and vipers". But really they are not vipers, but only blindworms. Unfortunately for the Alexandrians, however, posterity takes a real pleasure in doubly and trebly underlining all such apostrophes, even when they are not quite fair. The reason of this is that it owes such an enormous debt to the poets and so pitifully little to their opponents; also, because the former are so abundantly amiable and the latter so distinctly the reverse. One is even tempted afresh to say a good word, in the name of

justice, for the much-abused Alexandrians. Who, however, is to-day their most outrageous calumniator? The Alexandrians of the present dispensation. And that is the humour of want of faith. If it is not laughing and crying together, it is biting its own leg. And with this consoling picture, I draw the curtain.

GLORY

A NATION should from time to time look over the garden-wall to see whether all goes well with the glory which it means to allot to its elect citizens as the highest possible prize. For the matter is not so simple as we are apt to think; fame is not a natural, indestructible property of the human race.

On the contrary, a great deal of care is necessary for the growth of fame in a nation; the slightest unfavourable wind blights the laurel. Barbaric, despotic, chauvinistic, military, and pedantic peoples or ages lack fame; they may do honour to their heroes but cannot lend them real fame. Honour, however, is the malicious sister or (otherwise expressed) the parasite of fame. Before one knows, she has overcome and strangled it.

It seems to me that at present there is good reason for an examination. For I venture to assert that the literary reputation of present-day Germany is suffering from most deplorable evils.

In the first place, it has lost its loyalty, for the man who was glorified the day before yesterday has to-day been consigned to the lumber-room. All the belauded

names wear themselves out with such celerity, that immortality is made to look like an ordinary article of consumption. The gentleman has scarcely found his way into the mouth of the public before he melts away. Indeed, it has come to be a simple logical proposition. Since So-and-So is to-day lauded as a genius, it follows that ten years hence he will be discarded with scornful shrugging of shoulders. Those who have a delicate ear may even, during the general jubilation, detect the falsetto overtone that will pretty soon become the contemptuous dominant.

Glorification has also become impudent. People do not now whisper respectfully the name they wish to honour; they bellow it into our ears, with their hats on their heads and their hands in their pockets. As if it all referred to a social-democratic comrade. I know, however, of nothing more insulting than reputation without veneration. First, respect a man; then bow before him; then bow again; thereafter, sound his praises.

Of course, when it has been arranged beforehand that an agent shall call out the names of selected candidates like Stock Exchange quotations; when he exalts his man on the shoulders of seven others, so that he may look tall, it is really difficult to pump up honour for the client so all too closely identified with him. And see how the example works. Other promoters put up other celebrities. Then ensues a most unsavoury competition for votes. It is Pope versus Anti-Pope. And nobody believes in his own Pope, to say nothing of the other man's.

This is the time to be on our guard. Otherwise, it

may some day happen to us that the individual to whom we offer fame may reply: "You will, of course, wash this fame carefully with carbolic soap, before I touch it?"

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

I AM not the only one who cannot altogether respond to the jubilation felt by a nation when one of its great men attains the age of sixty, or seventy, or eighty years. On the contrary, I find myself in most excellent company—*viz.* the company of those whose anniversaries are thus celebrated. For of all the people who take part in a jubilee, the jubilarian himself is the least disposed to feel jubilant. His mood is one apart, full of melancholy and bitterness. The patient endure it in silence, the defiant save themselves from the threatened operation by taking to the woods, if, indeed, they do not, like Grillparzer, call down fire and brimstone from heaven.

"But it really, at bottom, pleases them, in spite of a little sadness." Certainly, a little gentle sadness is pleasant, like every tempered suffering. And your voluminous protestations of affection, gratitude, and admiration may soften them, may move them, may move them perhaps even to tears. Many an unconscious grudge may vanish, all sorts of evil tensions may be relaxed. "After all, it did my heart good." Excellent, if that is all you want. But this "doing good after all" unfortunately reminds me of another case, which has

little of the jubilee about it—*viz.* a death in the family. One probably does good "after all" to those concerned when one's sympathy moves them to tears. On this principle your jubilees become jubilees of condolence. In fine, in the mouth of the man whose jubilee is being celebrated—and, after all, he counts a little in the matter—the jubilee tastes like a bitter-sweet pastry, soaked in a saline infusion.

You approach the gentleman with congratulations? Congratulations on what, if I may venture to ask? One generally felicitates a man when he has attained something that he wanted—*e.g.* when he has been elected Mayor, or has become a Privy Councillor, or has won the chief prize in a sweepstake, or has married a charming bride, or has become the father of a healthy and vigorous boy-baby (mother and child doing as well as could be expected). But in the case of a jubilee, what has the poor victim attained? His seventieth year. An accursed prize! It amounts to a permit for cancer in the stomach or softening of the brain.

Yes, indeed, it is a fine idea to have a national festival of admiration for a single living individual—if only it came in good time and sprang spontaneously from a naïve overflow of enthusiasm. On the other hand an admiration which is born of the calendar; which waits pedantically for a date and as late a date as possible at that, in order not to be too early, *i.e.* in good time; which follows the beat of the conductor's baton, so as to come in at the proper moment—an admiration, in short, which is organised like a corner in copper, a gracious, condescending admiration, where the great age

of the man celebrated is allowed to count as an extenuating circumstance—that is a truly rancid national fête. Do you imagine for one minute that the hero of the occasion does not see the strings by which this precious jubilee is worked? Do you think he cannot measure and weigh the impresarios who have contracted for the national enthusiasm; the grave-diggers, who squeeze his hand, while his obituary, ready for the press, sticks out of their pockets? It is an elevated lot, that of a king. But a king by grace of the king-makers? And what sort of king-makers! Let us out with it boldly. Your so-called poet jubilees are bookseller jubilees. In the second line they are biographic and monographic jubilees. At the age of seventy a poet will soon be a testator. That's where the honey comes in.

Would you like to know for whom these anniversaries were originally intended? Who is really refreshed by them? Who is he for whom they are really good, not merely good "on the whole"? The answer is easy. He who has no other merit than his advanced age; he who, his whole life long, has had nothing else to celebrate but his birthdays. A humble bookkeeper, a subordinate official, an obscure schoolmaster in an obscure town, who has done his duty honestly and modestly for twenty-five or fifty years, deserves a celebration of his age or (rather) of his period of service; and he doubtless feels his soul uplifted on the occasion. Now, for the first time in their life, they feel that they are in the limelight; for once at least they feel their petty ambition gratified; henceforth they can lay on the sick-bed beside them the sweet illusion that they have

really done something, have had some value, have attained some end. Those, therefore, who celebrate the seventieth birthday of a great poet elevate him to the dizzy height of the bookkeeper of Brandt's celebrated Swiss Pills.

One thing is certain. Before his seventieth birthday the victim had a sixtieth birthday, before that a fiftieth, and so on. Why were no cheers uttered, no speeches made, no paragraphs printed, and no toasts drained on these occasions? I understand perfectly that jubilees have no overtures, only tattoos. All the same, a silence of thirty years before the first chord is rather excessive, and a sudden fortissimo of the whole orchestra after the muted passage seems rather abrupt. True fame does not orchestrate in this way; it prefers *sempre crescendo*. But, naturally, one cannot expect measure from a jubilee of which the tempo is wrong.

Jesting apart, the contrast between a silence of many years and the sudden *tutti con timpani* at the end of one's life is so startling a phenomenon, that it gives us pause and demands an explanation. I have often asked myself whether green-eyed jealousy does not, after all, have a finger in the pie. I have asked myself the question and I have answered "yes"; and I still give the same answer.

The chief reason, however, occurred to me by chance when Germany was perpetrating the jubilee of Paul Heyse. [One perpetrates a jubilee just as one perpetrates a solecism.] One of the leading German journals published a brief, in which it was seriously argued that it ought not to establish a precedent for celebrating an

author at such a ridiculously early age as his sixtieth birthday. There it stands, in cold print, frankly and honestly. Let us grasp the idea, hold it fast, and see that it never more escapes us. A poet of sixty is too young to have a jubilee. Consequently, it is agreed that it is the robustness, the full vigour of creative power (and nothing else) that vitiates this hushed pause in honour of genius. A poet must not be publicly honoured until he has at least one foot in the grave. As already said, such a golden axiom as this must not be allowed to perish from the earth; it must be a never-dying possession of posterity, like the sayings of the Seven Sages.

However, it is not really envy that speaks in this manner. For envy does not declare itself so frankly; it whispers. No, it is rather the delectable postulate that the importance of a poet does not begin until he is "a complete and rounded whole", until we can "survey at a glance" his "full activity", until we can "outline a lifesize portrait" of him. In other words, when we can discuss, explain, edit, comment upon, and emend him; when, in fact, we can grind him in the literary mortar.

This is the real "open sesame". Not his works—God forbid, those are quite secondary; what is really important is his image and superscription as a poet, the place and number assigned to the man in the history of literature. If we never knew it before, we should know it now. Modern Germany, in spite of all its fuss and gabble about Goethe and poetry, is concerned with literary history, not with literature. The aim is to lecture on the poet, not to enjoy him.

I shall probably have a long time to wait before the advent of the jubilee which I should really enjoy and in which I should gladly play a part. I mean the jubilee in honour of a great work immediately after its first appearance.

COPULI, COPULA

OVER and over again have I passionately envied the Greeks. First, at ten years old, because they had not to learn Latin. Secondly, at twenty, because their uncles gave them a little bunch of slave-girls as a birthday present instead of the two thick volumes of Weber's *History of the World.* And lastly, at thirty, because no one thought of ascribing silly love entanglements to their poets.

Do you like the future? For my part I don't know whether I do or not, as I have not the pleasure of its acquaintance. But I believe in it truly; in all seriousness, I believe that there is a future. In any case, surely we may assume it as possible that we are not the last men on the earth, but that we may be followed by ten or twenty or a hundred other generations? Seeing that the world has lasted for a million or so of years, it may manage to get on for a few dozen millennia more? The idea is not absolutely preposterous, is it?

On this assumption, then, I beg you to put your ear to the telephone and listen to what the literary historian of the thirtieth century (not to go too far afield) has to

say about the thoroughly debased and prostituted literature of to-day. What is his opinion about the sloppy love stories that legions of writers, in myriads of books, periodicals, newspapers, and theatres unweariedly offer, year in, year out, to milliards of insatiable readers from Gibraltar to Hammerfest, from the Urals to the Sierra Nevada? What has he to say about the hundreds of thousands of little ladies and gentlemen, both in Europe and America, who have been recorded as in and out of love with each other during the past fifty years, and who are perfectly willing to go on with the same sort of thing for fifty years more? And what does he say of our precious assumption that absolutely every story and absolutely every drama, be it tragedy or be it comedy, whether it has to do with to-day or with the Mosaic dispensation, cannot possibly be a source of pleasure unless some sort of billing and cooing is involved? Or of our pretentious, amorous Song of Songs, the "Epic of the 19th Century"? Or of our craze to weave, retrospectively, some liaison or other into the reputation of every great artist, since otherwise we should find his story insipid?

Do you really hear nothing? Nothing (*e.g.*) like "old wives' gossip" or "a literature for procurers by procuresses"? For my part, I hear it quite distinctly. No, I can't give it you now. I'll copy it out and send it to you some day.

In the meantime, as some compensation, I venture to give you a handful of my own opinions, to beguile your homeward way.

Patient listening to or reading of detailed accounts

of the intimate concerns of strangers is effeminate; to take pleasure in an account of their love affairs is unmanly.

A smirk over the fact that he and she have come together is pardonable on a woman's lips because of its maternal element; on the lips of a man it is repulsive, because senile. A real man, when he hears of a love-match, by no means assumes a smirk of content; on the contrary, he cries out "Is that pretty girl really taking up with that ass? If so, she has gone down fathoms in my estimation". After this exclamation, he goes home and sings the song of the fox and the grapes.

All the devout fuss and chatter about a personified god of love; about a sacred abstract love, which denies its origin in the senses and refuses to be associated with any single individual, in order to bless with tremulous emotion, from an allegorical heaven, all the pairs of lovers who are, or were, or ever shall be—all that sort of thing is worthy only of a eunuch.

For it is only for a woman, and not for a man, that this pure and detached "love" exists. He who writes "love is" or "love has" writes in an unmanly fashion. A man does not love the abstract, does not love "love". He loves a single particular woman, or possibly several particular women, or (if you insist upon it) all particular women; but he does not really care a hang for the barren idea of the relationship between the loving man and the loving woman. Yes, love's illusion, a passionate crazy illusion of a love for some particular woman, is quite a manlike quality; it is, in fact, manlike to the *n*th degree, *viz.* to madness. On the other hand,

a distilled and holy love in the abstract is a hysterical assumption.

Well, that's probably enough to begin with, I have tried your patience enough. But I have still a small favour to beg. Can you, by any chance, favour me with Hecuba's address? For, somehow or other, I am beginning to take a most uncontrollable interest in that lady.

"VIRILE" POETRY

THE prosaic wiseacres keep popping up with the idea that the pure gold of poetry is too soft, that it needs some alloy, even when they are (theoretically) teaching the very reverse—perhaps then, indeed, even most. After we have succeeded in seasoning poetry with wit, in draping it with phrases, in improving it with virtues, in elevating it with ideas, in deepening it with wisdom, in amplifying it with useful maxims—then the precious therapeutics calmly begin all over again, and (to avoid the compulsion of calling it primeval) we call it modern.

At present, for a change, the cry is all for a vigorous and virile poetry; we dose the Muse with peptones and hæmoglobin, and prescribe iron and chalybeate baths, in order to strengthen her constitution. Indeed, we come within an ace of applying a stimulant to make her beard grow! Burning questions, red flags, and murderous strikes must increase the red corpuscles;

sweat and garbage, dialect and dynamite must expel diabetes. Yesterday our tonic was the shirt-sleeves of the peasant, to-day it is the apron of the artisan. This time, however, we are in grim earnest. We have so thoroughly ruined our digestion with golden syrup that we hanker after petroleum. What is prosaic? What is pedantic? What is frostbound, jejune, and nebulous? What tastes badly? What smells suspiciously? Out with it, so that we may turn it into poetry!

And what is the result? Titanic grimaces without the least accession of force. This is because tumefaction and muscle are two different things, and because portentous snoring may really be a sign of weakness.

For what does "force" or "strength" in art mean? It does not lie in the weight of the material, nor in bristly and brutal ideas, but in the victorious domination of the task of the moment. He who masters whatever he undertakes is a powerful artist. This goes so far that a healthy art never posits strength as an end in itself, but aims at perfection, in which strength is only one among other good qualities. When a generation passionately desires force in its poetry, it is as much a morbid symptom as when a chlorotic servant-girl longs for salad. Do you mean to tell me that imbibing iron, eating earth, or a craving to inhale the decomposing spirit of our day are signs of health? On the contrary, they are symptoms of anæmia and hysteria.

Art does not allow any alloy, and one cannot make poetry with one's fists. And, so far as I can judge, even if a whole generation with millions of primary electors unanimously affirmed the contrary, art would not be

one jot more manly, though the generation might show itself puerile. For poetry refuses, like every other natural force, to be bull-dozed by will, or resolutions, or noisy outcry. Every vital force is sap; and all sap is soft and even (it's not my fault!) a little sweet. If, therefore, an unfortunate generation has had to swallow so many dainties that it whimpers "anything you like, but, for God's sake, nothing sweet", all right; there are plenty of things and activities in the earth that are anything but sweet. May good digestion wait on appetite! But you will find that, if you try to serve poetry, like soused herring, with social onions, you will produce a mayonnaise that nobody can digest.

"OLD" AND "YOUNG"

ON the one side is a senate, grown gray in the service of respectable mediocrity, to which I would gladly pay all due reverence, if I owed it any. On the other side is a group of youngsters, raising a cry of triumph over their problematical puberty like frogs on a May night. You may choose whichever better pleases you

"Old" and "Young" are terms that poetry does not recognise. Neither age nor youth is in the least a merit, or an advantage, or even a quality; they represent nothing but a condition. One is young or old just as he is healthy or sick, just as one day he will be dead. One is not this and the other that; each is this *and* that. What

in the world, then, has art got to do with it? Exactly as much, as if you had or had not the toothache. Bring out your works! And each, I beg, singly, with his own productions. No Cook's personally conducted tours through the spirit of the age! For there is a turnstile in front of the ticket-office, and fame makes no reduction for schools and societies.

It is a very inadequate angle of vision that cannot span the interval between your own short life and the nearest point of eternity. If you have left a permanent work behind you at your death, then you will begin your youth; if not, you were born old, as old as a shrivelled apple in spite of all the blowing of your own trumpet and the donning of new plumage. Or is it, perhaps, just because one knows the horn will sound the "kill" to-morrow, that this shameless profligacy is indulged in to-day?

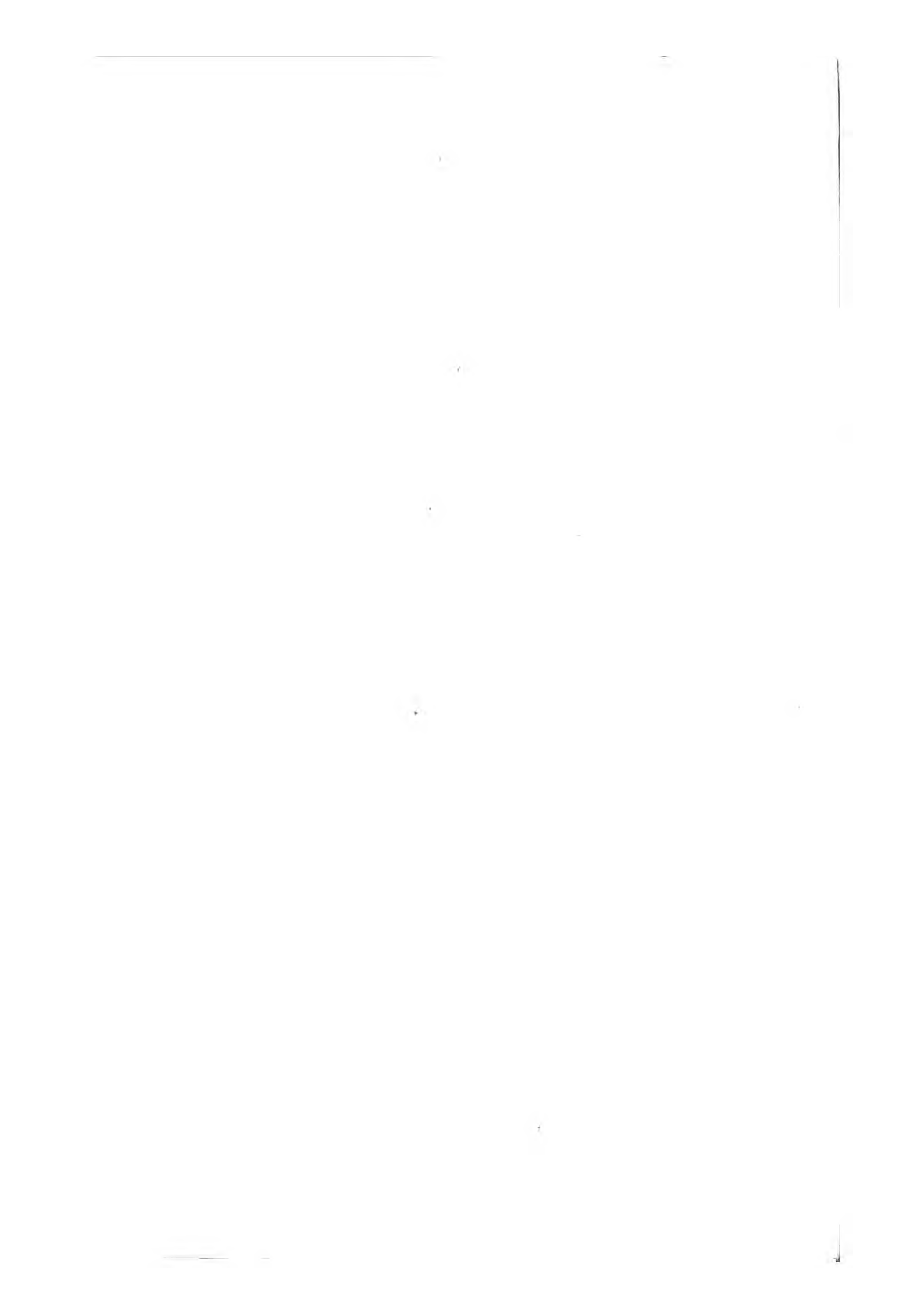
To-day you are still green, at any rate, greenish? I congratulate you heartily. The colour of fame, however, is not green but evergreen. To-day you are beyond dispute the flower of the nation, though I prefer to use other flowers for my buttonhole. Remember, however, there is also such a thing as cauliflower.

Certainly, youth has an advantage in natural selection, in marriage, love, and amourettes. If one of the senators of poesy took it into his silly head to try to cut you out with a tavern waitress, you would doubtless gain a brilliant victory over the old man. In a case of this kind, however, no great amount of genius is necessary. For if this is an advantage, it is, thank God, not a rare one. It is shared with millions of our fellow-men, and with

milliards of other bipeds of a lower species who make no claim to genius.

In conclusion, I have a secret for your ear. Youth, let me tell you, is like a carrousel; it runs round and round. One has hardly begun to be the youngest rider, before another, still younger, is at his heels. And just as he is in fine fettle to call the man in front of him a dotard, he hears behind him a titter of "old donkey". Don't you hear it? Just take a look at yourself in the mirror. There are already three charming puckers under both eyes. These, my friend, are young and hopeful wrinklets. And when these wrinklets become fullgrown wrinkles, an impudent band of adolescents will sneer at you, just as you now sneer at the ancients. Amen, so let it be!

DEFENCE



LITERARY SQUABBLES

A SPECIAL table in the public reading-room of the town I live in is reserved for the pamphlets. Weeks often elapse before I find leisure to look at them. Every time I do, however, I invariably find, to my astonishment, that a polemic is being carried on against some literary notability. To-day the quarry is Baumbach, Julius Wolff, or Ebers; the day after to-morrow it is Lindau; another time it is Paul Heyse or Wildenbruch. Sometimes the writers are slaughtered in batches, to make the Muses' holiday. My list, as the reader will note, is far from being exhaustive, but it is much more than long enough to make me enquire, with some amazement, into the cause of this bitterness. I see well enough that the assailants are acting in good faith, that they are zealous for their cause, that they are concerned for good taste and poetry. But I cannot understand what taste and poetry stand to gain when one author galls the kibes of another. "We must tear away the mask from the spurious great man, in order that the public may see his real visage." This is the stock excuse. Apart altogether from the fact that it is rather an unmannerly kind of unmasking to tear out our neighbour's hair in the process, I take the liberty of disbelieving the quarrelsome gentry, and assert that not one of our authors wears a mask. They write and compose just as it comes naturally to them, each according to his own talent. And this talent, be it observed, is generally

far superior to that of the mail-clad hotspurs of the attack, who are hardly able to express their views in correct language.

It seems to me, we must once for all settle the question whether a man who produces a play or publishes a book thereby undertakes the duty of enlightening at least a score of centuries. If so, well and good. We can then close our bookshops and our bookstalls, and quench our thirst henceforth solely with the textual criticism of the classics. If, however, the answer is no, I do not see what should hinder us from enjoying every talent in its own field, or what should make us grudge it its success, even if that is out of all proportion to its merits. The public has its whims and its pets, and will insist on this prerogative to the end of time. I grant you that the public does not always choose its favourites for their purely literary merit, and I allow that it would be better if it were otherwise; but this evil does not seem to afford any decent excuse for the unbridled outpourings, which are often desperately like lampoons. Indeed, I cannot even consider the evil as of very grave importance. And no one, I imagine, will suspect me of partiality in saying this, for I certainly am not among the darlings of the public. "But the false gods of the day bar the way for real talent!" It would be well for all us unknown writers if nothing else stood in our way than the twentieth edition of a book by Baumbach or the hundredth performance of a play by Blumenthal! But even if they do stand in the way, the question still remains whether it is right and proper to clear the course by a literary battue.

In short, the more I observe the zeal against the "false gods of the day", the more convinced I am that the cure is worse than the disease. The taste of the public has never been improved by bludgeoning, only by good productions. Moreover, it would be lucky if there were no worse taste than that of the public. I certainly know worse. On the other hand the violent feud of author with author, even when it waves the standard of principle, inevitably injures the dignity of the craft. How can we ask anyone to respect us when we do not respect each other? When soon there will not be a single living author who has not been "unmasked" by some foot-soldier of the Muses? There is one approved means of relieving the vexation caused by the alleged inferior performance of another man—*viz.* do something better yourself. He for whom this remedy is too expensive may criticise the darling of the public, so far as his knowledge allows and if he really considers it his duty; but he certainly ought to do so politely, and even (if I may make so bold) respectfully.

ON THE MORAL STANDPOINT IN CRITICISM

HERE is another charming spectacle! One group of writers excommunicating the others as loathly swine; and a second group introducing the first to the ladies as lecherous and debauched old men. And yet we are called upon to respect the craft of authorship!

I do not know who began it, but I am much concerned to find out who will finally have the good taste to put an end to it. If, however, I am not wrongly informed, the rumpus, on the contrary, only begins in dead earnest when (as would appear) certain well-meaning societies take literature under their wing, in the name of outraged morality and in the form of a crusade against a group of modern authors.

The victim this time, as it happens, is a fraction which is protected neither by popularity nor by fame and importance—a fraction, moreover, which uses its somewhat callow talents in making life miserable for its colleagues. Other authors are therefore strongly tempted to rub their hands complacently, and to aid the moral coalition with congratulations, blessings, and weapons. All the more do I deem it necessary to utter a word of earnest warning; and, as I have always known myself as an æsthetic antagonist of the group in question, I trust that my warning will be listened to.

I consider it a very thoughtless and ill-judged policy to get rid of a literary opponent, whoever he may be, by the aid of the parson, the attorney-general, or the public instinct. Thebans and Athenians may fight each other, but they should not apply for help from Philip of Macedon. For the writer, Philip of Macedon means any power that judges of literary works from other than the literary standpoint, no matter how venerable its name. Such an encroachment eventually creeps round about to every one of us, and so the bitterest enemies should combine in order to offer a unanimous

resistance in the name of literature and the privileges of their craft.

This is, however, not always admitted. We are apt to think that "true" liberty cannot be endangered by the interposition of so exalted a personage as morality. In the consciousness of our own rectitude, we refuse to believe that the attack will come round to us. I maintain, however, that no author, who takes his art seriously and conscientiously, even if endowed with a really virginal modesty, is safe from a sudden indictment for moral delinquency in one or other of his works. And when I say "no author", I do not except even the greatest, even one who will eventually be held up to the nation as a sound moral instructor. When I reflect that even Gottfried Keller was accused of immorality for the most spiritual of his works (*Romeo and Juliet*), I fancy I need advance no further examples. If an author made it his special aim to give no offence and devoted his whole life to writing for twelve-year-old girls, even that would not save him. For in that case it would be easy to accuse him of "cunningly concealed lubricity".

The phenomenon has not only its cause, but also a good literary basis—and a double one at that.

So long as the world stands, he will scarcely be able to abjure cynicism who deals with realistic material in a realistic manner, who practises both humour and satire. Cynicism in this sphere cannot be avoided without damage to body and soul. A simpering and prudish generation, insisting on decent breech-clouts, actually frustrates the possibility of masterpieces of this character. He who introduces cynicisms into his literary works

is not therefore a swine; if he were, Shakespeare and Goethe and Schiller would all be swine, and literature as a whole would be a pigsty. But that is not all. It is well-known that modern realism has made truth to life its fundamental law in a more far-reaching sense than was ever before the case. It posits realism not only as a means but as its highest aim. Whether this is right or wrong is beside the question; that is a purely literary concern, which has nothing to do with morality. If once, however, literal truth to life has been accepted as the aim of art, the individual author, holding this faith, is no longer free to ignore, for external reasons, important sections of reality. Criticism, too, has no right to blame him for doing what his literary convictions force him to do. One of these great sections is the sexual life, with its spiritual projections, the significance of which can be denied only by naïveté or hypocrisy. If, indeed, we are striving to produce a realistic fresco style, as in the drama, then this theme may, perhaps, be avoided. If, on the other hand, we have to deal with the analytical representations of romance, I do not see how it is possible to give true pictures of life without risk of offence to the jeune fille. It is no more reasonable to demand that a realistic romance should steer clear of the unseemly than it would be in the case of a physiological or pathological textbook. Why should I not express my conviction fearlessly? I count it a fault in a naturalistic romance when the author equips truth with a fig-leaf for the sake of dear old respectability. Literary men do not write for men alone, but neither do they write for women alone. They write

for the nation and (if practicable) for the world. A nation, however, is the sum of the genius of all its eminent men and women. Who would presume to regulate this genius by police by-laws and pedagogic rules? And who in the world should learn the unvarnished naked truth, if this genius may not? Must the whole nation march in blinkers from the cradle to the grave, like the crocodile of a girls' school? Everyone may read or leave what he will; an artist, however, cannot write what he will but what he must. If, therefore, an author, in the name of truth, writes something disagreeable, the proper question is, simply, is this offensive statement true or not, or (to go back to our pigs) is truth a swine or is it not? If it is, we may blame the truth, but not its reporter. He who writes thus suffers personally from a real idiosyncrasy against every obscenity, and cannot read Rabelais because the coprological bombardment disgusts him. Criticism, however, swallows a classical dung-beetle like this as if it were candy, with profound reverences; on the other hand it prosecutes, just for a few unseemlinesses, the moderns, who are as far from Rabelais as white-frocked confirmation candidates are from a tough old master-at-arms. They call this sort of thing literary history; I call it straining at gnats and swallowing elephants. I may blame the victims for calling it hypocrisy, but I cannot scold them.

That is one side; now for the other.

The naturalists, from their professional cubby-hole, have spied the moral nakedness of their antagonists with equal keenness and malice. Their reproach is that

of "cunningly veiled and disguised lubricity". They find this lubricity in Heyse, in Baumbach, in Julius Wolff, in Marlitt, even in the most virtuous of domestic romances. I do not dispute this, but I can amplify it a little; there is lubricity, concealed or otherwise, in Homer, Herodotus, Horace, Ovid, Ariosto, Titian, Correggio, and Rubens. Verily we find ourselves in enviable company. I continue. There is hidden or open wantonness in the whole of French culture, and still more in the whole Greek world. In conclusion, I find frank lubricity defended by Lessing in a sober treatise. Such exalted examples might be continued indefinitely; but I think I have given enough. If I were a philosopher, I should make it my task to show that "veiled lubricity" —*i.e.* the sense of form or delicacy of feeling or sensibility to the beautiful—is really one of the noblest and holiest of levers in art and culture and cosmic evolution. I should show that imagination and idealism are closely connected with the appeal of beauty of form, if they are not, indeed, actually rooted in it; and that, if it were not for the admixture of the neurological element, we should still be using, instead of table-napkins and pen-wipers, the means afforded by our own prehensile monkey-tails. As, however, I am no philosopher, I restrict myself to observation. My observation, then, tells me that the European nations most highly advanced in spiritual culture have all, without exception, a strongly marked sensuous tendency; that the so-called artistic natures are as a rule eminently sensuous natures; and that idealists, owing to their cult of formal beauty, are more easily led away by the beauty of the female

form than others—particularly those others who have no imagination. And are the naturalists themselves free from sensuality in their own writings, for all their grim pursuit, well armed with test-tubes, for every shadow of a spark of hidden lubricity? I trow not. All I have noticed is that, in the name of vigour and truth, they perfume the sensual with stench, which may make the matter better, but does not make it different.

The double equation works out thus: in the camp of truth we shall seldom find that unseemliness is absent, and the same is true of slyly veiled, concealed sensuousness in the camp of beauty. I am very sorry about it, but there it is.

What next?

Well, I shall simply mention a modest fact. Ever since I have practised criticism—and I practise oftener than is necessary for my private well-being—I have made it a rule never, under any circumstances, to denounce a book as immoral. I have kept this rule up to now, and it has stood me in good stead.

"But, good heavens, one really cannot!"

I beg your pardon, one can.

"Yes, but what on earth do you do when a book is sent to you that fairly reeks with immorality?"

I judge it by its literary qualities.

"Without animadverting on the scandal?"

Yes, without an appeal to Philip of Macedon.

"So you completely ignore——"

"I beg your pardon. I ignore nothing, I judge. Only when I seal my verdict, I do not borrow my sealing-

wax from either the parson or the police. The secret is this. If a book consists wholly of obscenities or indecencies, it is also rubbish from the artistic point of view. If a writer introduces the disgusting without justification, that is a fault of style. Do you ask for examples? Take the case of Wieland. Wieland is indecent and—tedious. I could also, instead of Wieland, give you many instances from the most modern books; and you will find every time that the gratuitous introduction of indecencies or sensualities derogates from the literary value of the work.

"And you believe it is enough to stigmatise the fault solely from the literary standpoint?"

I even believe that it will be more effective than any other critical method.

"Are you not afraid of being a little frivolous?"

I have no fear of being frivolous in the service of art; for art is sacred in my eyes.

As already said, this is a simple and modest fact, which I submit to the testing of my brother critics. As far as I myself am concerned, the more I observe, the more convinced I am of the results that other methods lead to.

In particular, they may bring about the absurd situation that the moral pig-dealer will wake up some fine morning and find that he himself has been sold as a swine. This might happen quite unexpectedly; and I heartily hope it will.

In general, they may lead, in the first place, to the abandonment of literary freedom to inartistic forces, from whose violence the worst may be expected. Did they not, in the name of menaced morality and religion,

attack even Phidias and Euripides, even Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe? In the second place, they run the risk of provoking the eternal laughter of posterity if, by evil chance, they discipline a sinner who later should be universally recognised as a master.

PHILANTHROPY AT THE PISTOL'S POINT

THE world is already familiar with a Pistol Point Press. It now looks as if it had also to accept Pistol Point Philanthropy.

For several months a blameless and honourable university professor was systematically persecuted, constantly and unsparingly, simply because he had had the temerity to express an unfavourable opinion of a certain Asiatic people.[1]

This is a fine state of things! A benevolent terrorism? Philanthropic zealots, with a collecting-box in one hand and a muzzle in the other? A "Ring" of United Albion, Zion, and Samaria, which denounces as "Moabites" all who permit themselves an independent judgment in philanthropic matters? An Anglo-Armenian censorship for our universities?

It remains an open question whether this astonishing precedence given to the misery of Asia Minor over every other human misery is justifiable—*i.e.* whether it

[1] August Oncken, professor of political economy at the university of Berne, was violently attacked in 1896 for his Turkish sympathies in the matter of the so-called "Armenian Atrocities".

has any sense of proportion and has its only reason in the fact that shed blood cries to heaven—or whether it is not really the aggrieved policy of London that is lifting its voice. But the question really presents itself so; are we to have philanthropy with a dagger, just as Döring's soap is accompanied by an owl.[1] As if no one should dare to murmur when the saints meeting in Exeter Hall have trumpeted a "Hetze" against the Turks.

Benevolent terrorism. In point of fact, we are not so very far removed from this. What, exactly, is terrorism? The silence of all when one is sacrificed. Nothing more is needed. Not the smallest actual force is necessary to establish a terrorism; all that is required is for everyone to lie low and say nothing.

It seems to me that we have already lain low far too long. We have a university teacher persecuted to the point of ruin, suspected, morally assassinated, merely because he is said to have calumniated the Armenians. I have heard of blasphemy against God, but blasphemy against the Armenians is new to me. If it goes on like this, it will soon be less dangerous to speak freely in Russia about the Czar than for us to do the same about Asia Minor.

There is nothing for it but that all unbiased men should spring to the aid of the isolated victim of philanthropic hate of one's neighbour, until the biased ones remember their common interest in liberty of opinion.

Those, however, who have the most urgent interest

[1] The trade-mark of this extensively advertised soap was an owl.

in putting an end to the shameful persecution of a Berne professor are the Armenians themselves and their protectors, advocates, and friends. For if there is anything that can irretrievably ruin the so-called "Armenian Movement" (*i.e.* this onset of the orthodox on heretical Turkey), it is just this bombardment of intimidation. Nothing cools off sympathy so drastically as to see a bomb peeping out of the sleeve above the petitioner's hand—whether it be loaded with powder or with poison or with suspicions. So that's that for the well-organised international Lazarus Artillery! Bellicose martyrs indeed!

"Fellow-Christians" is all right. But what about *Dynamite* Fellow-Christians?[1] This brand of brothers in the Lord seems to my occidental palate a little too highly seasoned; it smacks of nitro-sulphuric acid.

No, moral massacres in Switzerland, as a postscript to atrocities in Armenia, carried on in the name of humanity, are absolutely nothing else than a Turkey of Philanthropists. If we have only a few more months of this crocodile benevolence, we shall find ourselves forced to open charitable subscription lists for the cruelly slaughtered victims of love for our neighbour.

[1] The German play upon words here cannot be reproduced in English. Mitchristen = Fellow-Christians. Dynamit-Christen = Dynamite Christians.

LITERATURE

THE FORBIDDEN EPIC

THE maxim that the Epic is no longer permissible in modern times is one of the most precious gems in the thesaurus of every man of culture. If one ventures to knock shyly at the portals of the brain and beg for a friendly explanation of why this is the case, one is met by a peevish murmur to the effect that the primitive days of the nations, the youth of mankind, and a naïve outlook on the universe form the only tolerable atmosphere for the Epic. Besides, the conclusion goes practically without saying, as is proved by the total absence of this form of art to-day, accompanied by the brilliant development of the romance, the true epic of the nineteenth century. In fact, it is an eternal and fundamental truth.

Thus, since the Homeric period furnished the abovementioned conditions, the epic was then all right. Since they are lacking to-day, the epic is now all wrong. Verbum sap.

Good. The idea is plausible. But nobody seems to find it necessary to prove the assumption that the alleged fact is a knockdown blow, that the Homeric age really did afford the required conditions. That is, presumably, another eternal and fundamental verity. Or what would be the good of the popular catchwords that enable us to dispense with thinking, knowledge, learning, and other annoyances of that kind? And, of

course, when we have not the most primitive ideas of what a given era was, it is clear that it must have been a primitive era.

I do not need here to give a historical lecture. But if the cavalier manner in which Homer handles his gods betokens a naïve outlook on the universe; if the exceedingly blasé and degenerate culture of the Ionic Asia Minor represents a state of infancy; if never-ending bewailing of the present, homesick longing for the past, and despair of the future are signs of the youth of humanity, then I claim the right to assert that the nineteenth century is an example of childhood and to call even the Barrisons naïve.[1]

This shows that the left leg of the fundamental verity is rather lame. Let us next deal with the right leg.

"Primitive condition, childhood, youth of humanity," "naïveté of outlook on the universe", "bloom, maturity, old age of nations". Who would venture to argue here as if these were known quantities? What if I asserted that humanity was never young and that no era was ever naïve? And this is just what I do assert. Is there really a biology of nations? Does anyone know when a people is young or when it is old? Is there anyone who would venture to decide dogmatically whether (*e.g.*) the Germans or Russians of to-day are an old or a young race, or whether they are at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of their career? And so on.

And more. Or rather still less!

[1] The Barrisons were a group of charming and highly accomplished English dancers, whose elaborate evolutions were much admired about the time this essay was written (*i.e.* forty years ago).

We do not even know what a "nation" or a "people" is. Is it determined by its mother-tongue and traditions, or by its constitution, politics, fatherland, and boundaries, or by its habits, customs, festivals, and religion? Do we know a single law of the life of nations, even if it be assumed that there can be laws of life for an abstract collective personality like a "people"? Such considerations show that all the wisdom about naïve views of the universe, or the childhood and youth of mankind, or the youth and age of nations, is sheer foolishness.

Moreover, the fate of this eternal and fundamental verity is just the same as that of all other such verities. If we take the trouble to make a closer examination, we shall always discover, low down in the right hand corner, a proper name in small characters, with "fecit" and a date appended. The eternal and fundamental verity that the epic belongs to youthful nations only has taken a course at the University of Tübingen and speaks the Swabian dialect. Before the days of Vischer no one knew the first thing about it. Even in the eighteenth, as in all previous centuries, the epic was still regarded as the dearest and highest aim of every poet. Lessing put it in the first place, Goethe essayed it, Schiller yearned to it. And what has become of the famous sun of Homer? I suppose it has suffered an eclipse.

I am no more blind than other people to Vischer's merits. But the proposal that, out of affection for this Swabian Isaiah, we should propagate by a process of natural selection the owlish idea of trading the epic for

the romance, is surely a piece of the most egregious tomfoolery.[1]

Should we then wait for the epic until the gracious return of primitive conditions, naïve views of the universe, and the youth of mankind? Then we'll have to wait until the evening of time. For this state of affairs will never return, for the very good reason that it has never been there before.

INDUSTRY AND INSPIRATION

A Psychological Study of Poetic Creation.

THE necessity of energetic labour after the inspiration has arrived no longer needs to be proved, for even the children and the children's children of to-day know quite well that works of art do not fly readymade to the pen. But I wish to point out here that industry has an important rôle to play also as the forerunner and pioneer of inspiration; the old counsel to await the proper mood or inspiration would better be replaced by the diametrically opposite maxim, which tells us to challenge and entice the mood and the inspiration.

I must, however, make at once some important reservations, to guard against misunderstandings. The indispensable assumption is, of course, preëminent poetic talent, because, when that is lacking, I know only

[1] The word used here by Spitteler is "Schwabenstreich", lit. "Swabian action", just as we might say "an action worthy of the Wise Men of Gotham".

one practical rule for creative work: "give it up". Further, the value of diligence as a preliminary to inspiration does not apply to the conception of the work, for here all depends on the inspiration and the degree of its value; not even the most admirable artistic skill can make up for deficiencies or gaps in this sphere. The poet who sets about his task without an adequate imaginative impulse is foredoomed to shipwreck along with his work. The original inspiration has its birth, as everyone knows, in regions of the soul far beyond the powers of sense, will, and intellect; preliminary work is mediate and passive, and requires to be well shaken up by life. I go even a step farther and maintain that the first inspiration, no matter how strong it may be, is not in itself adequate. The young make a mistake when they proceed to work immediately after an inspired plan has suggested itself. On the contrary, before a plan can be considered ripe for execution, there are a great number of secondary and supplementary conceptions to be considered. For any thorough work there should be a specific idea for each scene, so that a continuous chain of pictures should remain steadily before the imagination. Then only is the work ready to be begun; and at this stage it generally renders the patient so uneasy that he is compelled to work, whether he wishes or no. Now these secondary inspirations are no more docile than the original parent conception, and any attempt at coercion leads to a pernicious forgery. The poet is thus often, indeed usually, compelled to let his valuable designs slumber and germinate in the unplumbed depths of his soul for years, until they have accreted

other related sub-inspirations in sufficient number and fullness. Those who begin too soon rob their material, in spite of all their art, of some of its finest possibilities. Thus it is that care in his estimate of the exact state of his ripening plan is one of the greatest needs of the artist.

After the task has actually been taken in hand, the whole man must devote to it the tensest activity of his mind and all his other spiritual forces, and must not rest until it is completed. I hold interruptions during the period of accomplishment to be highly unsatisfactory; the same is true of too easygoing experiment and too protracted weighing of one thing against another. Here, as I believe, more respect is due to industry than is generally granted. In all far-reaching plans, in spite of the most careful preparation, in spite of all boldness of will and all genuineness of inspiration, there suddenly comes, sooner or later, a disagreeable hitch. This may be because a hitherto unnoticed difficulty creeps into the light out of a fold in the material; or because body and mood fail to work after months of tension; or because unavoidable claims of the outer life are too insistent and drag us out of the proper connection, so that the earlier pride of creation refuses to return in its pristine fervour. In such cases I hold it wrong to give way and wait for the revival of desire and mood, though this practice has been practised and recommended by celebrated poets. This conduct is assuredly prudent and sure, but it is not great. If the musicians of the eighteenth century and the painters of the fifteenth had acted on this principle, we should

have been deprived of half their works. Is it not possible to think of a similar quick accuracy of aim in the case of a poet's execution? I venture to hope so and to believe so. If my hopes do not deceive me, the world may one day, in favourable auspices, witness the spectacle of poets who will rival the fertility of the great painters and composers. This means that the present output of poetic production would be increased threefold. For what interrupts the continuous flow of creation is not any deficiency in the supply of inspiration of the first order; every great artist has his magazine-gun full of cartridges. Nor is it the time they take to ripen, because, though they ripen slowly, there are always, as in the case of oranges, some ripe fruit on the tree. The meagreness of output is due partly to the struggle for the proper artistic form, partly to hesitation and fastidiousness in execution. The first may be spared us by a timely birth in a favourable era, where definite forms of art already exist. The second is a matter of energy, which, it is true, does not always accommodate itself to the hygienic rules of Niemayer.[1]

My position, then, is this. After the work has been begun, one should pay no attention to the mood of the moment, nor evade any form of difficulty, nor allow oneself any sort of pause; the work should be completed out of hand. Is this, however, possible; and if it is possible, is it advantageous? The necessary brevity does not prevent me from answering this question distinctly. Inspiration, though it always

[1] Niemayer was a German physician, whose health exercises were once in vogue.

arrives unexpectedly and unsummoned, is not so independent of thought as is generally assumed. On the contrary, the process of thinking serves to fill the imagination with fertilising elements, out of which, in some unforeseen moment, the vision bursts on our gaze like the lightning flash from the pregnant cloud. Work is therefore like a lightning conductor or (to vary the figure) like a plough, which routs out all the good things slumbering below the surface and brings them under the illuminating coöperation of the ever-busy imagination. Hardly any artist would deny the fact that, immediately after a strenuous effort, the creative imagination is present in greater bulk and more willing mood than in a state of dreamy repose. Experience shows also that the more vigorously an author deals with the old inspirations, the more diligently he has worked during his life, the richer flows the stream of new inspirations. There must, then, be a relationship of cause and effect between industry and inspiration.

Without any doubt, however, the inspiration never appears exactly on the spot where I desire and need it. The attempt to overcome a difficulty satisfactorily, or to fill neatly a definite gap in the imagination, by an act of will and careful thought, will certainly fail. All the same I should apply myself to the work with all my power, because in its course visions appear that will be advantageous for other parts of the work, of which I am, for the moment, not thinking at all. I believe I can lay down the following law for the phenomena of visions. A vision never appears at the point on which the creator has concentrated his attention, but at a point

referring to either an earlier or a later stage of the work. And the number of the visions will be proportional to the energy of the labour. For my own use I call this the law of the ricocheting imagination. Work spreads snares, in which some fine day the visions are enmeshed. For this reason I set myself to work, quite unconcernedly, even in the bleakest and most barren mood. For what is a mood? Merely a matter of the nerves. But the creative imagination is not a matter of nerves, but a sacred thing. A true and beautiful legend tells us that the Muse visits the poet without invitation. Still more true and beautiful is it when the poet returns the visit and does not let himself feel dismayed if he does not find her at home. Or, in more prosaic language, the artistic mood is always present in good material. He who subdues his nervous mood will assuredly find the artistic mood just as soon as he really grapples again with the material.

It would be a grave error to expect and wait for the counsel of inspiration in such difficulties as relate to the work of composition; if the creator (*e.g.*) postponed the work for later reconsideration when faced by apparently inextricable entanglements or by the necessity of choice between motifs of seemingly equal value. These things really lie outside the realm of the unknown. There are no complicated visions. Visions are always simple and absolute; they cannot disentangle, sift, and separate; they cannot select, arrange, and collect; they can neither discover relationships nor supply glosses. They never extend beyond the bounds of a single, clearly defined scene, and they are unable to combine

things separated by either time or space. Indeed, if we investigate more closely, we find that persons and groups of things, within a frame of time and place, are accessible for the vision only when they are combined in a perspicuous and easily recognised manner. It follows that any hindrance to composition must be overcome by the labour of thought and will, that the very simplest conditions of time and space must prevail, before we can expect a poetic picture from the imagination. Indeed, while one is doing this, the imagination will generally leap as eagerly into the newly-created clearance as a rabbit would jump at a fresh and fragrant head of lettuce.

Such, then, are my modest personal experiences. As, however, I have no private preserve of natural laws, I assume that the situation will be very much the same anywhere else.

TEMPO AND ENERGY OF POETIC CREATION
(1890)

TO judge from the unanimity of pamphlets and reviews, it seems that in the Germany of to-day waiting and pausing, as exemplified in creation and publication at long intervals only, are accounted to the poet for a virtue. This judgment may be quite in place as a protest against the customary journeyman labour, which regularly turns out its drama or romance once or twice a year; and I acknowledge this all the more willingly

because I trace in myself the liveliest aversion to this sort of hack-work.

Unfortunately it is the curse of Alexandrian ages that every æsthetic truth is so long mumbled in the mouth of wisdom that it eventually becomes septic. If the maxim is supported also by the word or example of authorities, thought generally retires gracefully, with the result that no account is taken of correcting or supplemental facts.

It appears to me that we are now threatened by the danger that the fresh courage and richness of the younger generation will be twisted into a reproach, merely because it so happened that one or other of the modern bigwigs lent his sanction to a thrifty and cautious method of production. There is obviously no intelligent correction here; but experience teaches us that it is beyond the powers of a theoretically critical generation to estimate disparate things in the same manner at the same time. The danger is imminent, and, in order to forestall it, I venture to remind you of a few facts in the domain of artistic physiology.

Richly endowed and original natures are at all times fertile and in the highest degree anxious to create, unless they are hampered by particular hindrances. Of these there are, unfortunately, many, such as the striving for new forms of art, when the inherited forms have outlived their usefulness. If, however, everything is in order, both within and without, the great men produce with a marvellous, often quite feverish energy. Examples from the history of music and the plastic arts are patent to all; there is no

reason why it should be otherwise in the realm of poetry, provided it finds suitable forms at hand. And Germany at least, if I make no mistake, knows one classic of the first rank who suffered no injury from his uninterrupted masterful creation, which endured until his latest breath. I refer to Schiller.

Æsthetic problems must be handled with a very delicate touch; catchwords and authorities simply kill them—evidently not a process of encouraging creation. Some forms of art are adapted for cold storage, working over, and retouching; others must be completed at one stroke. In some cases, the good things must be drawn out gently as with a butterfly's proboscis; in other cases, they must be hastily grubbed up, as a bull rips up the turf with his horns. One fruit differs from another in the degree of ripeness at which it may be enjoyed. Some cannot hang too long on the bough; others need merely a short exposure to a strong sun. It has (*e.g.*) long been recognised that works planned on a grand scale need not be handled with such meticulous care as an elegy or a lyric. No intelligent person has ever reproached a playwright for the regular intervals of his production, for the annual harvesting of his crop. This fact is in itself enough to controvert the theory against which I am fighting—that is, if a theory ever allowed itself to be convinced by facts. Along with the differences in the field of labour, we have to reckon with the differences of the individual creators. In the first rank of these come the differences in the kind of endowment and the differences in temperament. As to endowment, even when we confine our-

selves to the highest kind of endowment, *viz.* genius, we find that nature furnishes varieties differing in elasticity and vitality. We find tiny intermittent springs that flow only after a thunderstorm; we find capricious devil brooks, which suddenly rise in swelling waves and a suddenly subside; and we find placid, deep, moon-ruled waters, alternating soberly in ebb and flood. But nature also produces geniuses of meadow and stream, which are so abundantly charged with sap and seed that every breath must create or choke in the attempt. Yet, forsooth, it seems to be expected that these should close their blessed mouths in deference to some fashionable dogma of the moment. Or must the Three Wise Virgins of the Night be forced to muzzle themselves with Papageno's padlock?[1] To tell the truth, I feel very suspicious of the sense of beauty in those who complain of a superfluity of beauty in art.

Turning our attention to temperament, we reach the important realm of personality.

There are contemplative, contented, esoteric visionaries who sit, smiling contentedly, under a blossoming willow, with their rod between their knees, and with half-closed lids wait patiently for days or even weeks, until the goldfish bite. Such men will come to the market with some choice specimens, but not very often. On the other hand, there are also fresh and hardy men of the imagination, who put out into the deep in a swift boat, sniffing the morning wind, driving shoals of small fish into the nets, and spearing larger fish, until all is spurt and foam. I quite understand that

[1] The reference is to Mozart's *Zauberflöte.*

people love this sort; I love them myself, whatever others may say. But when they tell me that I can do so only by despising the other sort, I say "Stuff and nonsense".

If we have to decide which of the two temperaments is the nobler, the contemplative or the energetic (though it is better not to compare them), there is little question but that the preference must be given to the more vigorous temperament. This I shall prove by three examples, two logical and one zoological. It is open to the strong poet to resign himself to contemplation in his intervals of rest; but it is not so easy for the contemplative poet to jack himself up to a course of continuous energy. If you peep through the bedroom window of the poets who are envied for their thrice-blessed serenity, you will find them in the evening of their days, sighing over their unhappy indolence. Nature is not peopled by fish alone, but also by birds and quadrupeds. Some of these may be captured in snares and traps, but many must be shot on the wing, by the sportsman of sharp eye and ready hand; others again have to be untiringly pursued on horseback, until they finally surrender. "If you don't first feel it, you'll never capture it."[1] Please do not overlook this fact: he did not catch it himself, his spaniel retrieved it, and he patted the dog while removing the game from his mouth. And last, but not least. How are you going to capture the noblest quarry of all, such as the eagle, except by exerting the utmost energy? You may sit a long time in ambush, with your yearning poetic eyes, but the eagles will not

[1] *Faust*, Part I, line 554.

come down to you; they won't even come within sight, much less within shot. For them you must bravely climb over snow and ice, sweating and panting, until at last the upper air bathes your body and the longed-for bird screams over your head.

ON THE VALUE OF COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

THERE is something to be said for the custom of publishing lyric poems in one common volume, containing as much as possible both in quantity and variety —songs, ballads, epigrams, anecdotes, riddles, occasional poems, exercises in metrical form, and so on. One advantage of the practice is that, as probably there will not be an over-supply of available matter, one has a chance to rummage every drawer for the reserves, so as to make a sizeable volume. Lyrics, at any rate good lyrics, occupy very little space. Some dead ballast must usually be added in order to provide the publisher with the requisite weight. This is the why and wherefore of the inevitable translations and travel-verses. By the way, every poet should bind himself by a blood-curdling oath never to write verses about a town or district (not even Venice), and not to admit any translations to his collection. The very fact that poems of this kind are apt to be described by the critics as "imperishable pearls of literature" should warn him that he is here on dangerous ground.

The custom, then, is practical. All the same, a collection of diversities is not a real combination. In such cases the book is bound together only by its binding. If you take away the cover or the title, the poems fall asunder and slink off, each into its own proper drawer. But even when the cover and title are still there, even when the binding holds out, it is impossible for the imagination of the reader to make a unity of them, to conceive of them as one large reminiscent picture. For a book of collections is not organically articulated, it is not obviously proportioned, it has no centre and no point of general observation. It is at first difficult to find one's way in it; it is hard to remember where such and such a passage occurred. Faute de mieux, we have to avail ourselves of pencil tickings in the index, just as Tourist Societies put up signs on the beech-trees to enable us to find our way in the woods.

This, however, is all by the way. The main point is this: twenty heterogeneous poems are twenty times a single poem, not twenty poems. It does not add up. Emotion can no more add together an enigma, a ballad, and a ghazal than the intellect can make an addition sum of clothes, vegetables, and domestic animals. They all belong to the same owner, and they must be duly accredited as his property; but taken together they seem just the contents of the lumber-room. Heterogeneous matter is more when it is separated, less when it is combined.

In contradistinction to this, I hold that the bringing together of more or less cognate and homogeneous products—making a chain, a garland, a cycle, or what you will—belongs to a higher principle of selection.

From a cycle, *i.e.* the juxtaposition of like objects, is born a unity, a combination; a corporate unity, which creates a new value, transcending the value of the individual member—a collective value, which is not merely value but art value.

To explain. Every good poem or piece of music includes a whole world of allied potentialities of beauty, which all head in the same direction. A qualified reader or hearer, possessed of imagination, divines the indefinite outlines of these beauties and eagerly longs for them. If now these divine and desired outlines are filled in by the poet, if (in other words) he adds other allied works of art to the original, there ensues a marvellous feeling of content. First, there is the fulfilment of the desire. Then there is the feeling of rest, as the reader is not forced to change his point of view in passing from one enjoyment to another. Further, there is a sense of peace and homelike comfort, since the same world is repeatedly brought before us by the same artistic methods. Lastly, there is the impression of richness, for like may be summed up with like and remains in the memory as a unified picture. Here the situation is the very reverse of that in a motley collection. Twenty ballads are more than twenty ballads, they form a world of ballads.

It will be an additional advantage, if the unity extends also to the outer form. The effort of the poet to test himself in the most diverse forms of metre is intelligible, and in some cases praiseworthy; but it does not correspond to any need of the reader. The same or a similar form allows us to concentrate our attention on the subject, and foments the homelike satisfaction

already referred to. Too frequent change or too eccentric variety is unsettling. He, therefore, who exaggerates the correspondence between form and content, pursuing the one with the other at every step, becomes unrestful. Just as the epic remains faithful to its chosen metre, just as poetic narrative is best when it sticks to the ironclad strophe, so will it be to the advantage of cyclic unity if it uses the same, or at least cognate, forms for each individual poem.

The smaller and the smallest lyrics are absolutely dependent on the cycle to save them from sinking into oblivion through a fissure in the memory. There are some things which can be dished up alone, others only in quantity. We may offer one melon or one drama, but not one cherry or one song. One cherry is an insult; one song is a confession of poverty. Here once is really less than not at all. If a blind hen finds a grain of corn, the wiser course would be to keep that wonderful event to herself. In all seriousness I am of the opinion that he who has only two ballads or six songs to offer should keep this beggarly treasure for himself, even if the two ballads and six songs are of a high degree of perfection.

In a good poetical garden songs and ballads grow like grapes, twenty on one stalk. Berries picked singly are altogether too thin and too miserly.

Experience will confirm what we have here found by a logical process.

Which collections of poems and musical compositions are the most grateful, the most famous, the most popular? Always the most homogeneous. Such are

Schiller's Ballads, Schubert's Songs, Bach's Preludes and Fugues, Beethoven's Sonatas, Mendelssohn's Songs without Words, Chopin's Nocturnes and Mazurkas. Supposing Beethoven had written only the first four of his sonatas or Bach only the first four of his preludes, would these four, without their companions, have the same value for the world that they have as members of a cycle? Certainly not. In the first place they would not have fastened themselves on the imagination of men, and, moreover, they would lack the lines of communication that lead over from them to their sisters. In a cycle, number has not only arithmetical, but also unifying value.

One more superfluous example may be adduced to prove this. Have "Pieces for the Piano" or "Selected Compositions" ever succeeded in reaching an importance like that of the sonata cycle? Why do Weber's brilliant compositions for the piano fill so little room in the consciousness of the people? Simply because they appear separately, as sparse examples of each category. Why are compositions of the very first order, like Mozart's Fantasies for the Piano, almost unknown? Because there are too few of them. If there were twenty instead of four, all the world would be playing them.

ON THE VALUE OF ISOLATED BEAUTIES

ROSSINI'S jubilee has faded away, and newspaper articles in his praise or blame are no longer seen.

What gave me most to think in the critical articles about him was the light-hearted way in which they dealt with the isolated beauties of the master, with the elementary revelations of his music. The only question that interested them was a verdict on his conception, characteristic style, dramatic force, and "depth". Not a word about the fire of Rossini's tempo, or of the soaring flight of his allegri, or of the magical decrescendo at the end of his introductions to the overture (*e.g.* in *Tancred* and *Semiramis*), or of the golden melody of his a capella passages (*e.g.* the A sharp intermezzi in the *Barber of Seville* and *Othello*), or of the wonderful harmonic progression of his modulations, or of the swelling accents of his melodies (forcing the soul to jubilation by purely psycho-mechanic devices), or of his skill in incidentally forming cavatinas and refrains out of the simplest series of intervals within the triad. These and a thousand other marks of genius are treated as if they were of merely secondary importance.

I maintain, however, in defiance of general opinion, that these points are the things that matter, the others are the unimportant. And I take this opportunity of uttering a warning word in favour of elementary beauty, working direct without regard to combination, as against the excessive over-valuation of art or (rather) of technical and relative skill. Not only are there immortal works; there are also immortal motifs, and even immortal bars. Even if the form of the whole composition be defective, even if the supreme end (to which the details should minister) be incongruous and evanescent, even if the expression be inappropriate to

the effect aimed at, yet melodies, motifs, and harmonic progressions of the first order, though they may be dust-covered and forgotten, can never lose their intrinsic value. A change in the fashion, or even a naïve ear and attitude—and at once they shine again, with the brilliancy of a hundred years ago.

On the other hand, the risk of falling out of fashion and then of total oblivion always hangs over the most self-contained and compact compositions, unless they ransom themselves by single beauties in their subordinate parts. Posterity will respectfully mention the conformity of the composition to its plan, purpose, and definite rules as evidence of the composer's strength of will. But it will relegate the works to the history of barbaric industry; it will consign them to the same limbo which already harbours Hindoo cosmogony and symbolism, speculative philosophy, scholastic theology, and numerous other artistic subtleties spun by the human mind when divorced from the basis of fact. An art without isolated beauties, which charm in and for themselves, is a mark of barbaric peoples or eras. My definite—but not very exact—name for it is Vishnuism.

Those who rebel against these views should note the following points.

Experience teaches us that the creative artist is generally charmed by the individual beauties of a painting, while the layman, the art-critic, and the æsthete keep exclusively in view the purpose and technical perfection of the whole. No one, however, can doubt which of the two judgments is the more authoritative.

Moreover, the greatest masters of the self-contained form, such as Shakespeare, Schiller, and Dante, have at the same time devoted so much care to the sporadic beauties, that page after page, even sentence after sentence, brims over with them. I wonder whether anyone can give the names of past masterpieces which owe their continued existence solely to the perfection of their dramatic or other plan. On the other hand, there are many works in the most exalted ranks of the élite, which are defective in form or conclusion, such as the *Iliad*, the *Orlando Furioso*, *Don Quixote*, and (most striking of all) the *Divine Comedy*. As complete works of art they are for us Vishnu; for their sporadic beauties they are eternally enjoyable.

A CRITERION OF GREATNESS

THOSE who have noticed the fickleness of taste, the variations of judgment, the uncertainty of the most trustworthy æsthetic foundations, must often have anxiously asked themselves whether there are no common marks, in spite of the rotation of changing views, that will enable us to discriminate real greatness, of every kind and at every time, from the mediocre and the plausible. Pregnancy seems to me such a mark (though not the only one)—the urgent necessity of plain and concise expression. On the negative side this may be described as a dislike of long-drawn-out, secondary, transitional passages, a hatred of distension,

the *horror vacui*. Every great man, whoever he may be and whenever he lives, gives much in small space, whether the treasure overflows its banks only in this manner or whether he is economically husbanding his resources. Take Homer, or Schiller, or any other recognised genius, and turn to any page of them. Every page repays you with gold, everywhere your attention is fixed, everywhere you breathe the upper air, everywhere you find beauty. In the case of the truly great, there is no need to burrow through heaps of sand to find the grains of gold. There are no long passages that derive their significance from the context, that possess merely a transitional or composition value.

"Just read on, and you will soon find out." No, I will *not* read on. For a great writer does not hide beauty in a sausage of meal and chaff. Our touchstone works equally well for poetry and music. Whoever asks you to swallow thick masses of tone, before he gives you anything really nourishing, is not a great musician, whatever be his name. Take, on the other hand, Beethoven, Mozart, or Haydn. One, two, three; in the very first bars you have form, clearness, energy, and (generally) also beauty.

This comes from the fact that a great man, while he is creating, lives in eternity, where time is precious. For in eternity a second counts for more than an hour does in transitory life.

ON THE BALLAD

IT has been a great mistake to include the ballad among the forms of epic poetry. For the shaping of even the shortest epic demands quite other competencies and moods than the ballad. In its embarrassment, poetics took refuge in the formula: neither epical nor lyrical, but "lyrical-epic" or "epical-lyric". The logic of this seems to me doubtful. An animal that seems to be neither a dog nor a cat is not, on that account, a "cat-dog".

I ask simply, who writes and who wrote our ballads? Literary history answers, the lyricists. From this I draw the conclusion that the ballad must belong to lyric poetry. It is indirect lyric; lyric with a mask before its face.

Much more important than the definition of the ballad (in which, by the way, no one has been successful) is the discrimination between its varieties. For this discrimination increases the delicacy of our feeling for style and leads to new problems. First and foremost we have to distinguish between the naïve popular ballad and the conscious and technically elaborated ballad of art. Two huge halves, each of which contains a number of sub-sections.

I

I begin with the popular ballad. This has either a mythological background or (as a substitute for this) an

idealisation of human power, typified especially in the kingly crown. I divide the subject of this section, then, into mythological ballads and royal ballads.

The mythological ballad is concerned with the old, degenerate pagan gods, who have been banished from Christendom by religion and new views of life, but still "walk" in the realm of popular superstition, and even more eagerly with nixies and elves. These gods still take an active share in the fate of humanity. They were originally conceived as a hostile element; contact with them brings disaster. For this reason the genuine naïve popular ballad has generally a tragic end and a gruesome atmosphere.

This still shows in Bürger's ballads.

The ghastly ballad and the blood-curdling ballad are sub-varieties, or rather distortions and abortions, of the mythological ballad. It is extraordinary how identical the mythological characters of popular poetry are in different countries. The nixies and elves, under one name or another, are almost always present.

When we proceed to examine the second class of popular ballads—*viz.* the King ballads, we must remember that in the Middle Ages the crown was invested with something of a superhuman element. In the popular fairy tale the king's son might almost be described as a brevet fairy. The royal family appears as a kind of superhumans, the very name of whom has an idealistic connotation, and whose existence and demeanour are veiled in a golden shimmer. Thus there is no more trace of character-drawing than if the imagination were depicting angels. Whenever I meet

a king in a ballad or fairy tale, I long to play cribbage with him. They are playing-card sovereigns.

The kingly dignity, however, is not absolutely necessary for the hero of the royal ballad. Other ranks may play his rôle vicariously, provided only that the rank is idealistic enough to create a lordly glamour in the popular imagination. I regard the heroic ballad, the knightly ballad, the minstrel ballad, and the love ballad as all sub-varieties of the kingly ballad.

It is well known, though rather strange, that the popular fancy has the knack of surrounding famous criminals with an idealistic nimbus. This, however, involves the presupposition either that the hero commits his crimes at a healthy distance, or that he is regularly rendered harmless by condign punishment.

There is also the picaresque ballad or ballad of rascality, present in a very rich assortment. In the Near East the Heiduck and the Cossack, both originally robbing and murdering freebooters, are enveloped in a romantic haze; in West Europe it is the bandit and highwayman, like Rinaldo Rinaldini and Fra Diavolo. The corsair is a favourite even with a poet of Byron's rank. And even to-day no one who receives the attentions of the hangman can escape the fate of celebration in song. The doggerel broadsheets in honour of murderers, hawked about at fairs, are a lineal descendant of the old popular ballad.

On the other hand, the popular fancy has never been able to find a poetic side in the magistrate, the constable, the rate-collector, or the bailiff. There are no police ballads.

II

We now come to the second department of ballad poetry, *viz.* the artistic or literary ballad.

It is not enough for the literary artist to turn his attention to the ballad in order to produce a literary ballad. For the artist can deliberately ignore his own personality and culture in order to imitate the naïveté of popular poetry. This was the case (*e.g.*) with Bürger and Uhland. The result then is an archaistic work of art—*i.e.* one composed intentionally in the spirit of a bygone age and with the use of bygone symbols and forms. When Mendelssohn composed fugues and oratorios in the manner of Bach, he was working archaistically; when our architects build rococo or Gothic houses, they are building archaistically.

The literary ballad came into existence when a poet devoted himself heart and soul to the production of a ballad, without renouncing his own culture and skill. And this poet was, as you know, Goethe. He was the creator of the literary ballad. The Goethe Literary Ballad shows radical (though not ostentatious) variation from the popular form. And the differences occur both in the essential spirit and in the outer form.

In the literary ballad the original mythological content is allegorically indicated and rationalistically interpreted. The old gods are now artistically handled personifications of natural forces. The tragic and gruesome atmosphere disappears; in its place comes a higher form of thought, which spiritualises the whole treatment. Repose and charm, clearness and beauty in the pictures,

the tones, and the language bathe the Goethe ballad in sunshine. Thus, even when the end is tragic, no poignant emotion, much less a violent shock, is produced. The satisfaction of the æsthetic sense is so keen, that even tidings of death do not disturb its harmony. Wit and humour, and even a little instruction, come to light in the Goethe ballad.

The Goethe literary ballad is not, however, in every case superior to the popular ballad. Thus I cannot recognise the *Erl-König*, with its somewhat insistent rationalism, as the equal of its naïver models; and I am not the only poet to hold this opinion. But on the whole, the Goethe ballad is not only an advance, but a very great advance, on its prototypes.

If you want a test to discover whether a ballad does or does not belong to the category of popular ballad or its imitation, the archaistic ballad, ask yourself this simple question: "Has the ballad a consecutive train of ideas, or (what amounts to the same thing) has it an intelligible symbolism?" If it has, then it is a literary ballad. The popular ballad depends upon emotion, the literary ballad upon thought.

Schiller's ballads are wholly different from any of those already mentioned. They have not been grafted on the stock of the popular ballad, and do not even lean on it in any way. They form an independent plant, with its own roots. With the ballad they have nothing in common except the name; and the very name is deceptive, like a label pasted on the wrong bottle.

Must we, then, regret the arbitrariness of the name? I think not; for the idea of the ballad is thereby ex-

panded, though (I admit) with some violence. The art of poetry gains a superscription for narrative lyric in general, and such a title is desirable, if not necessary, no matter in what form. Only we must come to a clear understanding and agreement. If we were (*e.g.*) to try to study the general character of the ballad in the ballads of Schiller, as we might in those of Bürger, Uhland, and (to a lesser extent) Goethe, we should fall into some strange errors.

What are the ballads of Schiller? Perhaps they are historical ballads? Apparently yes, but really no, because we can call historical only that of which the theme belongs to world history. Now, it is not enough that something is past, or that someone is dead or has never lived, to make them a part of world-history!

What are the names of the heroes of Schiller's ballads? What do they do? When did they live? Did they ever live in the flesh? If you ask yourself these questions, with Schiller's poems in your hand, you will find the answer to the question about Schiller's ballads. They are anecdote ballads.

The profound student of history, the incomparable historical dramatist, has, in his ballads, deserted serious history and diligently ransacked the dustiest corners of the most forgotten collections of anecdotes. Why did he do this? Because he had need of insignificant themes to give free play to his gigantic force and delight in mastery. The given material, the historiette, is nothing. Indeed, it is often less than nothing, because intolerable. But there is nothing that Schiller cannot make immortal and add to the common property of all nations. He

need only touch a thing to leave on it the stamp of his master-hand. Schiller is never guilty of a failure.

Goethe, Schiller, and their successors have by no means exhausted the realm of the ballad. Art is, indeed, inexhaustible.

DEDICATIONS

BEFORE me lie half a dozen volumes by different authors, all of which were published last year and are furnished with a dedication "To my Mother". This is, therefore, a suitable moment to say a word, which, as I suppose and hope, has often been said already.

Books, which one prints and scatters far and wide over an unknown world with the help of the bookseller, are a matter of publicity, not of private life. Neither the mother, nor the wife, nor the aunt of the author has anything to do with it. That an adult man, if he has the extreme good fortune to number his mother still among the living, should dedicate to her his deepest feelings of affection, veneration, and gratitude, is a matter of course and is not a secret of the poet. An eloquent member of parliament does not yield to an author in domestic piety; but it never occurs to him to preface his speech on the sugar duty with a flowery expression of his attachment to his best-loved kinsmen. I understand and revere the sentiment; I feel it myself; I am quite ready to be moved by it and to be convinced by the dedication of the good nature and

loveableness of both parties, the author and his mother. But a similar manifestation of filial piety in the mouth of a parliamentary orator would move me just as much. Why, then, does not the orator indulge in it? Why does he renounce his privilege? Just because he has a finer feeling of tact, because he realises that he owes the public not confidentiality but respect. A nation is of too exalted a value to serve as the stamp of a family gift, and the public is too big a personage for us to assume that we can incline the whole body, in an indefinite direction, towards an unknown lady, however worthy of its regard she may be. I don't know how it is with others; but I feel a slight itch, in such cases, to send the book back to the publisher unread, with the excuse that, as it happens, I have not the honour to be the mother of the author. Of course, my sympathy always gains the upper hand in the end; but I have already had to pardon the author for something, before he has had time to exhibit his metrical sins—and that is a little too early.

This abuse is due to, and in some cases palliated by, its ancient descent. Indeed, the history of literature is forced to justify it in the eyes of those to whom exalted example is of itself a law. Poets and artists used to pay, in their titles or within the work itself, tributes of courtesy and attachment to casual ladies and gentlemen of no interest whatever to us. Painters of noble madonnas presented us with cloth merchants and syndics into the bargain; composers intertwined the titles of their immortal works with aristocratic names three feet long. But I ask any impartial person whether or not this usage

has an elevating effect on us? Moreover, the duty of homage belongs to the past; the artist or author of to-day has, greatly to the dignity of his profession, emancipated himself from it. Is it legitimate for him to try arbitrarily to persuade the world to help him to pay the tribute which he feels he owes to a private person? No; the mother of the author is entitled to the first copy of the book; the book itself belongs to another lady. Formerly she used to be called the Muse, now she is called Art. To her alone should a work of art be dedicated. As, moreover, this dedication goes without saying, it remains true that the most seemly of all dedications is no dedication at all.

A QUOTATION FROM GOETHE

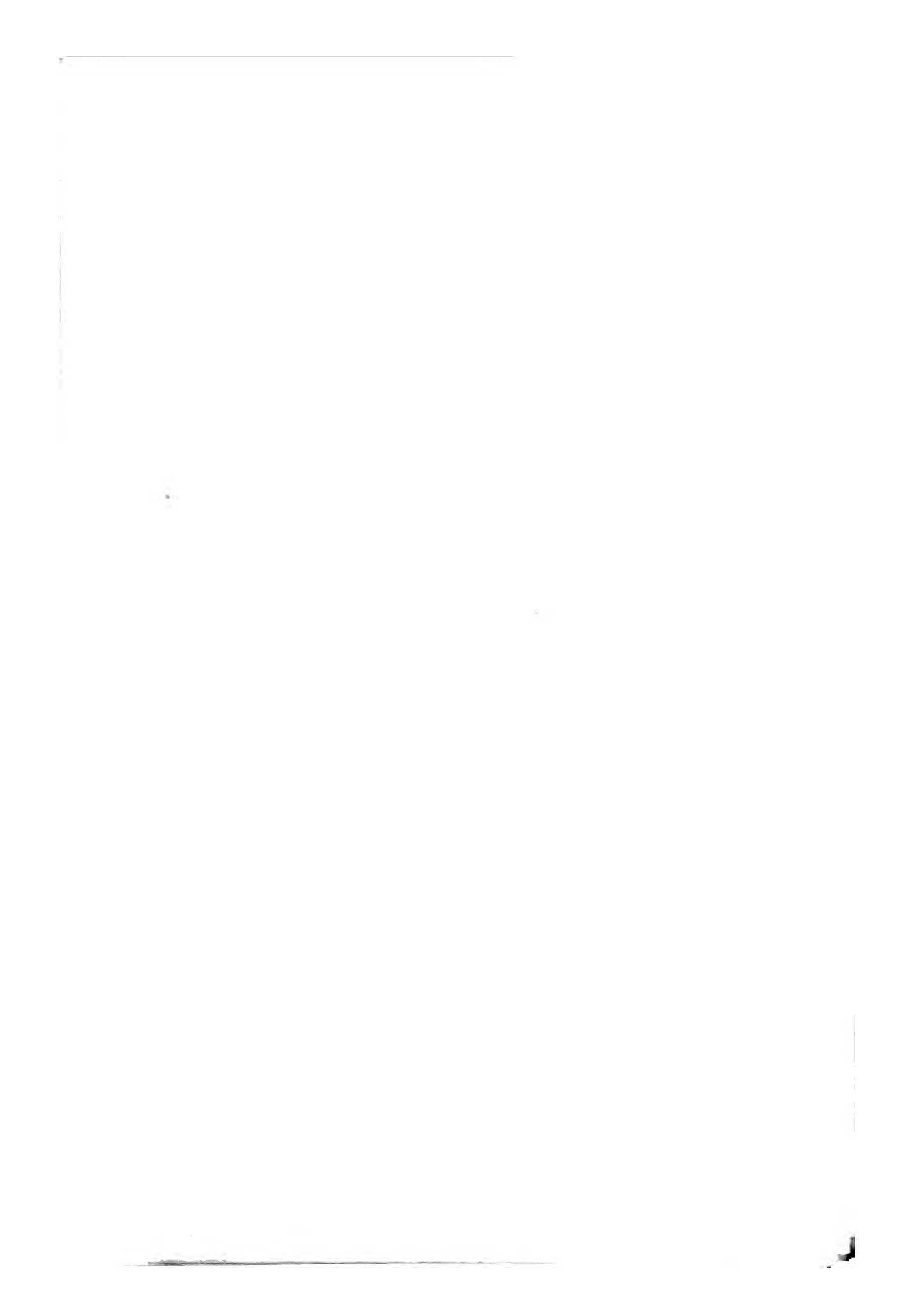
IN German-speaking countries quotations from Goethe occupy a peculiar position, just as quotations from Shakespeare do in England. They cannot be compared with other quotations. We quote other great authors on account of the intrinsic value of the citation; we quote Goethe out of loyal veneration, just as we hang the portrait of the reigning sovereign on our walls. For Goethe is the reigning poet-prince and commander-in-chief of all German metres, with the laurel of the first class. Just as it would be conspicuous if there were no portrait of His Majesty the Kaiser in a German home, so would it seem unnatural and unseemly if there were not at least one citation from Goethe in any German book,

no matter what its subject may be. Our instinct alone assures us of this. The absence of portrait or quotation would indicate an ostentatious intention. No one could get out of it by saying that he was writing on earthworms and that Goethe had composed no poem or paragraph in their honour. If he were really in earnest, a way could be found. As an excellent model and example of how Goethe can be made available even in what seem to be the most desperate cases, I recommend the course followed by an authority on locusts in the *Zoological Journal.*

This worthy zoologist had to make a report on the American locust. Let us note carefully how he managed to bring Goethe into the memorial, so that we may learn how to do likewise. In the first place the author describes the devastation wrought by locusts in former times. He then goes on to point out how the continuous spread of human settlements and the economical and political progress of the area in question had practically wiped out the pest. He concludes his report as follows: "Thus the locusts learned the truth of Goethe's maxim that 'nothing on earth is so difficult to bear as a series of fine days.' "

I suggest that this kind of logic should be termed zoologic.

ALLOTRIA



"*FAUST* Idea", "Prometheus Idea", "Wandering Jew Idea", "Don Juan Idea". I have known people who assert that they really mean something in using these phrases. Well, in any case, it is a fine discovery that merely by appending the little word "idea" to any proper name, we can call into existence a gigantic egg of exalted emotions, a veritable roc's nest of profundity. Now, of course, that the secret has been discovered, any schoolboy can work the oracle. Semiramis idea, Zeus idea, Hercules idea, Cæsar idea, Brutus idea, Hohenstaufen idea, Charles XII idea—a game of forfeits is difficult in comparison. I could undertake to produce two thousand such "ideas" in the course of a wet afternoon.

Best of all, however, is when one set of "ideas" is combined with another set to form a regular train of "ideas" like a vestibuled train de luxe. Antinous-Achilles-Mozart-Raphael idea. That is a veritable omnibus. Let me see what I can do myself in this line:—"Uranos-Kronos-Titan-Hannibal-Spartacus-Michael-Angelo-Beethoven-Rembrandt-Goethe-Napoleon Idea". Does that go?

"In a certain sense, if you like—it depends upon how you understand it—yes, it goes."

All right; it is quite a comfort to me that I too can do the trick.

Not for the world would I place any obstacle on the rails by which this philosophical steam-engine has tra-

versed the mists of ages. I understand, of course, that it is an excursion train. There is only one "idea" that annoys me. Tell me, what *is* a " Don Juan" idea?

"Well, I should say the idea of irresistibility, due to a highly gifted personality"—Have you finished? Excuse me if I interrupt. Please be good enough to show me anything either highly gifted or irresistible in Don Juan. Two indecent attempts, practically coram populo, and one of them in a cowardly disguise; the murder of an old man; the desertion and mockery of a loyal lover, with the addition of a little of the courage of a cornered rat—these are the records in the case. A pretty irresistibility, indeed, when a man has to seek salvation in a rape, and when he fails in this attempt, even though he is a count, in the feudal period, in the land of the primæ noctis, and with one of the would-be victims his own serf.

The argument, then, is that rape, if prosecuted diligently, is a proof of high gifts, an "idea" of genius. And when it is consistently repulsed, it is an "idea" of irresistibility. Now, of "ideas" of this kind there are, thank heaven, a rich crop in our penitentiaries, with projecting ears on their heads and fetters on their legs. Tell them that they are "ideas", they will be delighted and consoled. But I must beg for consistency. If Don Juan is an idea, we must confer the degree of doctor of philosophy on those interesting individuals who assault women in lonely woods or in railway carriages, in order that they may deliver a course of lectures on the Pure Reason; and we must pay them salaries to enable them to develop their important talents.

So far as I am concerned, it seems all to depend in

the last resort on a simple difference in language. If you prefer the word "idea" to the word "scoundrel", I have no objection. But it is not clear to me why one is an "idea" when he does something in Andalusia, and a scoundrel when he does the same thing in Germany. Or does rape become ideal when it is accompanied by a baritone aria?

All this in peace and amity. We can differ in opinion, can we not, and yet like each other very well? If, however, you undertake, in the interest of the Andalusian idea-fellow, to hold up the other man, the tenor Ottavio, to ridicule, then I give notice that my stock of peace and friendship is exhausted and that I no longer feel so kindly disposed to my opponent as I should and would be. Where and when, my ladies and gentlemen, are the loyalty and trust of a nobleman towards his bride considered laughable? Surely not in Germany, a land lauded for its fidelity? Can you point to one scene in the opera where Don Ottavio makes himself ridiculous?

No, both the composer and librettist have taken Ottavio seriously and treated him sympathetically. That may be proved, and indeed, if I am well informed, it has already been proved. The opera of *Don Giovanni* is a glorification of loyalty, just as much as *Fidelio.*

Or is Ottavio indirectly made ridiculous by the fact that Anna secretly loved Don Juan and not him? That might, perhaps, be truly asserted in the case of a married couple, but only if the critic had pocketed his morality and his principles in order to display the views of foreign people and countries.—On the other hand, is a bridegroom laughable because his bride deceives him, because she conceals from him that she loves another?

No; even the most frivolous ages abhor in such a case the perjured bride. Moreover, it is not true that Donna Anna loves Don Juan. First, because the opposite is true; I mean that in the text there is not the least ground for it, while there are many assertions that it is not so. Secondly, because it is impossible. Never and nowhere does a decent woman respond with love to a cowardly criminal assault.

I have stated where my indignation begins; I shall not conceal where it culminates. It reaches its height when I have to read how German æsthetic writers whisper in our ear, with a triumphant leer, as if it were an æsthetic advantage, that Donna Anna hardly came out of the attempt upon her virtue so innocently as she represented; that, on the contrary, she concealed the most piquant details from the bridegroom. This presentment of the case is supposed to make the opera more enjoyable. It is all to the good that this pleasant insinuation should be expressed and printed. For it serves as an example of the abysses of bad taste into which a generation may be insensibly led by literary panders and the grovelling of the historians of literature before alleged genius.

MISCELLANEOUS EDUCATIONAL NOTES

I. The Beginning of a University Term.

THE winter term is approaching. The various faculties of the university will shortly reopen their courses,

which, taken together, represent the entire knowledge of the present day. A rich and varied programme, the different sections of which appear wide as the poles asunder.

If, however, a student, during the first weeks of the term, could manage to visit all the lecture-rooms on the same day, he would find, to his astonishment, the same kind of activity and almost the same lectures, under a different title, in each of them. In all he would hear definitions and logical quibbles about the title of the advertised course, far-reaching retrospects of the achievements of previous centuries in the same field, meticulous lists of the books and theses to be consulted, seasoned with critical analysis and depreciation of the representatives of other academic schools. The real theme or subject of the course makes its appearance, if all goes well, in the third or fourth week of the session.

The explanation of this phenomenon lies close at hand. The modern professor is a scholar in the first place and a teacher in the second; a teacher often in the last place, and sometimes in no place at all.

In consequence of this he does not prepare the manuscript for his "Course of Lectures" from the perspective of the undergraduates; he takes into account neither the psychology of a zealous neophyte nor what will be found useful in examinations (though this latter fact I regard as an advantage). What he really does is to write a scientific work, in one word a book; and this book, before its publication, he reads fragmentarily to his students ex cathedra.

Such a book, in order to bring credit to the scientific

reputation of its author, must naturally be equipped with all the appurtenances of scholarship, and these will include a minute and detailed analysis of the existing literature on the subject. For a book has to win its place and justify its existence amid the copious material already published. Exposition of principles, proof of its right to exist, and introductory references to earlier books on its subject must naturally come at the beginning of a learned work. Of that there is no doubt whatever.

The explanation, then, is easy and plausible. All the same, I do not hesitate to call this use an abuse, so long as the university maintains the fiction that it is a high school for the education of youth and does not confess that its main object is to train new professors. For the custom is just as *un*pedagogic as a custom well could be. The poor undergraduate is in the position of a dinner-guest, who sits down to table with an excellent appetite and a healthy thirst and then finds that, before the soup is served, he has to listen to lengthy disquisitions on the idea and scope of soup, along with a history of dining from Sardanapalus to Gargantua and critical remarks on the preparation of sauces.

If anyone objects that the analogy is false, since the appetite of an undergraduate for instruction is not comparable to that of a hungry man for food, I beg to reply that the objector greatly undervalues our young people. There are both a thirst and a hunger for knowledge; and both of these are the rule with a normal young man. Nothing is more depressing than when the man hungering for instruction, who wants knowledge, and not the knowledge of the ignorance of knowledge, is fobbed

oft with dreary scholastic disquisitions and learned wranglings. When I enter my name for a course on *Horace* or on dogmatics, I do not want to learn wherein the treatise of Griffonius on *Horace* differs from that of Scribonius, nor do I care what meaning the twelfth century writer, Minutius Rabulista, ascribed to the term dogmatics. No, I want to have my *Horace* pure and simple and to know whether I am hereafter to be broiled or roasted in hell. That comes home to me, that touches me on the quick, that sets me on fire.

For such reasons as these, it seems to me the university courses should be otherwise introduced. For some sort of instruction is necessary; it does not do to plunge into the thick of things at the first go off. I venture on the following proposal: a lively, stimulating address, the objective or target of which should be the spirit of the science to be studied, while the psychology of the young man thirsting for knowledge should be used for taking the sights. This, would, indeed, be no easy task, but it would be one of benefit and dignity. And, in my opinion, it would be one which any teacher at a national college should be capable of twice a year.

II. A Little Botany.

Let us step down from the university to the secondary school. Among the many, far too many, subjects taught in our schools is one called "botany". Botany, literally translated, means the science of the herbs that the cow eats. In this limited sense of the word, botany is never taught in our schools, as the cowherds do not need the

knowledge and schoolboys cannot use it. Botany has found its place in education in a somewhat different form—*viz.* as the knowledge needed by apothecaries. Its original intention was to familiarise young and old, for their own use and advantage, with the simples or medicinal plants. The frequent use of "officinalis" in the Latin names of our plants bears witness to this; such names are fossil survivals of the naïve botany of the herbalist. The next step was to turn from preoccupation with the utility of plants to a systematic objective study of the claims on our attention possessed by any and every plant, without reference to its utility or harmfulness to us. This transition was made all the more easily because modern medicine deals in mineral, not in vegetable, poisons. When, finally, the place of the dry morphological system was taken by vegetable physiology, which realises and explains the plant as a living organism, we believed and still believe that we had found the right method.

When, however, we test the success of school botany on our young people, we find that this by no means answers our expectations. Interest in the plant-world does not last beyond their schooldays, and is, indeed, rare even in the class-room. If we consult the popular textbooks of botany, as used to-day, we find it quite easy to understand why this should be so.

From the primitive or utilitarian botany modern school botany has inherited the preferential treatment of field plants and wild flowers; from the scholastic, terminological botany of the savants, it has inherited the impartial ascription of interest to every plant, so that the

bracken gets as much, or as little, attention as the palm. But even this was not enough for it. The preference given to simples and common field plants unexpectedly involved a certain neglect of the nobler plants in the botany lessons, a neglect that was more often than not total. It is a matter of common knowledge that the magnificent exotic flowers and shrubs are treated in a very stepmotherly fashion by our schoolteachers. The equal distribution of interest between the interesting and uninteresting led insensibly but necessarily to the laying of the chief stress on the insignificant, the varieties, the humble, the rarer species of plants. Naturally! For a systematic study of plants calls for a collection of plants, and every collector is out for what is rare, not for what is important.

Thus it has gradually come about that botany is as a matter of course regarded as the science of wild, meadow, and wayside plants. Not only are exotic plants neglected, but also the noble plants that have been imported and naturalised.

This goes without saying because we are familiar with the fact as a habit. The obvious, however, in the eyes of intelligence and pedagogy, is regarded as a monster.

Where in all the world do we accept, in any other study, the principle that it is only the wild or rare products that arouse our interest? That the moment any object is "improved", it loses its claim on our attention? What (*e.g.*) should we say if in zoology the lion and tiger were ignored, or treated superficially, in order that we might devote more close attention to our native beasts of prey, such as the flea? But this is just what botany

does when it places our native weeds before the gigantic growths of the tropics. Or what should we think if zoology contemptuously dismissed the horse and the dog, because they are artificial products and not natural developments? But this is just what botany does when it simply ignores our beautiful garden-flowers.

Or, take mineralogy. Should we treat diamonds, gold, and silver cursorily because they are not found on the Uetliberg? But no one is unwilling to accept Swiss francs because they are artificial products, made of raw material from America.

What nonsense it is to rule the garden out of botany on the score that it is unnatural! In making this claim, school botany, in my opinion, pronounces its own condemnation. Unnaturalness *versus* unnaturalness. May I say how I define the unnatural? I hold it unnatural to give weeds the preference over useful herbs, the vegetables over the flowers, the plantain over the rose, chicory over coffee. I hold it also unnatural to climb the Albis to look for thistles, without sparing a glance for the gardens passed on the way. Or to press lettuces and not even know azaleas by name. Or to cross the Furka to find some slimy toadstool and to pass the flower-shops in the Bahnhof-Strasse with complete indifference.

"Nature." I have never understood that our schools were striving to attain a state of nature. Is the school "nature", is botany "nature"?

My strong conviction is that the garden should have a place, even the highest place, in botanical instruction. With all its flowers, and especially with such flowers as camellias, hyacinths, and tea-roses. And why should I

not express the whole of my opinion? I believe that the catalogue of the nurseryman should certainly be among the schoolbooks used; and that the pupils should be taken to visit botanic gardens, private gardens, nurseries, and florists' shops. I maintain that in this way a real interest in botany could be awakened in all the children, while at present interest in it is simply paralysed by the botany of bog-plants and weeds. I should like to see the child whose heart does not leap up when he beholds a white camellia or a garden rhododendron, whereas the counting of the filaments of a horse-vetch is not to everyone's taste, and ought not to be.

We come upon another crying evil when we consider how deliberately the school botany relegates the fragrance, the colour, and the gorgeous beauty of the flower to a secondary place, while these are exactly what the natural man is attracted by. The modern school (by which I mean the teaching of learning that grew on mediæval soil, and was sugared over with a little humanism, in contradistinction to the Græco-Roman educational school) has all along, in consequence of its scholastic and theoretical origin, had great difficulty in recognising the educational value of the beautiful. How long was the drawing-master looked upon as an unwelcome interloper! Even at our universities, æsthetics and the history of art are newcomers.

This state of things has, theoretically, improved; we now know, and pedagogy admits, that the educational value of beauty is beyond rubies and quite indispensable. It is admitted that joy in the beautiful not only cheers the spirit of man, but also that it purifies it; that a sense

of beauty helps, in a word, to make man good. Practice, however, limps slowly and late after intuition; and even what intuition allows has not yet become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Our pedagogy, in spite of its theoretical admissions, still suffers from the conception that beauty should not be taught. And the lower we go in the primary schools, the more numerous and clearer examples do we find of pedagogues who are hostile to beauty. The board school recognises utility as its only standard. Beauty is known to be of no use, at least its usefulness is not so easily demonstrated as that of the sheep or the cow.

This is the root of the matter. It is just because the flower is beautiful, just because a garden is a museum of the most beautiful plants, that the haughty school botany turns up its nose at them. "For Nature nothing is insignificant, and it is well that the pupil should learn to take as much interest in the modest hemlock as in the most superb magnolia." I beg to differ. This maxim is wholly true for scientific botany, it is not true for pedagogics—*i.e.* for the school. The purpose is not to turn the school-children into doctors of botany. It were a good thing if we could at least get far enough to understand the fundamental principle that the educational method and the scientific method are two different things, and that the former cannot be replaced by the latter. But the practice of our schools offends this principle at every step. The Latin master practises textual criticism, as if he had nothing but budding philologists before him; and every other teacher treats his own subject in a similar way.

In short, my view is that the botanical instruction in our schools has still a great advance to make, *viz.* the advance to æsthetic botany, in which the beauty, the colour, and the scent of flowers will be treated, not as a mere incidental matter, but as the main topic. And I hope to live to see the botanists eventually make their way from the byre through the apothecary's shop to the garden, where they will find something more edifying both to look at and to teach. And then the pupils who take with them from school a lively interest in the lore of plants will no longer be the exception but the rule.

III. "Easy" Pieces for the Piano.

We now pass over from the school to the domain of private teaching, *viz.* the teaching of music, especially of the piano.

Many pianoforte teachers believe it to be their duty to give their pupils so-called pleasing melodies and easily understood and childish pieces of music, and their preference is for pieces of this nature containing little snares for the performers, so that the children may learn to overcome difficulties without knowing it. Hence comes the popularity of the meagre sonatina, the lean rondo, the *Daughter of the Regiment*, the serenade from *Don Giovanni*, and similar morceaux for use in piano lessons.

I consider this a mistake. In the first place, the technical pitfalls in such pieces are often very troublesome and bear no reasonable relation either to the musical value of the composition or to the elementary capacity of the

child. Indeed, when we investigate more closely, we find that most of these so-called pieces for children really presuppose a certain virtuosity on the part of the performer. A rondo (*e.g.*) played without a delicate touch, a scherzo without grace, a finale without fire, are absolutely intolerable. And the more "childish", *i.e.* the more pitiful the composition is, the more it demands some facility in execution to make it anything at all. Otherwise nothing is left but sodden dreariness.

Moreover, it is discouraging when a performer cannot do what seems to the ear easy. All such mischievous pieces I should for these reasons rule out from teaching the piano—among them Beethoven's two sonatas of Opus 49. For the same reason, *viz.* that they are deceitful and discouraging, I should rule out all the pieces that the composer himself has labelled as "easy" or " for beginners". When these pieces prove difficult to the child, he loses heart altogether. Such pieces, however, are not technically easy; they are merely thinly composed, because they dispose of relatively scanty means. Bach marks a fugue as "easy" when it has only two parts; Mozart calls a sonata "easy" when it renounces harmonic and contrapuntal display. All the same, these pieces may presuppose great executive ability, and, as a matter of fact, they do. Let us, therefore, be warned. The directions "for beginners", "easy", "childish" in the mouth of a classical composer must not lead us astray. When the author says "easy", he means "simple" and "unpretentious". Simple and unpretentious compositions are, however, the very last that should be used in giving pianoforte lessons.

And now we come to the most important point. The child of legend and the child of fact are two different things. The real child hates nothing so much in its teaching as the "childish" (or "playful") and finds nothing in art so hard to understand as the pleasing. The child wants to be taken seriously; it wants to grow, *i.e.* to raise and enlarge itself; it wants to be nourished, so it likes facts in the domain of knowledge and fullness and richness in the domain of art. What seems to it childish or play or easy or readily overcome is to it an object of contempt in instruction. It requires a great and reflective culture to trace the hidden art of a theme under the veil of childishness. It is for the adult, not for the child, to estimate the value of a *Daughter of the Regiment* melody or of a sonatina in spite of its street-ballad ear-tickling. Thus in my opinion Clementi should not be used for teaching the young, because his material is not rich enough, because he seems to the child too childlike in his theme and too meagre in its elaboration. Just ask them; you will find that all children detest the Clementi bogy. That is why he is called a classic for children. And it is the same with Mozart, though on a very different scale. Why are young people disappointed with Mozart's sonatas? Because they seem too catchy, too pleasing, and withal too insignificant. Youth craves the serious, not the merely pleasing. The very best, the very highest in music is exactly what children need. I should teach every pupil the classical composer that most appeals to him. Verbum sap. For if we enjoy a work of art, we also understand it.

IV. The Envy of the Gods in the School.

As a consolatory conclusion and terrible example, I shall now tell you a grotesque but truthful anecdote about the teaching of literature in schools, the accuracy of which I guarantee. In a text-book, which was used six years ago and probably still is, there stands an edifying story entitled "The Cherry Tree". In this story the wonderful cherry-orchard of a peasant is shown to a wise man. Instead of the orthodox manifestation of joyful wonder, the wise man begins to howl "I am afraid". And when asked what the matter is, he replies solemnly that he is afraid of the terrible misfortune that will come to the owner of the orchard, because of the ungodly success of his fruit.

What think you of this story, told in sober earnest, in a school-book, as a laudable example?

What a charming spectacle it would be if this edifying attitude were to become general. Baron Rothschild has invited you to dinner. As soon as the golden coffee spoons make their appearance, you begin to whimper because you shudder at the ghastly fate of your host on account of his golden coffee-spoons. In the ballroom you must wax lachrymose over your partner because she wears diamonds. And must a group of village school-children burst into a shriek of agony when their holiday trip brings them face to face with the outrageous luxury of the town? It would certainly be advisable to find out the exact amount of the bank balance and what the rich stuffs are that excite the envy of the gods, so that we may insure and reinsure ourselves against it. Ladies must

wear envy-proof calico wrappers over their silken gowns, and we must all take care not to deposit too much cash in any one safety vault. I am amazed that the Bank of England has hitherto escaped the envy of the gods. According to the theory, a thunderbolt should fall there every quarter of an hour.

And in the case of prosperous joint-stock companies, would the envy of the gods extend to the individual shareholders?

It seems to me we have already quite enough to do with the envy of men and the progressive income tax. I quite understand the praiseworthy idea. The author of our curious little story was quite familiar with his *Polycrates*, his *Iphigenia*, and so on, and thought he was showing real scholarship by passing on to our school-children the view of life supposed to be held by the good classics.

There is, however, still a word to be said about the learning of the poets and the transmission of this learning in connection with such an extraordinarily naïve interpretation. Poetic truth is not scientific truth. It must not be literally conceived and obeyed as if it were a truth of intelligence. The poet knows and practises the most various kinds of truth, as, *e.g.*, the truth of costume, which pronounces its oracles in conformity with the views of a given period; the truth of character, which emanates from the individuality of a given person; the petard or explosive truth, which luxuriates in the superb crack of a rhyme or a figure or the turn of a sentence or an epigram.

In the *Ring of Polycrates* we find the costume-truth and

the petard-truth combined. It goes without saying that Schiller did not pretend, personally, to believe in the envy of the gods. He transferred himself metaphorically to the ancient standpoint of the world and wrote his stirring ballad from that point of view, with pleasure in the poetic and rhetorical effects to be gained from it. It certainly was not his idea to inoculate us once more, after two millenniums, with the dogma of the envy of the gods. A proper understanding of this ballad implies not only that we admire the poetic beauties of the narrative, but also that we should not fail to stigmatise the Egyptian guest as a silly croaker.

BALLET PANTOMIME

ANYONE accustomed to judge of human arrangements in art and life according to their fitness and intrinsic value will everywhere meet singularities and contradictions. Accidental causes and the too credulous following of an already furnished example are apt to exercise a decisive influence for indefinite periods. The philosophic thinker detects such absurdities mainly in the highest sphere of the human intelligence. I shall, however, select an example to show that this sanctification of the traditional model manifests itself also in the most subordinate fields; that we treat as inviolable even matters that no one takes seriously.

A municipal theatre announces the performance of a ballet. What shall we see? We know practically the whole

thing beforehand. There will be a gymnasium of tights and short skirts, sparkling and brilliantly coloured processions, magical transformations, kaleidoscopic changes of scenery, choreographic evolutions, dandified dancers making corkscrew evolutions in the air, and more or less beautiful ladies waving their arms, and sometimes also their legs, above their heads. All this is carried on through a system of signs intelligible in the secret language of the much-strained muscles, but not very clear to us, as, unfortunately, it is not taught in our schools. Below the stage blares a full orchestra, conscientiously exploiting all the effects of the latest scheme of instrumentation.

Here I allow myself to ask: are all the ladies and gentlemen on the stage deaf and dumb? No? Why, then, do they not utter a single word? Because it is not permitted. But who forbade it? And what is the terrible penalty for an infraction of the rule that makes them observe it so punctiliously? Probably no answer will be made to this. So I allow myself a second question. Is there a more absurd spectacle in the world than an audience watching with great solemnity a deaf-and-dumb opera, in which, for reasons which none of them understand, the action is explained, not by the ordinary vehicle of speech, but by nonsensical signs and gestures? Is it really the fact that, as a relief from the usual dialogue play, we need an absolute assurance that to-day we shall not be troubled with a single, solitary word? Very well. Is it, however, also necessary for us to receive the impression that all the characters in the drama have had their tongues cut out? But this impression is forced upon us

by a sentimental scene in which the lovers gesticulate violently to each other, pointing to their lips and their heart and their palms and apostrophising high heaven with their arms.

Two different things have to be distinguished, the *Dance* and the *Action*. A dance naturally needs no words; and if the ballet could be resolved into disconnected single dances, I should have nothing to say against it. But the idea of employing a symphony orchestra for an intrigue of several acts, in which the action is indicated by pantomime instead of by recitative, is an offence not only against common sense but (which is more important) against the laws of music. The composer is thereby forced to work himself up to an exaggerated emotional ecstasy on the most inadequate provocation, in order to make his music interpret to some degree what is going on on the stage; and the ballet music thus loses its greatest privilege, that of spontaneous and spirited joyousness. It is true that Auber allows the dumb girl of Portici to gesticulate, and Mozart makes Papageno, with the padlock on his lips, indicate his meaning in dumb show; but it would not have occurred to either of them to produce a score of several acts on the loves of Fenella and Papageno, with an obbligato chorus of excited paralytics. Verily, I do not wonder at the difficulty of making a creative thought successful in the higher realms of art, when I reflect that mankind has never mustered enough courage to improve upon the sacred traditional nonsense of a miming ballet. The ballet mime, with all the mannerisms of its conventional leg-play, is an anachronism. It is a survival of the stiff, petrified Renais-

sance classicism of the French, which we are only too ready to condemn in other fields. We have curtailed the revered hoop-skirts of the dancer very materially; I suggest an equally drastic cut in her coiffure.[1]

THE CIRCUS

THE æsthetic value of the circus is by no means slight, since feats of bodily strength and skill have charm as a by-product. This value could be materially increased, if the beauty of the performance were regarded as the main object instead of mere technical virtuosity. The circus, if it were conceived and conducted as an institution for the culture of the higher forms of gymnastics in the service of æsthetics, would infallibly become a visual training school of the first order for the sculptor and the lover of the plastic arts. Indeed, it already is so to a considerable extent, in spite of its lack of system, its haphazardness, and its inadequacy. The French painter Ingres even ventured to suggest that the Greeks put the living models for their statues into tights.

The new fashion of introducing spectacular pieces and dancing is all to the good from the point of view of the spectator. The fact that in certain places the theatres have applied for and received protection against the circus-ballet acts is itself a tribute to their charm, for one does not take arms against the harmless qualities

[1] The German play on words here cannot be reproduced in English. The word I have translated as coiffure is *Zopf*, which means (1) pig-tail and (2), in a figurative sense, petty formalism or antiquated pedantry.

of a rival. Besides gymnastic feats of all kinds, the circus possesses another source of attraction, which it now uses very sparingly and in very poor shape. I mean the art of mimicry. When we remember the rôle played by the independent mime in antiquity, and compare it with the very subordinate services of the mime in the modern theatre, there remains a boundless series of opportunities for the circus, since the theatre despises them. I do not mean to assert, however, that there must be nothing but pantomimes and that the pantomimes must always be of a ludicrous character. A man can do better with his limbs than crawl into a chest with three lids. The circus as a whole shows an astounding lack of invention as soon as its imagination leaves the stables. But, if I here make a few complaints, it is from no hostile spirit towards the circus, but with the most cordial wish to see it attain that well-deserved perfection which lies close at hand.

Why is the circus so tedious for many of us? Because, instead of exploiting its illimitable freedom, it fobs us off with all sorts of old tricks, many of which could never at any time have afforded pleasure to an intelligent eye. Of this character, in the sphere of the manège, are all those stunts which are against the nature of the horse and do wrong to his beauty; *e.g.*, kneeling down, rolling on his back, going round the ring on his hind-legs with his fore-legs on the barrier or on some wheeled contraption, and all that sort of thing. In the equestrian acts the same thing is true of jumping through hoops or over carpets, an exhibition which, though pleasant enough to the eye, is so tame in comparison with the

feats of the acrobats that its endless repetition becomes tiresome. The replacing of the slack rope by the tight-drawn wire can hardly be called a change for the better. It is surely more satisfying and more beautiful to see an elastic form poised on an elastic rope than to see a man with broad-soled shoes and awkward gestures wading through the air as if it were a morass.

But the humorous part of a circus performance is, perhaps, the worst of all! The clowns are the chartered libertines of humour, the legitimate descendants of their namesakes in Shakespeare. I certainly do not demand that their smiles should be intermixed with tears; that would be asking too much of them. But we are entitled to demand that they should amuse and cheer us, and this with all the more insistence as no æsthetic prohibitions put hindrances in their way. We all admit that they are entitled to roam over the whole wide field of speech and gesture, to capture anything of a merry nature, no matter of what kind. What a difference there is between what might be made of this licence and what they actually make of it! Their very costume is a declaration of bankruptcy in wit, and moreover it is a humiliation. An article of dress becomes comic when it caricatures something in actual use. When, however, no points of contact or resemblance are visible, an intelligent man cannot find anything to laugh at. What can we make of these floury-faced spectres with their pointed caps, with their Chinese pictures on Parisian dress-coats, with their baggy red breeches reaching up to their armpits? Whom or what do they remind us of? What do they travesty or mock? Nothing; they are simply monstrosi-

ties of folly, meaningless to the mind and ugly to the eye. And their attack on our risible muscles is so overdone as to cause reaction. The proper equipment of clowns would naturally be an exaggeration of actually worn costumes or of bodily forms, whether human or animal. All the masks of popular comedy are based originally on this principle; it is common to the English clown, the French paillasse, the Italian pantaloon, and the German Jack-pudding (Hanswurst). Who prevents the humorist of the circus from making use of the thousand-and-one types available in the life of all large cities? Why is it that the "Dumme August" [1] is the only comic figure that the wit of thousands during many years has been able to discover? Nothing prevents it except the clown's own incapacity and the incredible leniency of our demands. When four clowns represent an elephant, or two a Tom and a Tabby cat, they are in their proper sphere; then they are really funny, and make us laugh whether we will or not. But are there no other animals in the world? Must there be a convention even in the choice of objects to parody? Are we all condemned to wander everywhere in well-worn ruts? Is there not a single spark left of healthy extravagance, of cheerful gaiety? But Messieurs the Clowns probably stand too much on their dignity to think out and practise their comic profession with real thoroughness. Moreover, they have various "elevated" performances to go through. Before you can wink, one of them has

[1] The "Foolish Augustus" is a German clown, whose chief function is to make exaggerated gestures of energetic helpfulness while really doing nothing.

jumped upon the shoulders of another, and a third upon him, there to twirl his felt cap for an eternity and a half. This may be difficult, it is certainly tiresome. It does not occur to them that the felt-hat juggling might be made really comic if the clowns were disguised as Tartars, who wear felt hats in real life. Apparently several centuries of hard thinking are needed for the discovery of a truth like that. Moreover, the fellows drop out of their part every moment. They ring cow-bells, or thrum on xylophones, or scrape out the inevitable *Carnival de Venise* in the most ridiculous attitudes, not to give us pleasure, but to excite wonder by their skill. When, however, a mask wishes to amuse, he must not, in between, intrigue for our applause, like a tenor singer; he must take it by surprise and compel it, not beg for it. Of the verbal wit of the clowns, the less said the better. It affords another example of how here too slavish conformity to convention obtains instead of cheerful spontaneity: a horrible and anæmic Anglo-German seems to be their only idea of the comical in pronunciation, and even this they use, not for our sakes, but because they think they are doing a fine thing in speaking English. They should notice what pleasure the audience shows when a Hungarian, or a Swabian, or a Russian steps on the stage in the performance of a comedy. In the theatre, it is true, the critics rather shrug their shoulders over these somewhat crude attempts to be comical, but in the circus they would probably not seem too cheap alongside the performing dogs and the learned pigs. If the gentlemen, instead of devoting their attention to threadbare jokes, would make fun of their

public, of me and my neighbours, what a jolly good laugh we should all have!

There is, besides, a still more unbearable company than the mechanical felt-hat humorists; I mean the human statues. It has always been a puzzle to me why a respectable public does not drive these meal-worms out of the arena with the abuse that they deserve. I cannot for the life of me see what secures condonation for these offenders against decent taste; on the other hand, I know very well why I find them intolerable. If I am not mistaken, the beauty of a statue depends mainly on its beauty; but surely no one will maintain that beauty attaches to these figures in bathing-drawers, wrinkled flannel sweaters, pointed hose, and obvious wigs, with their grease-painted faces, their necks clearly defined by the upper end of their jerkin, and their bare-faced appeal to our applause both by look and attitude? Another significant merit of marble groups seems to me to lie in the marble; but it may be questioned whether marble can be successfully reproduced by a mixture of paste, flour, and sweat. But perhaps it is an artistic enjoyment to be reminded of classical statues, no matter how? Here we come on a curious paradox. The ancients imitated the human body in their statues, dignifying it with noble material and the most ideal forms; we imitate ancient statues through human bodies, bowdlerising them with the meanest forms and the commonest material. Another step, and our sculptors will be found executing the pasty-faced acrobats of the circus in marble, in order thus to reach nature and the antique. The apex of intel-

lectuality will be reached when the motley felt-hat virtuosi, filled with envy of the success of their plaster-of-paris colleagues, trespass on their ground, throw themselves into the same tomfoolery in their red coats, make martial grimaces like a Bolognese maître d'armes, and raise their fists like a patriarch cursing his son. That also happens, and is naturally received with a frantic outburst of applause.

AMOR

AMONG German writers on æsthetics there has always been much discussion as to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the Allegory. The views on this subject are different, and my views are different from the others. In actual practice the matter has in the meantime assumed a somewhat curious form. In the sphere of thought, where it really belongs, the allegory is shunned as if it were a scorpion; in the plastic arts, where it is least suitable, it has been passed on as a treasure from one generation to another. I am the last to grudge sculpture and painting this privilege, but I think they ought to scrutinise more closely the utility of the traditional allegorical motives, and should take possession of their archæological inheritance only sub beneficio inventarii.[1]

There is, however, one among the traditional allegories, the universal popularity of which stands in the

[1] *I.e.* without being liable for the testator's debts beyond the value of the estate.

most violent contrast with its value or even its bearableness. I mean *Cupid as a Boy*, with or without his bow, his wings, and his bandage.

If once we admit allegory in general, I imagine we should all be at one in regard to the rule by which any given allegory should be judged in its relation to sculpture. The question is not whether the idea to be allegorised in a given instance is or is not a good one, but whether the symbol, selected to express the idea, stands the test of the onlooker's eye. Now the idea or thought that produced the boyish Cupid is clear and apparent, terribly clear and apparent. Beauty gives birth to love, therefore the god of love must be the son of the goddess of beauty. The goddess of beauty can hardly be conceived of as a matron, she needs the charm of blooming youth. But a very young goddess cannot have a grown-up son, hence Cupid is a child. The argument is complete. Moreover, love is blind; the boy must therefore be blindfold, like Justice. Love, too, as is well known, has its moods, its tricks, its caprices; thus, quite naturally, Cupid is furnished with a roguish dimple and an arch smile. Love wounds and hurts, it often strikes suddenly, and its wounds are difficult to heal. This is child's play for the trained allegorist, who at once arms him with a quiver, a bow, and a sheaf of barbed arrows. No one could miss the meaning of this.

All this is as mathematically simple as it is shallow and jejune. For a rhetorical embellishment it may pass. Allegorical poetry may, as far as I am concerned, go on trafficking with the bald symbolism, if she can content herself with circulating worn-out coins. But in painting!

What satisfaction does painting give the beholder in presenting these thin, abstract ideas rolled into concrete blobs of colour before his eyes? One of the most disgusting things that ever was hatched—a boy in the rôle of pander. And, at that, a pander who knows very well what he is about. This is obvious in his coquettish gestures, his mock-modest mien, and his knowing smile. Is there in the whole realm of wantonness anything more sickening than this example of an eight-year-old scapegrace? An eight-year-old pimp is not only unnatural, but impossible. And yet this object has been presented to our gaze for centuries with devout reverence, in statues, paintings, and engravings. And everyone accepts it credulously as the most harmless and self-evident thing in the world.

This interesting youth reaches the apex of his lovableness when, at the sight of an approaching wooer, he deprives his mamma, with a cunning leer, of her last shred of drapery. What a charming disposition, experience of the world, and knowledge of men this implies in the pretty little scamp! And how consummately blasé he must be.

It is, I hope, needless to waste further words on this topic. I think it is enough to have indicated the horrible antagonism between sense and symbolism. But, in the name of common sense and good taste, I fervently beseech our artist friends to be good enough to spare us future representations of this repulsive boy-pimp.

MUSIC

SCHUBERT'S PIANO SONATAS

THERE are two prejudices which do injustice to many of Schubert's sonatas. In the first place, we have all deliberately placed Schubert in the class of composers of songs, and accordingly feel that it is contrary to our sense of fitness, when the composer of the *Müllerlieder* mixes himself up with things which do not seem properly to belong to him. "I value and honour Schubert enormously, but mainly for his songs." Further, a rumour has reached our ears that Schubert did not find himself at home in the sonata form. "Yes, I like his slighter pianoforte pieces very much indeed."—No man of experience undertakes to oppose prejudices directly. I shall therefore confine myself, and quite without prejudice, to trying to throw what light I can on the merits and demerits of Schubert's sonatas, or, rather, on their peculiarities.

No particular subtlety is needed to recognize at once an essential difference between Schubert's sonatas and those of the so-called classical composers. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the former are inferior, and still less that they are irregular in construction. Their chief defect, if any defect there be, is their too rigid adherence to formal rules—not, as alleged, to their want of form. The conditions, it is true, must be very unfavourable before regularity degenerates into rigidity. Such conditions I observe first in the independence and

fullness of the themes, especially in the opening theme. The so-called classicists of the sonata, in order to facilitate its handling, make their first theme as short as possible; some of them, indeed, occasionally content themselves with a quite unimportant rhythmical figure as their first theme. Schubert, on the other hand, begins at once with a wonderful musical phrase, complete in every respect and usually from three to six times as long as a classic theme. And the whole first part is treated in the same way. In such circumstances there is naturally no question of a multiplication by thematic elaborations. Schubert therefore contents himself with addition. Even so, however, it is impossible to avoid the notorious "heavenly length",[1] not because Schubert goes to work arbitrarily or episodically (which, emphatically, is not the case), but simply because three themes, which in themselves are too long by half, would become a dozen times too long, if each of them were repeated several times according to rule.

The fullness of the theme, moreover, influences the structure of the sonata much more sensibly than by mere expansion. In composing complete and rounded periods from the very start, Schubert no doubt obtains a great initial advantage over the classicists. But later, in the final repetition, where the aim is to charm at once by proportion and surprise, he loses much more than he originally gained. For the periods so wonderfully finished from the very beginning cannot, towards the end, be over-trumped (I apologise for this

[1] The reference is to a phrase by Schumann in an article on Schubert.

rather low but expressive epithet); they are, on repetition, capable merely of unimportant variation, not of impressive or surprising development. Thus the hearer, after he has passed the middle portion and has to expect a merciless repetition of the whole of the first part in its original form, naturally feels impatience, *i.e.* boredom. As an unavoidable consequence of the same causes there results an artistic neglect of the thematic elaboration (after the repeat sign of the first movement), *i.e.* the cardinal section of the sonata. Here Schubert simply evades the issue. This passage marks also in his case the central point of the beauty, but it does not mark the central point of suspense. Is there, in fact, any suspense in Schubert's sonatas? In some of them, yes; but usually, no. The gigantic proportions prevent a general view and blunt the sense of focus, all the more as two other conditions contribute to the disorientation of the hearer. These are the equable sweetness of both the main and the secondary motifs, and the lack of tempo. Schubert possesses force, such as no other composer except Beethoven can show, but he has little temperament; he likes to loiter and he goes to sleep to dream, even in the middle of one of his so-called allegros.

The liberties taken by Schubert seem to me of much less significance than his regularities. When, for example, he follows up a movement in B with one in C♯ Minor and perhaps a third in C Minor, the harm done seems to me slight, whereas the gain, *viz.* the vivid colour, is incomparable. This brings me back again to my main proposition; not arbitrariness but misapplied con-

scientiousness is the distinguishing mark of Schubert's sonatas in the matter of form. Schubert wishes to erect, with geometrical exactitude, a gigantic structure of flowers; to this end, he thrusts three-foot rules through the garlands, measures the nosegays with a T-square, and bolts the wreaths to four-cornered frames. "Why then does he go out of his way to use the sonata form?" Because that form involves special and dignified beauties, which, outside of it, have no purpose and no place anywhere else in the wide world. Schubert perceived joy and strength in these special and dignified beauties, and so he had to choose the sonata form, even in disregard of the canons.

It costs me no little effort to refrain from proceeding from the outer ring to the inner core and, after the form, to define the essence, *viz.* the musical peculiarities of the separate groups. But the measure of an essay is, alas, even more relentless than that of a sonata, and I dare not allow myself a "heavenly length". One thing, however, I owe both to my subject and to my reader: my tribute to Schubert's incontestable, brilliant, incomparable, and incredible merits. These are to be found in prodigal fullness in two diametrically opposite directions; he is supreme both in strength and in tenderness.

When we see Schubert lying on the flower-starred sward—and that is his usual posture—we are inclined to regard him as a harmless shepherd and dreamer. When he stands up, we are astounded by his gigantic stature, the majesty of his gestures, the Herculean strength of his feats. Dissonances, cutting like the edge of a rapier, especially in intervals of the second, are his

delight; he loves to set sforzato chords battering against each other; syncopated passages are to him as a festal banquet. He needs pompous octaves, in order to enjoy life fully; if he cannot ride them as a fiery Pegasus, they must at least help him to mount his wooden hobby-horse; to do without them is impossible. Grand above all are his enharmonic modulations and chromatic colouring; these he hammers into solid metal, which emits flashes of brazen lightning (as, *e.g.*, in the first part of the first movement of the posthumous A Major sonata, after the cantilena—a thematic chain, which, it may be noted incidentally, any other composer would have transferred to the middle portion). The titanic wrath of the passionate progressions of the sixths in Op. 143 (first movement), and, again, the regal dignity of the rhythm in the modulations of the last movement of the C Minor sonata (*e.g.* from E♭ Minor to E♭ Major) are alone enough to stamp Schubert as the nearest kinsman of Beethoven.

In point of melting sweetness, Schubert's sonatas not only defy comparison, but exceed our wildest anticipations. They reveal magical arts and twilight effects, before the tenderness of which our imagination holds its breath. I can think of a hundred instances of this. Perhaps the best are the middle passages of the first movements; compared with these the short song-forms of the andante seem somewhat overloaded and cramped. Such measures as the following must sound like greetings from Paradise to even the most sober and critical hearer: the D Minor motif in the modulation of the (posthumous) B♭ Major sonata (first movement), or

the C Major section of the andante in Op. 147, or the pianissimo passages from A♭ Minor to E Minor in the scherzo of Op. 42, or (above all) the whole of the long middle portion of the first movement of the (posthumous) A♭ Major sonata. Every tone melts in pure beauty, free from all dross; it exhales the pure fragrance of music. It is sheer, harmonious, spiritual joy transposed into music. In its inmost being a nerve thrills with melancholy-sweet adumbrations of the cosmos.

And does anyone say that Schubert should have suppressed these inspirations? All Schubert's sins against form eventually land gloriously on virtue's side; they become an irresistible stream of heavenly visions. Before ever he began to work, this gleam of supernatural beauty shone before his eyes. In vain his intellect whispered him that he should murder it, in vain his will unsheathed the steel. The wonderful eyes of the damsel implored mercy; and he did what the hunter did in the fairy tale of Snow White (Schneewittchen): he let her live because she was so beautiful.

A Prophet Samuel may condemn him for this; but I am no Samuel.

THE ÆSTHETICS OF TEMPO

HOWEVER zealously I try to argue myself out of the notion, I have to confess that, as often as I hear the Drinking Song in *Don Giovanni*, my verdict remains the

same: the song does not fly, but flops; it has haste, not fire. Numerous similar examples lie to hand of compositions in over-driven tempo, which tear past the hearer without carrying him along with them. They occur oftenest in the coda of the instrumental finale, when the composer, having exhausted all other means to produce an effective close, seeks salvation in the presto. I venture here to include (*e.g.*) the A♭ Major presto in the finale of the Sonata Appassionata and the final prestissimo in the rondo of the C Major sonata (Op. 53), along with most other prestissimo passages, as seldom attaining what they aim at. And this failure is most significant when they simply accelerate a theme already dealt with. Acceleration means hurry, not speed. The composer who best knew how to produce the full tempo effect of a presto was one whom childish legend accuses of grandfatherly smugness:—I mean, Haydn. Everyone should study his prestos.

I have raised a difficult question, and I do not profess to be able to answer it with any completeness. The little, however, that I have found or imagined, I venture to offer, in the hope that it will at least ventilate the matter.

The first condition for the creation of fiery movement is that the beat to which the rhythm moves shall be perfectly obvious. The measure, however, derives its effect from the human pulse-beat. Whatever makes the pulse throb and excites the nerves has fire and animation: march time, dance rhythm, the galop, six-eight time, the dotted note, triplet figuring, the sustained rest, opposing rhythm, emphasis on the unaccented part of the bar, the

appoggiaturas of the accompaniment before the beginning of the theme, and so on.

In the second place, the production of a fiery effect demands that the beat shall carry the whole score with it, not (*e.g.*) a single part. Even the utmost speed of a single part does not accelerate the tempo by a single pulse-beat, as we may learn from the $\frac{6}{4}$ rhythm passages of an adagio or from the bravura figures of the variations. Yes, runs even of furious rapidity on one instrument may occur during a pause in the harmony without detracting from its effect of silence; on the contrary, they emphasize it. So, on the other hand, a sustained and weighty top part or treble melody may attain the rushing effect of a storm, if the whole score, which bears this treble melody, is passionately agitated. We experience this (*e.g.*) when the national anthem is sung at the end of Weber's *Jubilee Overture*.

The third consideration is whether I hear the notes of a theme as crotchets or quavers or semiquavers—*alla breve* or *alla grande*. [By the way, does one say *alla grande?*] It is no use for the composer to write a presto in crotchets, if his hearer's impression halves the crotchets into quavers. For, in so doing, he also halves the tempo, substituting pleasant ease for the tension of speed.

What are the respective conditions which make the hearer's impression of the tempo *alla breve* or *alla grande*, as the case may be? The character of the theme has to be considered as well as the measure of the accompaniment. There are, as everyone knows, both fiery and slumbrous themes. But there are also themes, intended to be fiery, which lack kindling power in spite of all

their haste and restlessness. This is the case (*e.g.*) when the theme moves within the intervals of the arpeggio —*i.e.* when it is not sufficiently diatonic in its working out. Variations on the arpeggio cannot possibly strike sparks, no matter how passionate the gestures of the composer or the singer or the player may be. The theme of the "Drinking Song" rests upon the arpeggio, and therefore all the puffing and blowing in the world cannot make it incandescent.

OUR SUMMER MUSIC

IT must, indeed, be no slight strain to conduct oneself throughout the whole of winter in a "European" manner. I am driven to this conclusion when I observe with what feverish haste humanity takes refuge with the goats and cows in summer, showing a positively nervous antipathy to a decent overcoat, a good book, or high-class music. "For heaven's sake, no more of that! We need recreation!" The need of recovery from civilisation strikes me as a little suspicious. But I think I understand; the poor things are satiated. "Yes, that's the word! We are 'fed up' to the point of boredom, to the point of nausea!" If, however, I venture, in winter, to put forward the modest advice that they had better not torment themselves with such merciless satiety, I am called a barbarian. From this it would appear that it is a mark of culture to overload the soul during one half of the year, and to offset this by a course of

purgatives in the second half. And these pills have a sugar-coating, sentimentally called "Nature".

However this may be in other matters, this miserable spring mood is enough to explain the programmes of the summer concerts in our gardens, promenades, and watering-places. These must form a sort of musical herring salad, in which any ingredient may find a place, provided it smells badly. And, in fact, we must give credit to the programme-makers for accomplishing their task well. Let us study the recipe they seem to use.

In the first place we must order a trumpet from Säckingen,[1] hide it in the shrubbery about twenty-five yards from the rest of the orchestra, and then leave it to its fate, until homesickness forces it to burst out in a plaintive wail. Then there must be a flute in readiness, to storm the heavens, and a clarinet, in case a demand for *Weltschmerz* should arise. A few potpourris are naturally indispensable, and it will usually be found that the cheapest of these are the most satisfactory. Then take a handful of musical hiccoughs and throw them into the programme—the more the better. These may be obtained at moderate rates from any bandmaster, under such names as "Cavalry March", "Singers' March", "Gymnasts' March", "Festival Galop", "Students' Galop", "Hussars' Galop", "Amelia Polka", "Eliza Polka", "Matilda Polka", or "Harlequin Polka". Having done this, take half a dozen bedizened "Ranz des Vaches", some steamed "Reveries", some boiled

[1] The reference is, of course, to Victor Scheffel's well-known romance *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*. It is as if we said "send to Tara's Hall for a harp".

"Souvenirs de Teplitz"[1] and a few well-soaked folk-songs (of all of which a good supply is always on hand), and crush and squeeze these until crocodile tears flow out. Stir the mess carefully. When it seems ready, cut the dough with a sharp knife into two equal parts, and stick an overture into each, so as to give the cake substance and good appearance. Your programme may then be presented to any audience without anxiety.

On the other side I have only one objection to raise. There are, after all, some men who do not regulate their taste by the calendar, but find a musical impertinence just as offensive in July as in December. Now, is it reasonable to force these men, however few they be, to retire, abashed, from the beautiful green gardens of summer? Seeing they have done nothing wrong, is it not simply fair-play to concede them, like the other, a seat in the open air? I entertain so much confidence in the goodwill of humanity that I am convinced our Summer Concert Conductors would willingly draw up programmes that would please the musical, as well as the unmusical, members of their audience, if someone would only give them an idea of how it can be done.— But is that really so difficult? I think not. All that is wanted is to find out what is liked or disliked by *both* these (apparently) so different groups of the public. The really musical person seeks the beautiful in music, no matter in what form, or style, or emotional sphere this presents itself, and no matter what name it bears. On the other hand he passionately dislikes the ugly, the

[1] The German words for "steamed" and "boiled" imply also the secondary meanings of "subdued" and "insipid".

mediocre, and the platitudinous, whether it be a platitude in a major key (*i.e.* impudence) or one in a minor key (*i.e.* sentimentality). The unmusical man, however, moves, in his sympathies and antipathies, outside the æsthetic sphere. It is not the ideas of "beautiful" and "ugly", "noble" and "mean", that determine his judgment, but the less defined qualities of "pleasant" and "tedious". In order, however, that a piece may "please" and not "bore" him, it must possess a more direct relation to his personality than that of its musical value, which, indeed, he is not able to recognise. There are two ways in which this relation may be established. The music either speaks to his "feelings", *i.e.* it must use the gestures of a tune, whether horrible or attractive; or it affects his "nerves", *i.e.* it makes him jump by its exciting rhythm, quite without reference to whether this rhythm is inspired by a celestial soul or the beat marked merely by the drums and trumpets in the crudest and most mechanical fashion.

Now, neither a moving tune nor a catchy rhythm lies in itself outside the sphere of beauty. It may therefore easily be seen that on both sides a compromise may be reached in the most natural manner, simply by a proper selection of individual pieces within the limits of the beautiful. As a matter of fact, however, the demand for "moving" tunes is very hard to satisfy, for nowhere in art is the aristocratic temperament more crucially divided from the vulgar than in matters of "feeling". A trivial, turgid, importunate, sentimental tune is always sure of the enthusiastic applause of the majority, whose feelings have been worked on, while the musical sense of the

minority feels the torture of the damned. Here, then, extreme caution is a law of love for one's neighbour.

The matter of rhythm is a little less difficult. Here hundreds of musical pieces may easily be found, equally adapted to charm the most naïve listener and the most accomplished musician. I mean the genuine, characteristic dances and marches, whether these have a social or a national origin, whether they are from classical compositions or are merely folk music, *i.e.* by unknown authors. A tarantella, a czardas, a bolero, a guarrache, a true polka or mazurka, a Hungarian march, a polonaise, a minuet, or a gavotte are all essentially different from the silly restlessness of the deux temps and the trois temps that we honour with the name of "dance" and "march". The former afford real revelations of the beautiful; the latter do not. What superb programmes could be drawn from the material named without going farther afield! Of the polka and mazurka in particular, it is high time that one significant remark should be made. The way in which these spirited dances are treated by composers and players is a crying shame. Why do they not use the classical examples in *A Life for the Czar* as their models? Why are these practically never given? If they were, we should probably get rid of the deluge of watered polkas and mazurkas; and our piano-players might, perhaps, handle Chopin in a more direct and instinctive fashion.

My proposal is very tentative. But I really must press home, in the name of all musical people, my suggestion that some attention should be paid, in our open-air concerts, to the taste of the minority. The present rule seems

to be "much rubbish for the common herd, with slight interludes of a higher character for the few". This rule is, however, cowardly and cruel. I propose another one: "as much as you will of the merry, the cheerful, the lively, but in no circumstances anything paltry, whether bold or moving". We do not suffer anyone to soil the benches; there is no reason why we should allow musical garbage to be hurled at our ears from a malignant kiosque.

"FRÖHLICH SEI MEIN ABENDESSEN"[1]

IT was after a performance of Sudermann's *Sodom's Ende* that, in a self-respecting tavern, I heard a little man with no self-respect fulminate, in the tone of a Jeremiah, against the Directors and Manager of the theatre because they dared to put on the boards plays to which a man would be ashamed to take his wife. I was deeply impressed, and seriously considered whether it was not my duty to approach the Board of Education with a valuable memorandum (freely adapted from Schiller) on the importance of the stage as an institution for moral training. But what was my surprise when last Monday I had to suffer the pain of seeing this same little man, not only with his wife but also with three blooming daughters, comfortably installed at a performance of *Don Giovanni*, their countenances beaming with devotion, as if they were listening to an Easter sermon. The

[1] "Merry be my supper"—a well-known song in *Don Giovanni*.

fact that an action, a mere reference to which in *Sodom's Ende* had excited him to an attack of virtuous indignation, was performed not less than four times in the opera (practically on the open stage), did not seem to worry him or his young ladies in the least. Such riddles of human nature might well perplex the most clear-sighted observer in the world. I found it, therefore, highly desirable to try to trace the causes why the same occurrence should give offence when it is portrayed once, and edify when it is portrayed four times. Does the spectator get accustomed to it? Or does it lie in the difference of the season? Does the moral feeling react better in October than in December ? Or has music, perhaps, the power to convert vice into virtue and scandal into edification ? Did not Beaumarchais once say that " when a thing is too immoral to say, we sing it "? Or do I misquote ?

But all this by the way. To-day I want for once to get off my chest the stuff that has so long oppressed me. "Merry be my supper!" says Don Juan in the last act. These words are as clear as can be; they are as obvious as the band that he engaged to play during the banquet, and that still delights us with its cheerful melodies. But what do we see? In a magnificent Moorish hall, which could easily accommodate hundreds of guests, the poor man sits lost and solitary between two lean and bony chorus-ladies, who are so embarrassed that they do not know how to dispose their limbs properly. And he furtively sips champagne, like a runaway traveller in Spanish wine, who, with cash stolen from his master, has escorted two light women to the ante-chamber of a

ballroom. It is quite in keeping that the Ghost should give him a musical recital of his sins through the peep-hole of a screen. Verily, if that is a merry supper, Don Juan is by no means exigant! The director, naturally, finds himself in great embarrassment as to how he may find a suitable moment to make the two ladies disappear. The two girls must either run off immediately on Donna Elvira's entry, like ghosts at cockcrow—as if a woman ever gave place like that to a rival! Or Don Juan himself must politely escort them to the door (in spite of the fact that he had invited them to supper), as I once saw actually done by an eminent singer in the rôle. If, however, Don Juan was not really more gallant than that, I cannot believe in a single one of his thousand-and-three conquests. Who ever shows a lady to the door? There is also the absurd invention of a statue which takes the trouble, for the sake of four persons, to haul its weighty body from the churchyard and lumber up a long staircase. But no miracles are really done in small private circles; supernatural personalities, as we all know, are chary of their appearances and carefully choose an occasion when their entry is sure to have a sensational success. Stone guests like empty houses no better than flesh-and-blood ones do. A Last Judgment staged for one lost soul is like shooting sparrows with an eighteen-pounder.

If, to complete the picture, the Spectre (as has recently happened here) cheerfully steps up to the position near the wings, indicated to him by the Stage Manager, and allows himself to be illuminated by the electric spot-light, with his face turned towards it, like a

cockchafer in the sun, how on earth can I experience any thrill of awe or mystery?

The scene should really be played as it sometimes (but too rarely) is in the theatres of the great towns. Don Juan, Grand Seigneur and hereditary Lord of the Manor, has invited a numerous and brilliant assemblage of ball-guests; the whole stage is occupied. In the midst of the dancing and general animation Elvira appears like a madwoman, to sing her prescribed aria. The company, astonished but polite, makes place for her and lets her sing, though, possibly, they may whisper a little, to save the public the trouble. Don Juan, with elaborate and ironic courtesy, invites Elvira to take a seat. This she refuses to do, and then, abashed by the false position in which she finds herself, shamefacedly flees. The painful episode causes a little embarrassment, which yields to the encouraging gestures of Don Juan to go on with the dance. A little later the terror of Leporello is reflected in the faces of the company. The dancers, male and female, follow their host to see what is the matter. Terrible confusion follows, and at sight of the real Ghost all scatter and scream, disappearing by door and window. It might have been worth while to attempt to keep back some of the guests. A ghost sings with this seven-league voice only when it is worth the trouble; for Don Juan alone the Commendatore could manage his job pizzicantando. We have often tried to find out how the Ancients used the chorus; let us for once consider how *we* might use it to best advantage. If anyone, however, objects that fidelity to the text forbids the introduction of a chorus in the finale of the second act,

my answer is this. By what right does the chorus linger on the stage in the finale of the first act, although Mozart directs it to disappear? But sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; what is right in one finale cannot be wrong in the other.

NATURE

"*VERSAILLES*", "Le Nôtre", "Mannerism", "Symmetry", "Architectonic", "French Regularity", "Topiary Work"—how often have I had to listen to these names and phrases! No amount of repetition, however, produces conviction. Who, indeed, would deny that Le Nôtre has carried his art to the very top, indeed to such a toppling top that it fell over into tastelessness. It was the crowning error of the French Renaissance that it conceived the inner rules in an external way and ultimately became Chinese. Do we not, however, push the reaction against Le Nôtre to an extreme, when we cultivate a deliberate disorder in our gardens? Is a garden just a slice of nature in the rough with a fence round it? No; it is a selection of the plants that give especial pleasure to men, because their blossoms, or their fragrance, or some other property has an especial charm. Am I then to grow these plants in an absolutely higgledy-piggledy state of confusion, or should I not do better to arrange them in such a way that they set each other off and produce a pleasant and harmonious picture? Should I not, in a word, lay out a "formal" garden?

"Formal!" Can you mention any beautiful thing on earth that is not formal or regular? Take, *e.g.*, the most beautiful woman you know. Has she not two legs, one (it is to be hoped) exactly as long as the other? And two arms, attached to opposite shoulders, neither of them

growing out from the middle of her neck? And two eyes, the left precisely the same size as the right? Is it beautiful when the two eyes look different ways? No, it is more beautiful when they do not squint but have the correct parallel vision. Or take dancing. Is it better when a couple waltzes in regular one, two, three time, or when they hop about in cheerful disregard of the rhythm? Or in music, is it the regular or accidental interval that pleases the ear? Or poetry. Do not the thirty thousand lines of an epic run so regularly that each verse is measured to a hair just like its neighbour? Would it be more beautiful if one verse had thirteen feet, another two, and a third four-and-twenty? And Nature, who is always being cited as a contrast to regularity, is she not herself regular? The crystal? The diamond? The snow-flake? And even the leaf and the flower? Can you show me a flower that is not regular? Man is the only being that at times prefers the irregular. *E.g.* when he has had to swallow too many foot-rules; when, in the spirit of fanatical opposition, he throws the child out of the bath along with the dirty water; when, century after century, he unthinkingly repeats a thought, which in its day had some justification for its reaction value, but has now become wholly untenable as an æsthetic principle.

We have not the last word. We must not imagine that posterity will carry on the joke to all eternity, only to do the opposite of what Le Nôtre did. Perhaps they will prefer the opposite of our style of gardening—*viz.* the opposite of artificial disorder.

"Symmetry." The absolute symmetry of the French garden was an error of taste; the abandonment of all

symmetry in laying out our gardens is, perhaps, a greater error. Take a gate, an entrance, a path. Every unprejudiced person will admit that he feels satisfied in seeing, to the right and left of the entrance, a tree of the same pattern, *i.e.* of the same height and colour, whereas he will have a sense of dissatisfaction if he meets only one tree, or two of dissimilar kind and height. In the same way everyone prefers a formal, symmetrical avenue or alley to one that is uneven and out of trim. This is not Le Nôtre, it is we ourselves, it is Everyman. Must then the ghost of Le Nôtre condemn to everlasting silence our natural æsthetic predispositions? The need of every healthy eye for symmetry and proportion? This symmetry, be it understood, may be veiled, interrupted, or even apparently abandoned; but it must be there.

In the style of the "French Garden" or the "English Garden". Why do we always forget the chief style, that of the "Italian Garden"? This was the style of the real Renaissance, which surely is not open to the accusation of want of taste.

The Italian Renaissance practises the first law of horticulture, the law which later became discredited through Le Nôtre's excessive use of it. This law is that the garden and the house must form a complete whole, in which the function of the garden is to raise the house into pre-eminence. The Italians had perceived that a bad or planless garden depreciates the house, injures its æsthetic impression, and (in fact) vulgarises it, whereas a carefully laid out garden lends it dignity. For this reason they entrusted the laying out of the garden to the architect who had designed the house, so as to ensure harmony.

And in so doing they acted sensibly, much more sensibly than we do, whose English wildernesses and deer-parks serve no higher problem than that of concealing the mansion.

Just look, for example, at one of the architectonic gardens in front of the palaces of Genoa, where flights of steps, with palms and orange-trees at the corners, ascend from the garden, while at the top of the steps stands the house. If that is tasteless, I crave much more of this sort of tastelessness. When one adds a garden to a house, laid out, quite casually, on purely botanical, instead of on architectonic principles, the result is that the house stands on its site like a box of bricks that has been borne thither by chance. It seems to be there without any necessity and without any relation to its environment. Whereas, if the designing of the house and garden were done in unison, the house would seem to grow majestically out of the soil.

But we do not really need to go as far as Genoa. Let us just look around us. If, *e.g.*, we plant a Wellingtonia on each side of a house, the house becomes much more plausible; it makes a much firmer æsthetic impression on us than if no such trees were there or if it stood in a group of trees.

And now we reach our thesis that the coniferous trees are indispensable because of their architectonic quality. When his artistic inspiration tells the architect that the garden, in order to preserve the unity of the picture, needs a dark tone at any particular spot, he will find that he cannot produce the desired tone as well with twenty deciduous trees as he can with a single evergreen shrub.

When an evergreen bush stands anywhere, it really stands. It is as if it were executed in marble, so firm, so placid, so effective is it. The impression it makes is closely wedded to the aspect of the house. Conifers work architectonically, like columns and pillars. They do so not alone through their form, but also through their colour and the shadows they cast. Proportion and perspective are important elements in a garden, and conifers are the only trees that show, quite definitely and perspicuously, a middle, a top, and a bottom, a front and a back.

Again, conifers are quite irreplaceable as a background for flowers. Those who use ordinary shrubs, as an effective dark foil to their roses, are striking a false note. They may plant one bush after another as thick as they like, they will never achieve a compact dark background, but only a dismal and unattractive gloom. On the other hand, a single yew, or cypress, or arbor vitæ, or even a yellow thuya, sets off the roses at once in their full brilliancy. Flower-gardens without the foil of evergreens, even if they be veritable Edens, work like a restless medley of colours without firm drawing. They give an impression of the haphazard, superficial, provisional, rustic. They are quite all right for foresters' cottages, shooting-boxes, boarding-houses, parsonages, chalets, and the home of the well-to-do peasant. But a garden of civic or country house dignity cannot be achieved in this way. If, however, you first provide your garden with a firm framework of conifers, you will obtain immeasurably more luminosity with half the number of flowers.

Further, what colour does a stone building require as a foil? Evidently, one as dark as possible. Therefore the cypress is the most valuable of all garden-trees. If there are no cypresses, then some other conifer. Observe (*e.g.*) how a yew-tree, with its deep-black shadows, at once gives dignity and importance to a stone house.

Further, you want a hedge that will give you the feeling that you are at home, and not at a neighbour's, or in the street, or in the open world. Try it; the hedge will never content you, it will never shut you off wholly, unless it be coniferous, such as yew or arbor vitæ. And I say this in spite of the fact that I have never been able to endure arbor vitæ.

Further: after you have begun to mix deciduous trees and the nobler conifers, you will notice with amazement that every change of a foliage tree for a conifer seems to lend your garden new dignity. You may not at first be willing to believe this, but you cannot help it. Your eye will, sooner or later, force you to admit it.

Further: when we gradually learn to see and judge more exactly, we shall discover a fault of character in the foliage trees of the garden, which becomes more detestable the longer we know it. Their leaves are deceptive. They come in May, they go in October. "Are they, for that, any the less beautiful between May and October"? That depends on who looks at them. Is gold-leaf, are paste diamonds, is a well-printed imitation carpet less beautiful because they are not genuine? You see the question is not so easy to answer. The child, the novice, the uneducated man accepts the imitation just as readily as the original, if it is equally fair to the senses. On the other hand there are men who despise imitations,

no matter how beautiful to the senses they are; there are even some who execrate and detest them. And this is just the case of deciduous trees in a garden. This temporary glistening, that, coward-like, leaves me in the lurch for half the year and thrusts broomsticks in my face during the whole winter, becomes steadily more distasteful to me, just like gold-foil and artificial pearls and cotton-velvet.

Do conifers produce a sombre effect? That depends on the climate and on the kinds of conifer. In the bright sunshine of the south, no conifer is sombre; in the gloomy north, every one of them is. In Southern Germany the cypress and the silver fir are noble apparitions, the spruce is a pyramidal gloom. It is quite incomprehensible to me how anyone can bear to turn his home into a sort of wild beast's lair by embedding it in sullen spruce-trees. It looks as if the owner had set himself to laying out a zoological garden for owls, ravens, and bears. He has provided himself in summer with a permanent winter. I always feel inclined to put on fur-gloves when I see such "Tannhäuser" (*i.e.* fir-houses).[1] The "Venus", however, is generally either non-existent or invisible.

A TRIO OF CEDARS

ALL over Central Europe occur celebrated and much admired "Cedars of Lebanon", which at the very first

[1] The play upon words here refers to *Tanne*, the German name for fir-tree.

glance, even from a distance, reveal themselves as really ATLAS CEDARS. One of these is the old cedar in the grounds of the Kursaal at Interlaken.

The difference between the Atlas Cedar and the Cedar of Lebanon is, however, so enormous and so obvious that the confusion would be quite inexplicable did it not arise from another point of view than that of the physical eye.

The preconceived idea once more vitiates the actual sight, so that, in fact, we see with the mind and not with the eye. In this case we gaze through the veil of Hebrew poetry. It is the celebration of the Cedar of Lebanon in the Bible class that rings in our ears, so that nine out of ten persons, when they hear the word "cedar", instinctively add the title "Lebanon", led away by the familiar sound-association. They think—if they exercise thought at all in the matter—that the cognisance or "national certificate" of the Lebanon is a sort of cedar noblesse, just as the Emmental is known for its cheese and the Canton Schwyz for its cattle. Thus, when they say "Cedar of Lebanon", they mean to emphasise the genuineness of the tree; and thus arises the consequential fallacy of calling every unmistakably genuine cedar a cedar of Lebanon.

It is easy to see, without express assurance, that confusion lies hid in such ideas. Indeed, is it not already confusion to wish to taste poetry and botany in the same cup? To call every cedar a cedar of Lebanon is just as far from definiteness as it would be to call all fine grapes "Grapes of Eshcol", every rose a "rose of Damascus", or every lily a "lily of the field". The Hebrews celebrated

the cedar of Lebanon because they knew no other; the rose of Damascus, because the tea-rose was not introduced from the Far East until the nineteenth century of our era; and the grapes of Eshcol because they were still unacquainted with Rüdesheimer.

When you enter a park, take my advice and leave your Hebrew poetry with the gate-keeper, with a small tip. You can reclaim it when you come out, if you really set so much store by it. But for the period during which we are gazing at actual, concrete, present trees, I recommend in preference a little knowledge of botany, which has, among other virtues, the advantage of distinguishing one kind of tree from another and giving to each its proper name.

The gardener's vocabulary certainly recognises a cedar of Lebanon, just as it recognises a rose of Damascus, but only as one variety among others, not as a title of honour. Just as it includes, not only the damask-rose, but the tea-rose, the moss-rose, and many others, so it includes not only the cedar of Lebanon but also the Atlas and Himalaya cedars. The fact that the name of each of these cedars is borrowed from its original habitat does not imply that we must always procure our Atlas, Lebanon, or Himalaya cedars from black, brown, or yellow market-gardeners, carefully packed on camels, with their roots intact, and shipped from the coast in vessels sailing to Genoa or some other European port. I should like to see the mutilated rubbish that would reach us in that event! On the contrary, all the different varieties of cedar have long been acclimatised throughout the world, and are grown, partly from seeds and

partly from saplings, in England and Spain, Germany and Italy, quite as freely as beeches and hazels. Just as with our roses, which we do not need to order afresh every time from China or Damascus. If we had to, roses would be a costly luxury indeed! The sentimentality that moans over the slow but sure dying out of the cedar in the Lebanon district has, like every other sentimentality, a very guileless and insignificant basis. Its tears are infantile. If every cedar in Lebanon disappeared to-morrow, down to the very last root, how would that affect us? Not a whit more than if the horse-chestnut became extinct in Irkutsk. We are not the Four Major Prophets; we do not aspire to sing for the Chief Musician upon Gittith,[1] we do not want to charter ships from the wharves of Ophir!

I. Atlas and Lebanon Cedars.

The immense and obvious difference between an Atlas cedar and a Lebanon cedar is æsthetic, not botanical. It does not consist in the number, form, and length of its needles or even on their grouping; it depends on the general mode of growth, on the direction and proportion of the boughs, and on the appearance of the treetops. Each of the two varieties has its own aim and its own form; and the characteristic struggle becomes more evident in each case with increase of age. Really youthful examples of the Atlas and Lebanon cedars, in which

[1] See Psalms viii, lxxxi, and lxxxiv.

the struggle for differentiation has not had time to develop, cannot (as I am assured by a venerable authority on cedars) be distinguished from each other. In half-grown trees the distinction is more evident at a distance than close by, because the leaves are still similar, though the general effect has changed. When you are quite near the tree, it is easy to make a mistake, but this is impossible if you are some way off. Full-grown trees are easily distinguishable, at any distance.

Of all cedars the *Atlas Cedar* has the straightest stem. It towers in the air like the mast of a mighty ship, tapering rapidly towards the top. The boughs project in successive tiers or stages, at a considerable interval from each other, the gaps thus formed allowing the light to penetrate to its heart and reveal clearly the bare white bole. Between the main branches occur only small bushy growths. The branches spread neither horizontally nor parallel to each other; they push in curious independence almost directly upwards. The symmetry of the growth, in spite of the arbitrary trend of the boughs, is achieved by the clawlike bend of their outer ends. I return to the image of a ship. It is as if the mast were enveloped by all kinds of tackle, running both across and aloft, but with all the transverse yards curving downwards at their ends. This curvature, however, is not pliant, but bold and definite. The short spines of the twigs are not bushy, but form knobs and tufts, between which the light-coloured stems are conspicuous. The skeleton or framework of the tree is invariably more noticeable than the foliage. The leaves shade the ribs rather than cover them. This produces an unusually

sharp outline, a true silhouette. As, however, the bristly tufts of leaves throw heavy shadows on the white limbs of the tree, the sudden change of light and shadow affords a most inviting subject for the pen or pencil of the artist. In its own natural appearance the tree already forms a drawing in pencil or Chinese ink.

The Atlas, to speak strictly, has no definite top. It lifts to heaven a mass of slanting, thin, crooked scaffolding, skeleton-like wings, and hooks. And we are forced again to search for analogies: masts with yards, or the talons of a vulture, or fluttering ravens, or a scaffold and gallows. Always something demonic or malicious. In a word, a carrion crow perched on a gibbet.

In its youth—and the youth of a cedar lasts long—the *Cedar of Lebanon* is at a disadvantage, compared with the Atlas cedar; but this gradually disappears and in full maturity the Lebanon variety makes by far the more striking impression on our senses. An old cedar of Lebanon is so overpowering in its effect, so gigantically portentous, that no mortal can pass it without notice. He has to pause in amazement to try to take in the marvel. Think, for example, of the cedars at Verona!

A youthful Lebanon cedar, from ten to twenty feet in height, has little to say to us. It simply looks like an exceptionally bushy fir-tree. There is as yet no trace of a definite top. The characteristic curving of the branches is not yet noticeable, because they are so close to each other and so thickly covered with foliage that the eye cannot follow the outlines of the framework. The pine needles of a young cedar of Lebanon are so profuse that the eye cannot penetrate it and so gets no idea of

what is inside. Thus the rich leafage, which is eventually the chief glory of the tree, works at first to its disadvantage. Also the drapery-like effect, which the Atlas cedar lacks, does not develop in the Lebanon cedar until an advanced age, when the lower, almost vertical, limbs fork and bend towards the ground. It is only the exquisite balsam-fragrance, which it exhales from the first more bountifully than the Atlas cedar, that reminds us of the noble nature of the sapling. In other respects, as already noted, it looks like a condensed, richly-leaved fir-tree.

But how different it is in age! This is not a bird-of-prey, it is a lion. It is not arms, wings, or claws that its boughs simulate, but broad and massy paws, as if they aimed to cover and dominate as much as possible of the ground below. Just above the earth the wide overhang crawls to an amazing distance. We seem to see it grow and extend its grasp; we estimate, with a pleasing shudder, the ultimate goal of its fabulous expanse. Stretches of twenty feet in every direction, measured from the trunk, are not uncommon, showing a total spread of about forty feet.[1] Then we have the top of the tree. Is not that a real lion's mane! Nothing pointed, nothing thin; never. On the contrary, a flat skull, a menacing head, a surging swell of locks and curls. The whole tree is a shaggy, sombre, portentous giant; a black lion, humped like a camel.

He who plants a cedar of Lebanon must have patience and self-denial. He must be able to feel with the hearts

[1] In his *Forest Scenery* William Gilpin mentions a cedar with a horizontal expanse of 96 feet.

of his great-grandchildren. But what wonder is there in this? Is it not, after all, our own heart, illumined by youth and bathed in hope? Of course, I should not begin with quite tiny shoots. I should choose saplings ten feet high, so that I should save about six years of my time. Ample space must be given to them, for they are monarchs whose robes are very voluminous.

II. The Himalaya Cedar.

Cedrus Deodara is its botanical name. Under this name come numerous varieties, such as the Deodara argentea (silver deodara), Deodara viridis (green), Deodara robusta (the adjective referring to the great length of its needles), and the Deodara glauca (blue). These differentiating names are in so far misleading, as the differences are in fact by no means so great as the epithets would indicate. Indeed, in the course of the tree's evolution they tend to disappear or become almost indistinguishable. One part of a tree often looks bluish, another greenish; the general colour-effect is ambiguous. Fully-grown deodaras are almost as like as two peas; one has to look very sharply to recognise the original differences. It would be nearer the truth to say of the Himalaya cedar that it has a sharply defined and constant framework, coupled with very uncertain colouring. No single example is exactly of the same hue as its neighbour. In early youth the colours run riot and offer fascinating contrasts. Silvery, bluish, and grass-green trees grow side by side. You would never take them for the same

plant. The green Himalaya cedar is, however, now rare, and is seldom an object of commerce. Among several dozen specimens of deodara stocked by one of the leading market-gardeners of Italy I did not find a single green one. The basic colour of the Himalaya cedar, to which it always returns after excursions in the direction of green or silver, is a light bluish-green or (perhaps more exactly) greenish-blue. The young needles make their first bow in a light-green dress, turning later decidedly blue and ending as greenish-blue. The colour is always light, much lighter and more nebulous than in other cedars. Thus the outline of the tree seems soft and (as it were) veiled.

This light-bluish coloration is, therefore, the distinguishing mark of the Himalaya cedar. The next peculiar feature is the length of the needles, which in the ordinary varieties are twice as long as those of the Lebanon and Atlas cedars, while in the Deodara robusta they are nearly as long as those of the pine-tree. They also intertwine with each other at their extremities like a pair of pincers. As, moreover, the needles do not stand erect, but lie or hang, the general appearance of the deodara may be easily conceived. It is of a soft and pensile character, differing from that of other cedars just as Angora cats differ from the ordinary variety, or as the Strobus excelsa or King Pine (also a native of the Himalayas) differs from the common pine. Obviously the long-hairedness and pendant type of the Himalaya cedar contribute to the perfection of its spread. This is attained at an early age, as even quite youthful specimens shade the whole of the ground round the trunk. Every part of

the tree is pensile. The boughs slope like a roof, and quite regularly, towards the ground, without any diminution of the bold hook or curve that distinguishes all cedars. The tree-top bends sharply downward, from youth to age, just as is the case with most of our northern cypresses. It is so thin and slender, that it seems as if the first storm must break it off. In age the boughs, which branch freely in all directions, become more sharply curved; the original gentle regularity of the slope gives way to a more menacing swing. Eventually the appearance of a large deodara is very like that of a cedar of Lebanon, with the exception of its top. For this assumes a unique and adventurous form. We do not find the gallows and vulture-talons of the Atlas cedar, or the lion's head of the cedar of Lebanon. In their place we have the head and beak of an eagle. It is as crooked and as sharply bent as a sickle.

The Himalaya cedar is at present more popular than any other. This popularity depends partly on the fact that it is more easily transplanted than the others and hence involves fewer failures. Besides this, however, it has the æsthetic advantages of forming (even at an early age) a splendid sweep or spread of foliage and of adding softness and luxuriance to the innate dignity of all cedars. A successful deodara, even if it is only from six to ten years old, generally passes as the most beautiful tree in the garden. And especially if it is a Deodara robusta, hanging its head till it nearly touches the ground.

Those who want to learn how to distinguish one cedar from another will find the best opportunity in the

Giardini Pubblici of Milan. Here stand huge examples of every variety. There are many blue Atlas cedars at Geneva. In Ouchy there is a sensational Robusta.[1]

JEREMIAH IN THE GARDEN

"It gars me grue."[2]

PERHAPS you have a small garden and go one day to a nurseryman to select some nice little plant. Your eye falls on a wonderful bush of the most superb green colour, shining like a well-kept lawn, full and slender and rounded as a half-grown angel. The whole shrub is a picture of jubilant delight, that would lend your garden-plot a unique touch of liquid colour—a tone of, what shall I say? Ah, you are colour-blind. That's a pity, as otherwise I should have said a tone of celestial green. Well, let us say dream-green or soap-bubble-green. In short, this is your ideal, this strikes you as just the thing, this is what you want. What's the name of this shrub? *Cupressus viridis stricta.* "What does it cost? So-and-so much." "Good; fetch it along to-morrow and plant it in my garden." But a doubtful expression creeps over the face of the nurseryman, and he scratches himself behind the ear. "Plant it in your garden? A *Stricta viridis*? A Viridis stricta in a garden? Generally most

[1] In England there are exceptionally fine cedars at Woburn Abbey, Warwick Castle, Syon House, and many other places.

[2] This Scots phrase is, perhaps, the best equivalent for Spitteler's dialectic heading: "es tödelet". The English version might be "it is ghastly" or "it makes my flesh creep".

people usually consider that as more suitable for a cemetery."

I go walking one Sunday with an acquaintance, chatting about this and that. All at once my companion becomes distrait, sniffs, and looks uneasily round. "It makes me shudder." What makes him shudder? I look in vain for (say) a dead mouse. It is a beech hedge that makes my neighbour's nose wrinkle.

A lady is admiring a park. Suddenly she puts up warding hands before her face. "Pah! That looks like a churchyard." This time it was an innocent pyramidal yew that made her flesh creep.

What, then, makes your flesh creep? Is there anything that doesn't make it creep? We shall make a short list of the plants that cause goose-flesh—without any claim to completeness, simply those that occur to me at the moment.

The following are "gruesome" plants:—All the Thuyas and Trees of Life (Arbor Vitæ), which alone account for more than half of our ornamental shrubs; then the juniper, the yew, boxwood, the holly, the aucuba (Japanese laurel), the laurel, evergreens, the euonymus, cryptomeria (Japanese cedar), and cypresses. To these may be added the cycas and most other palms, and white roses, lilies, and jasmine. Everything is gruesome that has fragrance but no blossom, or has white blossoms, or has evergreen or shiny leaves, or furnishes convenient decoration for wreaths and crosses, or that is at once unfamiliar and beautiful. This is an imposing index, which condemns nearly all the finer decorative plants. What, at long last, remains over? The first principle is

that nothing that can be chopped up for soup or be sold in the market at a profit is gruesome. So the vegetable garden must be the most cheerful of all!

And we must not think that this feeling of horror ends with the interjections and has no farther consequences. Any gardener will tell you that the distrust of so-called churchyard shrubs leads to actual refusal to use them, and really attains the proportions of a violent superstition. Certain shrubs remain unsaleable on the nurseryman's hands, unless he has the chance of disposing of them for a cemetery. And quite often we meet persons who cherish a real horror for cypresses or yews. "Not for worlds would I have one of them in my garden."

Now I am quite able to enter into the feelings of those who metamorphose the allegorical meaning of evergreen shrubs in this way. I can appreciate the unpleasant association of ideas in the mind of those who connect a certain plant or a certain odour mainly or exclusively with necrological experiences. Subsidiary details do recall the main event, funeral wreaths and cemetery trees suggest death. For surely we are agreed that the funereal connotation of a plant has no direct cause in its own natural properties, such as its colour or smell, but is imported into it from the outside, simply through our mental associations. Or do you deny this? If so, I can easily prove you are wrong. Does the smell of musk suggest death? On the contrary, it makes us think of the demi-monde and of rendezvous. If you ask an Indian traveller, however, he will at once acknowledge that the scent of musk makes him feel the knife at his

throat. Thus, clearly, it is not the sensation of this particular odour that decides our reaction, but simply the mental pictures connected with it. So the slight emotional shock we receive when the sight or smell of a particular plant reminds us of its use at funerals is quite explicable and intelligible—and even, in a naïve and childlike way, intelligent. Everyone in his own way has more or fewer of such unwelcome reminders; only they differ in different cases. My flesh, *e.g.*, creeps when I sense a dentist, or see a surgeon, or read of a brilliantly successful operation. The mistake begins when this naïve impression is allowed to rule our conduct, instead of being corrected by the intelligent afterthought that the accompanying details are really quite innocent of the sad event. It is foolish to refuse to have a yew or cypress in our garden, or (what is much the same thing) for a healthy man to take headlong flight at the sight of a surgeon. The thing then becomes simply foolish. For is it not foolish to do without the handsomest decorative plants in our gardens because we (very properly) plant them on our graves? Why do we plant them in graveyards? In order that the graves may present a picture of blooming life instead of one of inconsolable grief. And yet we act as if the same plants that make for life in the cemetery must elsewhere reek of death? And so, from fear of this suggestion, our gardens must be laid out in a bleak, frosty, and morose style? *That* seems to me gruesome, if you like!

Nothing is more likely to effect a complete cure of this funereal prejudice against certain shrubs than a journey from Northern to Southern Europe. This would

teach us that every plant at the northernmost limit of its natural habitat is predestined to churchyard cultivations. In other words, every place uses the garden-plants of its southern neighbour for graveyard decoration. Or (to put it the other way round) we find that, when we have moved one stage towards the south, the gardens are full of our cemetery shrubs. The beech still worries the Alsatian, but does not worry the Switzer; the arbor vitæ makes the Bernese shiver, but has no such effect on the Luçernois; the Luçernois, in turn, dislikes the yew, which has no terror for the Ticinese; in Ticino, and to some extent in Lombardy, the cypress is looked at askance, while in Tuscany it is a welcome guest. So it would be juster and more intelligent, when we see such evergreens in a garden, to say "that warms me up" or "that smacks of the south" rather than "it makes my flesh creep". If our churchyard sensations in this connection, if our superstitious prejudices had the slightest basis or reason, Genoa and Florence would long ago have become waste places, Como and Lugano would bear the lugubrious impress of cities of the dead. Do they make such an impression? If not, why not? Because our eerie associations of ideas at once give way to more cheerful ones as soon as they get the chance—*i.e.* as soon as we see masses of our churchyard shrubs in every pleasure-garden. What, then, is our prescription for getting rid of this eeriness attaching to our noble evergreens? To plant them in our gardens. Fresh associations of ideas, new symbols, new memory pictures will be formed, which will outweigh the old ones until they tip the beam. Why does not the

beech affect us as it affects our northern neighbours? Because its fragrance makes us think first of cottage-gardens and open-air restaurants. Why does not the rose affect us grimly, seeing it so often flourishes in churchyards? Because we have it in our gardens, because we often encounter it in our ball-rooms. Why do we not shudder at sight of a Registrar, although a visit to him is necessary at every death? Because he also celebrates marriages and registers our births.

The man who defies prejudice and plants a graveyard shrub in his garden, such as the yew (Fastigiata) or (if the climate allows) a cypress, is really doing a public service, inasmuch as he encourages his neighbours and frees an outlawed but beautiful plant of its load of guilt. This does not require any particular sacrifice, only a little common sense. For it is by no means so dangerous as one imagines. It is quite possible that the planter may die within the year. But do not the planters of lettuces and chives die also, even though no suggestion of mortality cleaves to these humble vegetables?

WHERE IS THE WINTER LANDSCAPE AT ITS BEST?

LET us assume that a native of Western Europe, with the eyes of an artist or at least of a nature-lover, travels north to 60° N. lat. or to an even higher latitude, about the beginning of February, when severe cold and (as a

rule) continuous sunshine prevail in these regions; and suppose him carefully to note the details of the winter scene before him.

The first thing to strike him, as compared with his recollections of home, will be the paleness and uniformity of the colouring. In the brightest sunshine the sky does not look blue, but whitish, as if veiled in a mist; it is often difficult to determine whether the atmosphere is clear or clouded. Below, the surface of the earth is uninterruptedly white, glazed by the sun, but not painted. There is not a spot of brown loam or yellow path, no standing corn, no dried leaf, no bubbling spring, no flowing river. The very woods have no colouring, but are merely patches of darkness. A bunch of weeds by the roadside would be as grateful as an oasis. Besides the colour, our observer would instinctively feel that something else was lacking, though at first he might not be able to formulate it; as soon, however, as he realises what it is, he knows that it alone is enough to spoil the landscape for him. In the northern winter there are no strong shadows, and, above all, no sharply defined shadows. Even in the brighter sunshine men wander about like Peter Schlemihl, their bodies making merely a light-grey, scarcely noticeable, indistinctly outlined mark on the snow. The same uniform dazzle surrounds each object. My observations in this matter have been scientifically confirmed and explained by an eminent physicist. The dispersed light (I quote his explanation literally) in high latitudes attains a relatively high degree of importance as compared with the direct rays of the sun. Every lover of nature will easily conceive how

much a landscape will lose from an absence of well-marked shadows.

In the meantime, have we to do here really with landscapes at all? Even that might be contested for a great part of the North, especially for the Sarmatian plain. Without committing ourselves to a discussion of the difficult conception of a landscape in the æsthetic meaning of the word, we may at least agree that grouping and harmony are the essential and basic conditions of a "landscape". It is only in exceptional cases that we can apply the word to perfectly flat stretches, especially when the demarcation between field and wood is not clearly defined. We should find the exceptions most readily in summer, when colours and odours divide and unite, and the changing canopy above seems to enter into sympathetic relations with the levels and undulations of the earth. Even the poetry of winter solitude and melancholy cries out for the presence of some warmer motif, such as we find at every step in winter landscapes of the South, whereas in the North it is a rare exception.—Finally, the drawing of the details leaves something to be wished. Our winter woods, apart altogether from the glory of their colouring, furnish us with a wealth of striking variations in the mere form of their bare branches. The majestic pines and firs, the slender poplars, the mighty boles of the oaks and beeches, and the endless varieties of fruit-trees all combine to make a winter paradise for those who come to us from the farther North. In the truly hyperborean regions there are only two constantly recurring trees, the mournful birch and the scraggy

stone-pine. The white stem of the birch, and the universal pallor of the environment, naturally do not produce the pleasing sense of contrast they evoke among the darker trees of our parks. The poverty-stricken character of the stone-pine is sufficiently indicated by the northern maxim that pine-woods give no shade. Scottish firs, most often found on sandy soil near human habitations, form grateful oases, and a leafless apple-tree affects us almost like an ornamental foliage plant.

And with all this let us compare the snow-scenes of Central Europe, especially in mountain districts. However deep the snow may lie, the brown, yellow, and black tones of the cultivated patches on the slopes of the hills and mountains afford a bright relief; green crops push up here and there; the woods of beech and oak are clad in wonderful russet; an azure sky looks down on us from above; the springs and rivers run blue; and more sluggish waters, converted into temporary bridges for hours or days, assume an infinity of strange forms, of which the suddenly frozen waterfall, with its pinnacles and stalactites, is perhaps the most attractive. The noonday sun, strong even in the grimmest winter, paints the landscape with silver and gold, and washes the shadows with velvety black. Even after the severest nights, it is still strong enough to melt the upper layers of snow and to sweep down the crystal dust from the stately limes and beeches, like a rain of blossoms. Sometimes heavier and more substantial falls descend suddenly from all the branches at once, taking our breath away by their chilly delight and diamond-like brilliancy. Added to this are the majestic background

of the Alps and the classic profile of the nearer hills, made more imposing by their mantle of snow.

No real Northerner, not even a Norwegian, has any idea of the wealth of beauties revealed by a snow-landscape in the Swiss or Austrian foothills of the Alps. He who dreams of spending a winter in the North should therefore do so as speedily as possible, in order that he may learn the inexhaustible æsthetic joys of our own winter. Though, of course, it is always possible that he may find in the North something that does not really exist there, but has been imported by his faith—a trick that is neither difficult nor unusual. The æsthetic pleasure of a winter landscape is decidedly, in my opinion, at its highest on the southern edge of the snow, amid the inhabited parts of the Alps.

NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

THE PERSONALITY OF THE POET

THAT high appreciation of the poetic and artistic personality, which seems almost self-evident, really implies an advanced stage of culture. The ordinary mortal enjoys a work of art as he does a cake; he knows it tastes good, and doesn't bother about who made it or what his name is.

The child acts in the same way with his picture-books; it makes no odds to him whether they come from Meggendorfer or Flinzer, or anyone else.[1] When the message-boy whistles an operatic air, he has not the least interest in its source. Our servant-girls, after a visit to the theatre, can give us a very fair résumé of the plot, but it is ten to one that they don't know the playwright's name. And the same consideration covers the case of the school-teacher, of whom we are told that, when asked the meaning of the words "Uhland" and "Schiller" in a book of poems, he replied that they were technical directions for the guidance of the compositor.

In unliterary ages a whole nation acts with the same sangfroid. Works, colossal both in extent and beauty, have come down to us without any author's name attached to them, such as (*e.g.*) the Homeric cycle and the Nibelungenlied. This is usually known as folk poetry—a phrase which gives currency to a very

[1] As we might say, whether they are by Kate Greenaway, or Randolph Caldecott, or Miss Florence Upton, of *Golliwog* fame.

significant misunderstanding. What is called folk poetry is really anonymous poetry. How this anonymity originated and how it still originates may be verified any day. Now, as two thousand years ago, the plain man, *i.e.* the people, enjoys every work of art without reference to the author, passes it on without any name attached, and so, in a short time, stereotypes its anonymity. If you go into a village and ask the inhabitants who wrote the "Guter Kamerad" or "Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten", they will not be able to tell you; they may have learned the names at school but they have since forgotten them. Indeed, if it were not for the histories of literature, they would soon pass into oblivion. As a matter of fact the popular poems of such men as the literary histories do not deem worth mention become practically anonymous in the course of two generations, even though the names of the authors were once well and widely known. This has been the fate of the "Vereli" song, "Doctor Eisenbard", "Du lieber Augustin", and all national anthems. The scholar may still know the authors' names, the people have already forgotten them. Sometimes the scholars have the pleasure of resuscitating at the eleventh hour an identity that had been wellnigh lost for ever. This, *e.g.*, was the case with the "Wacht am Rhein" and "Struwelpeter".[1]

How light-heartedly, I might almost say how ruthlessly, the people annexes as its own national product everything and anything that was originally personal

[1] So, in England, practically no one could name, at a moment's notice, the writers of such popular songs as "Hearts of Oak" or "Men of Harlech". Perhaps even "Tipperary" has already passed into this class.

may be most easily appreciated if we take into account physical as well as temporal distance by simply crossing the nearest frontier. Something that on one side of the boundary is duly accredited to its actual author passes on the other side as folk poetry. Heine's universally known and a hundred times reprinted song of the Loveliest Eyes ("Lied von den schönsten Augen") was cheerfully offered to me in Russia as a Russian folk-song. But what would you say if I suggested the possibility of Beethoven's sonatas masquerading as popular melodies? Well, that was an actual experience of my own. A band of gypsies announced that they were about to sing an old gypsy air, and then proceeded to render the first movement of the Sonate Pathétique, with introduction and runs all complete. Such experiences and observations are well calculated to make thinking men revise the current ideas about folk poetry. For popular poetry is not impersonal poetry, not the product of some sort of a collective folk-soul; it is simply an anthology, that has eventually become anonymous, of various authors, generally cultured dilettantes, who have now and again, by accident, produced a masterpiece. To pass from the great individual authors to popular poetry is simply to exchange the masters of art for schoolmasters, parsons, and lawyers.

If, then, the people, *i.e.* the ordinary man, is so confirmed a devotee of anonymity, it is clear that an enormous journey must be made to reach the modern cult of personality.

First of all we have to learn that a work of art represents an IDEAL VALUE of immeasurable extent—a conception

that very easily escapes the average man. Poems which the modern cultivated community weighs with gold and which bring fame, honours, orders, and pensions to the happy savants who discover them, pass from mouth to mouth of the public and from grandmother to grandchild as mere unconsidered trifles. What trouble the collectors had to secure a recitation of the noble popular epics of the Serbs! For the singers were ashamed of the "childish stuff". Grimm had the same experience in collecting the wonderful fairy tales of Germany. Everywhere and always the unlettered folk considered art as tomfoolery and the artists as triflers. Anyone who has spent his youth among peasants can bear witness to the truth of this.

Again, we must not forget that really sterling work is rarer in art than in the handicrafts; that much admirable productivity flows from the same source; that thousands fail altogether; that one man may produce a superabundance of the beautiful. Astonishment at this originates the popular reputation, which is won rather by the man who can accomplish many showy feats than by him who does one really great thing. The public also, when it has once painfully learned the name of an eminent master, is wont to ascribe to him every nameless and otherwise unclaimed work of art it comes across. The literary history of ancient nations shows many examples of this. Nine-tenths of the psalms of David and of the proverbs of Solomon are "spurious" —*i.e.* they are by anonymous authors. The popular slogan in regard to works of art is "to him that hath shall be given"—not "to each his own".

A farther and very difficult step was to see that perfection, whether in small things or in great, could be attained only by a GREAT PERSONALITY. How extraordinarily difficult the recognition of this fact is is testified by the troop of lyrical amateurs, who in their sweet innocence have no idea that even the shortest poem presupposes eminent originality on the part of the poet, but, in all seriousness, hope for success from any brand of inspiration. The "favouring hour" or the "kiss of the Muse" is all very well. But, unfortunately, this favour comes only to him who is already a favourite; the Muse kisses only those faces that have a clearly defined profile. So potent in every art is the personality, that genuine artists can determine from the most trifling example whether the man who wrote this single page is one of the elect or a casual weakling.

The question of the literary personality of the poet and artist is, therefore, one of no mean importance. Indeed, in the long run, all true art criticism is based on it.

This question, however, is capable of distortion, and, in fact, has been distorted. This happens whenever an exaggerated literary or artistic criticism relegates the work of art itself to the second place and drags the personality of the artist into the first. Many and various causes have misled our generation in this way. There is, *e.g.*, the Byzantine humbug manifested in idol-worship and the clustering of hagiographic legends round the artist. Then there is the adoring and romantic gossip, which cannot die in peace until it has provided a picturesque love-story for every artist (for all our art-wisdom finds its final outlet in women). Next, there are

all sorts of crazy attempts to decide how and in what degree the artist's life is his highest work of art—a theory that would reduce Shakespeare to the dimensions of a bungler. And, finally, the chief cause is our growing incapacity to enjoy a work of art honestly. Therefore, instead, we leave our visiting card on the artist.

Thus the cult of poetry and the mania for genius have become endemic, with baleful results, which naturally I cannot develop here in short order. If, however, you are inclined to believe that this hero-worship is pleasing to the objects of it, I beg to assure you that the very reverse is the truth. This is not because the lofty personages feel their good taste affronted by the exaggerated estimate of their work. For the artist or author is yet to be born who would own in his heart of hearts that he was really overpraised. But, simply, because the running after the personality of the artist is naturally accompanied by readymade preconceptions and (consequently) by demands which the real Simon Pure finds it impossible to satisfy, while his superficial and invertebrate imitator takes to them very kindly. The intended honours suffer a fate similar to crumbs scattered for blackbirds. The sparrows eat the crumbs, and the cat eats the blackbirds.

The demands of any generation upon a poet are infallibly unreasonable. In the first place, because they expect him to resemble the touched-up picture that has been handed down by a previous generation. Next, because the demands vary every fifteen years and are apt to be contradictory, so that the poor slave of the Muses must

possess at least four different characters in order to satisfy the popular desires. And, in the third place, because the demands have generally quite a touch of the childish.

History is my witness that I do not exaggerate. In one decade the indispensable condition for the recognition of a poet is that he shall always be sighing and sobbing. At another time he must strut about like a silly poodle with an openwork collar and a snappish temper, and must blight three hearts between every two rhymes. Anon he must be a symmetrical figure, posed delicately on his left toe, with his little finger pressed elegantly on his lips like a statue of Terpsichore. Then, suddenly the cry is to be dishevelled and tattered. He who has no bristles to show, who is not a dyed-in-the-wool Philistine, who is not an arch-pedant, is ruthlessly denied the possession of the poetic gift. And scarcely has one recovered from this terror before he is bound to be, from head to heel, as psychopathic as a stigmatic nun.

And please note that examples of all these different demands lie before us both in history and in present fact, and that each of them in its turn has been put forth as absolutely imperative.

What then, in contradistinction to all this, are the genuine common marks of a poetic personality? For it is not only a prying curiosity that takes an interest in this; there is also the worthy feeling of gratitude which incites us to get into closer touch with him whose work has given us pleasure of the most intimate nature. Moreover, the point has a psychological, I might almost say a (natural) scientific attraction.

I hope you will acquit me of a Mephistophelian cast of thought if I try to show that closer acquaintance with the private personality of a poet is usually unprofitable; we may rather congratulate ourselves on our distance from him, whether of space or time. I do not mean that appreciation is diminished by familiarity. I am convinced, just as you are, that the merits outweigh the faults and foibles. But the merits are not always on immediate view, while the faults easily affect social intercourse and may very possibly turn it into a vexation. Even one short and fleeting visit awakens, in many cases, a feeling of disappointment, which is not always due to the childish preconceptions of the visitor. More important is the presumptive loss through frequent companionship. In that case the nimbus provided by the would-be admirer generally fades into thin air. Repeated intercourse, if it remains superficial, is, indeed, the surest means to depreciate an eminent man. La Bruyère was both wise and witty when he wrote: "Who knows a great man least well? His acquaintances."[1] It takes real friendship and real affection to appreciate the personal worth of the private character, in spite of its many foibles; and a kindly and great heart is necessary for this. For the matter is not so much one of enjoyment and admiration as of patience and tolerance. When Charles XIII of Sweden congratulated the widow of the famous poet Bellman on having had so great a man for her husband, she replied: "Good Lord, your Majesty, if you only knew how unbearable he was!" The reason of the unbearableness or (better and juster)

[1] Compare "a man is never a hero to his own valet."

the unsatisfactoriness of the private character of the poet is not (as the envy of the mediocre is apt to assume) a pettiness that forms the obverse of the artistic greatness; the unamiability is really an occupational disease, an inevitable pathological consequence of his creative activity. While other trades impair the body only, the continuous productive work of the imagination sympathetically affects the temperament and even the character.

The average man can form hardly the dimmest conception of the enormous strain that the poet's function, if tackled in a serious and "grand" manner, inflicts upon him, or of the painful throes of conscience and agony of soul that precede the actual task of composition. It is nothing less than the sacrifice of a whole life, renewed daily. The Muse does not "visit" her votary; she tyrannises over him unsparingly from his earliest youth to his latest breath.

When you read the biographies of eminent poets, you will find that even their childhood generally passed as a time of continuous warfare. That quality which I might call the germ of all talent—*viz.* absolute truth to oneself—is in perpetual conflict with authority and conventions. Disputes with parents or teachers belong to the commonplaces of their existence.

The so-called period of development is usually marked by the most terrible psychic storms, which lead to the brink of the grave; and similar storms overwhelm the heart with those lightning flashes of which, in maturitv, the great works are made.

In connection with these youthful storms we may note

one striking and highly significant fact. Instead of the mirroring of the external world being at its clearest when the soul is most peaceful, as the analogy of water would suggest and as the popular belief takes for granted, we find that the best observers are precisely those poets who have weathered the most violent tempests of the soul. The famous gift of observation shown by great poets does not rest on a conscious appreciation of what goes on before them; on the contrary, the making of notes and rummaging among records is an unmistakable hallmark of amateurism. The real facts of the case are as follows. The attention is directed inwards; in the meantime all that is merely external and unprofitable for the artist flows past the observing glass as a fly crosses the lens of a telescope. This external matter is by act of will pushed aside, though it remains, like everything else, in the subconscious self, where it may be found later if the poet ever has any use for it.

The remarkable thing here is that the capacity for this unconscious storage of memory increases in proportion to the agitation of the soul at the moment of the experience. This is a law which you can verify by your own life. Which human beings, which natural scenes, which places abide most firmly in your recollection? Those which you observe intentionally, as a leisurely tourist studies towns, men, and landscapes? Not at all; rather those which you passed with indifference while your spirit was stirred by some momentous experience. What we see, *e.g.*, when run away with by an unruly steed, with death staring us in the face, is stamped ineradicably on our memory, down to the minutest

detail. The same is true of the accompaniments of a great sorrow (as at the burial of a friend) or a great joy. The more fundamentally the soul is harrowed and the mind obsessed, the more keenly and involuntarily are the accidental concomitants noted. The poet's gift of observation is thus actually based on his withdrawal from reality, in combination with his deep inner life. Now you will begin to understand why the professional naturalists find it so difficult to describe reality, and why the idealists succeed so well with great realistic works, as in the case (*e.g.*) of Paludan Müller of Denmark.[1] In order to be a great realist, one must have looked deep into the internal. The pretty picture of the Almanack of the Muses,[2] which represents the poet as imbibing nature with super-objective calm, through Olympian eyes of crystal, is therefore wholly misleading.

Out of the increasing hurricanes of the soul there bursts forth at last, with volcanic force, a maiden work, the success or failure of which is often decisive for the emotional sphere of the whole future life. Failure either breeds discouragement or (what is more often the case with the genuine poet) bitterness. Self-consciousness, much heightened by the rebuff, assumes an attitude of antagonism, and every expression thereafter shows a touch of the liver. Even greatness of character, if the failure is often repeated, does not prevent this, as was seen (*e.g.*) in the case of Grillparzer, one of our really great men. He who can sneer at failure producing such

[1] Paludan Müller was an idealistic Danish poet, whose idealistic work was often more truly realistic than that of professed realists.

[2] A work like our *Keepsakes* and *Books of Beauty*.

a destructive reaction, instead of a courageous and cheerful prosecution of one's work, forgets that the poet has put his whole soul into his work, especially if it were the firstfruits of his genius, and that consequently its fate strikes him to the heart.

Of this embittered and misapprehended type I need say no more, for everyone allows that it is difficult to find a more unsociable or more unpleasant class of men than poets who have either been misunderstood or fancied themselves to be so.

If, on the other hand, success has crowned the work, the public simply expects a continuance of it and becomes perplexed if it does not materialise. Such success, however, is generally long of coming, because there are a huge difference and a vast chasm between a single instinctive, eruptive act of creation and a conscious, steady flow of art-production. One has first to gain firm footing in the art, to investigate all forms, and select that field in which the given individual can attain his highest level. This is a hard and anxious problem, which can be solved only by trial and error and by an untiring force of will. Half, or even a whole, decade may easily pass in this manner.

The real labour begins when the artist has at last discovered and conquered the territory over which he is henceforth to exercise sway as lord and master. This is a happy and enviable labour, because it is one of harvesting the crop; but it is a work demanding more intensity of effort than any other. And it should be clearly understood that a fresh start has to be made with each new work, and that the proper form cannot

be determined without struggle. There are no masters who, as the vulgar suppose, have once for all set themselves at ease in the Zion of art. Even a Schiller compassed each of his dramas only through care and toil. And such toil will last till the artist has drawn his last breath. For the man who is visited by immortal motifs is not free to accept or reject or even postpone them. He must work hard at them, even if his own poor existence thereby comes to grief. With artists whose gift is a rich one, the drive of production, after the corresponding skill in execution has been attained, can therefore be described only as an actual fever.

Thus a never-resting, though by no means joyless work, ranging from meticulous attention to actual obsession, is an inevitable condition of the life of an artist or poet in the grand style. Occupation or preoccupation, with never a complete pause. Can you hope for satisfactory social intercourse with a man thus fettered to his daily task? Can you expect that he will join in your enthusiasms or be inspired with a deep interest in outside topics? Impossible. He will ruthlessly avoid, or even destroy, all that clogs his feet, whether human or circumstantial. And rightly so; for men and conditions pass, while his work is for all time. This, of course, exposes him (as indeed every busy man) to the reproach of egoism. It is a pity that we have not more of the egoism which sacrifices itself to an ideal workl Balzac has given us a happy phrase to characterise the way in which energetically productive artists are, through the nature of the case, preoccupied with the theme of the moment and consequently rendered callous

and blind to any other interest. When a friend on one occasion was telling him some important news, Balzac interrupted him with "Let us now rather speak of realities" and proceeded to discuss the characters in his novels. This hits the nail on the head. For every artist and poet of the first order his own work is the reality; everything else is behind a veil. This is not on account of "inspiration", for a great soul is never "inspired"; it is due to a feeling of duty, or, rather, to a consciousness of what he can do and therefore must do.

I must, however, give some explanation of what I mean by the paradoxical denial of inspiration to the poet. A feeling of elevation, yea even of lofty elevation, accompanies every creative effort, and is, indeed, its fundamental condition; but it is only in the young artist that this is felt as exaltation. Later, the productive artist lives so constantly in the upper air of fancy that any "uplift" in himself is no longer perceptible. The vision or conception itself, or whatever you like to call the sudden germination of the intellectual creation, does not present itself amid convulsions of the whole man, as in first youth, but in a glow of the soul tremulously permeated by a profound sadness. For every truth, seen from the height of life, is sad; and the visions that press on the mature poet wear the shroud of buried hopes. No real master ever dreams of working up his inner enthusiasm so as to go chasing ideas in the upper air. He has enough to do in either banning or satisfying the dead visions that resuscitate of their own motion. Just as Odysseus, when the Shades besieged him in the cave, begging for life and physical bodies, had to ward

them off with his sword. Most of the Shades allowed themselves to be beaten back; some of them, however, were so persistent, so troublesome, and so menacing that their demands had to be granted. These form the material which one actually exploits, the books which one actually writes. Even in accomplishment the master denies himself the joy of inspiration from his own works. His categories are raw material and labour, problem and solution. His anxious care is to execute correctly and accurately what his genius has conceived. If anything beautiful appears in the process, he garners it eagerly, but without spending time over it or rolling it under his tongue, as the novice does and as eventually the reader does and may and should do. All progress rests on the ability to take the marvellous as self-evident. In the following paradox La Bruyère has well characterised the whole matter—I mean the distinction between the poetic gush of the pretender and the cold-bloodedness of the master in face of the most exquisite visions. "The difference between the genius and the second-rater is that the second-rater exerts himself to be elevated, while the genius contents himself with trying to be exact." The following figure will make this even plainer. The poet who works himself up is like a boy desperately leaping up at the sprays overhanging the wall of a vineyard, in the hope of pulling down a bunch or two. He, however, who is tall enough to reach the vines, stands firm, selects the choicest varieties, and is mainly concerned to see that no berries are dropped in the act of plucking.

In this restless weaving and working in the domain of

the intellect and the imagination, it is inevitable that serious disturbances of the temperament and the nervous system should occur. No one can dispute this, unless he does not know what a work of the imagination is or has committed himself to a contradictory theory.

From examples which they have really failed to understand, people have tried to construct a gospel of health and strength for the poet, including an obligatory hygiene. Everyone agrees that art must be sane and sound. But a robust poet or artist with the nerves of a day-labourer, is simply an impossibility. With such stuff as that nature makes a fireman or a bombardier, never even a captain. Alexander, Napoleon, and Frederick the Great all showed nervous sentimental symptoms. As long as the globe endures, men of imagination will suffer from serious neurasthenic disturbances. I am sorry, but so it is. And no one can object that the case of the very great is otherwise. Dante, as far as I know, is a star of the first magnitude; and probably no one would dare to call his art morbid or unsound. All the same, on the modern theory of health, he would to-day be regarded as an "unfortunate weakling" on account of his hallucinations and fainting fits, and would be energetically treated with cold water. Shakespeare, whose art, as I am informed, is both vigorous and healthy, has been derided for his personal "sweetness". Our robust critic would certainly prescribe a little rail-splitting for him.

The least insight into the human organism is enough to teach us that it cannot be otherwise, that continuous and concentrated imaginative activity, complicated,

moreover, with assaults on the emotions, must inevitably produce a pathological mood. Intense mental work has a very bad reputation with the doctors, and none but a manual labourer could possess the impervious nervous system that one expects in artists. Lotze and several other thinkers have declared that, from the health point of view, the mind is a useless, if not injurious, parasite of the body.

Of the imagination this is true in a much higher degree. Moreau of Tours, one of the most celebrated French psychiatrists, ranks every imaginative activity as a pathological condition of the soul. Thus he reports a case of illness in which the patient could at will recall absent persons, with all the details of their features. So it appears that the learned doctor regards a strong and accurate memory as a symptom of spiritual disturbance. The fact that your mistress appears to you in a rosy and shining light is a proof of erotomania, a recognised form of mental disease. No matter how exaggerated and senseless this psychiatric "police-constable" criticism may be, it at least shows us the path we are following. Whenever a man prefers the life of imagination to that concerned only with the external world, he is on the highway to disease; in the meantime he is paying a rich tribute to neurasthenia and all its train. An artist, and still more a poet, while he is busy with a great work, shares the condition of those mental patients who have a so-called double personality. The offence against nature may long go unpunished, but at times a mere trifle, an external visitation of fate, or a depressing affection of the spirits, is enough to bring about an

undisguised manifestation of dementia. The history of literature provides all too many proofs of this. Here, however, we must guard against a misunderstanding. Genius in itself is not madness; on the contrary it implies an unusual depth and sharpness of insight. The great poets have always been among the best thinkers. But the activities of genius, its continual preoccupation, its tense life of imagination, its fatiguing and gigantic labour, easily lead viâ the stages of neurasthenia and hysteria to disturbances of the mental equilibrium.

If you will allow a man, who has practised and compared many very different forms of mental work, to speak from his own experience, I would venture to say that the smallest poetic creation, even if it flows easily, quickly, and without apparent spiritual exertion, exhausts the nerves more than days of concentrated and systematic thinking.

Every poet, therefore, if he is dealing vigorously with far-reaching plans, must show, more or less, the symptoms of a nervous patient. This is the explanation of his "inexplicable" foibles. To reproach him on this account is just as reasonable as it would be to blame a crippled soldier for halting.

I grant you that this morbid irritability is no more a source of pleasure for the neighbours than intercourse with a hysterical woman.

I have often asked myself whether the irritability of the artist shows any specific marks that would distinguish it from ordinary nervous irritability. We might, perhaps, see such a distinction in its boundless and lasting reaction to impressions from without. A word of

blame, an involuntary piece of neglect, is felt as a deadly insult; a contemptuous phrase sticks in the memory and assumes greater importance from day to day. And this may culminate in the complex of fancied persecution, such as we find in the case of Goethe's Tasso and in our own experience.

The psychological explanation of this is easy enough to find. Keen sensibility cannot exist without sensitiveness. The soul of the artist has keys which respond to a lighter touch, and strings that vibrate longer, than is the case with the normal man. The ear of the man who is wont to listen to the whispers of the imagination is apt to feel the actual material speech of his neighbour as a violent interruption. He fancies himself injured at every turn and, in his reaction against a supposed ill-will, may show himself unjust. This is an example of how neurasthenia may alter character.

The tendency to want of tact, visible in Simonides, Ovid, Rousseau, and many notable examples in our own time, is psychologically interesting, because at first sight it seems quite unintelligible. One would imagine that tactlessness would be the very last frailty of men possessed with an exquisite, almost feminine delicacy of feeling. But tactlessness may arise from an excessive refinement of feeling as well as from dullness of feeling; for tact means the harmony of an external experience with the normally tempered feeling of the average man. He whose own feeling differs from this normal temperature, either by excess or deficiency, will fail to gauge the actual state of his neighbour's mind and will as a result express himself with inappropriate freedom.

Thus it is that want of tact is almost always a feature of the solitary life.

To speak of artists and poets without mention of their traditional vanity might seem to many a serious lapse. I confess, however, that this property of the great has escaped me; I view the reproach as emanating from a misapprehension, combined, perhaps, with a little malice.

What is vanity? An excessive appreciation of one's own private personality. The mere fact that great artists live solitary lives by preference seems to negate this charge of vanity. For vain men require an audience to show off to.

If, however, we are to understand by this accusation of vanity that authors like to speak of their work, that they are pleased by commendation, that they are pained by depreciation, that they take some general interest in the appreciation of their efforts by their contemporaries —then I admit the fact, but not the reproach. Quite apart from the fact that self-consciousness over a worthy, important, and laboriously created effort is a manly attitude and not a vain one, the pleasure one shows in talking of what is most important to him, of that of which his mind is full, is simply naïveté. The poet likes to talk about the work he is engaged in just as a mother talks about the child for whom she is anxious.

The urgent need to guard the reputation of his work is, however, a very serious matter. We must not forget that every author and poet has to play grandissimo against nullissimo.[1] He must be either everything or

[1] In bridge parlance, to play for a grand slam with nullo as the alternative. To go nap or nothing. *Aut* Cæsar *aut* Nullus.

nothing; there is no middle course. Now, no one is so certain of himself and of the value of his efforts that he does not have to face hours of depressing doubt or even of despair. Even Beethoven had times in which he felt no other consolation than that he was fairly sure of some kind of a place in the history of music. In order to be absolutely free from torturing doubt, everyone needs to have his own opinion countersigned by his contemporaries. This is also the reason of the terrible reaction to lack of recognition. In that case faith in himself can be maintained only at the heavy price of contempt for others. Critics therefore should be a little more careful with their accusations of vanity. Besides, in my judgment, the vogue of this charge comes simply from a confusion. It is not the poets and artists who are vain, but certain classes which produce their effects by personal exhibitions and are mistakenly called by the public "artists" or "artistes". I refer to actors, opera-singers, circus-riders, and (last but not least) the honourable tribe of amateurs.

I must acquit the poet also of envy. When anyone tells me that an eminent writer envies his colleague, my instinctive retort is simply "that is not true"—even when I do not know him. For where real talent is present, the appreciation of another's work is so powerful that the feeling for it invariably takes the form of respect and friendship. Of course it is possible to set one genius against another by artful intrigues and partisan injustice, as happened with Mendelssohn and Schumann, but this leads only to a certain antagonism, which vanishes when the mob ceases its hue and cry,

when the two masters find themselves face to face and alone. The history of art and literature shows brilliant examples of good fellowship and camaraderie. If (*e.g.*) you compare the painters and poets of the Renaissance with the Humanists, you will find that it is not the former who hate, envy, and maltreat each other, but another class, looked upon by the State with a more favourable eye.

Much still remains unmentioned that has close connection with our theme. Thus we might well consider why it is that poets and painters seem especially prone to so-called "sensuality", better described as intoxication of the imagination by the beauty of the female form. This question would lead to a study of the connection of the imagination with the erotic nerve-system; it has been well and conclusively treated by Nietzsche.

But my time is up. What has already been said is quite enough to show you why I regard habitual intercourse with great poets as a difficult duty rather than as a pleasure. But at the same time a very serious one. For one may injure deeply and destroy what can never be replaced. Toleration must be constant. Not that they are entitled to claim it. It would be a queer world, if we set the artist above the law. But if allowances be made for an artist, of their own free will, by a loving wife, by a generous Maecenas, by a magnanimous generation or nation (as in the case of France and Rousseau), then history gives the choicest blessing to their noble and considerate protectors. Those, however, who have not been called on by destiny to occupy themselves with

this class of mortals, would be wise to keep at a distance, remembering the proverb "Distance from the guns makes long-lived soldiers". For the literati not only claim patience towards themselves, but also the right to be impatient towards others. To speak plainly, they are often very rude.

One exception I must make: their bearing towards their colleagues. Brothers of the pen or pencil derive enormous benefit from intercourse with their fellows, whether temporary or enduring, through interchange of information, instruction, and encouragement. For all others, conversations with literary notorieties are wholly unprofitable. The gentleman either speaks to us about the weather or how to make a salad, instead of about Schiller and Goethe, or he overwhelms us with technicalities which happen to interest him for the moment but have no meaning for us. In no case will he do what we want and act the part. A true poet never behaves "poetically". For that sort of thing you must go to your "cultured" friends and acquaintances.

And now, in conclusion, I shall try to leave off on a higher note by a mere mention of the two cardinal virtues of a genuine poet: nobility (the sense of noblesse oblige) and magnanimity. The hardest virtues are for him the easiest: the devotion of a whole life to an ideal purpose, without reward and often without hope; self-denial; forgiveness; and the traditionary return of good for evil.

All these things flow as naturally from his character as water from a spring. He can no other.

If, however, you find that the unique virtue of magnanimity is counterbalanced by a whole rosary of disfiguring weaknesses, I shall not gainsay you.

THE TEMPERAMENT OF THE GREAT

A FEW years ago there crept (and there still creeps) a sort of literary measles through Europe, which relieved itself in various romances, the common theme of which was the spiritual disgust felt by an artist who had become at odds with his art. Zola set the ball rolling with his *L'Œuvre*. This document may claim value in the history of literature—not, however, as the author intended, as a record of the spiritual struggles of an artist of genius, but rather as a warning example of the mood of god-forsaken mediocrity, of a natural and inveterate amateur. A great man never despairs, never even doubts, of his art. He may doubt or despair of himself, *i.e.* his own relation to his art, but he never questions the art itself. Melancholy and depression, gloominess amounting almost to madness, may visit him; but no real master ever feels disgust with the tools he has to use. Every decent violinist, even if God and the world failed him, would still believe in his violin. He never has any scepticism about that.

Art, when one is capable of it at all, lends the feeling of power; it produces self-confidence and self-esteem. And self-esteem, when well founded, brings happiness. Art is, indeed, a burden and even a heavy burden, some-

times one may have to groan under it as Sindbad did under his Old Man of the Sea; but it is a godlike Old Man and the servitude is a blissful one.

Once more, then, I assert that artistic strength and greatness produce happiness, tempered it may be, but still the deepest happiness to be found on earth. Only the weakling is without resource, and only poltroons give way to disgust.

"GROSS-STADT UND GROSS-STÄDTER"[1] (GREAT CITIES AND THEIR CITIZENS)

THE German word "Gross-Stadt" ("world city") is not synonymous with "grosse Stadt". Thus Lyons and Bordeaux, in spite of their half million population, are really "provincial" towns. In a Metropolis or Great City proper the native or indigenous citizens must be distinguished and separated from the national and international inhabitants. The "Indigenous Citizens", as a body, are, even in the first cities of Europe, essentially bourgeois, even more so than in the most parochial or "Gothamite" of country-towns, because they have lost touch with nature and the civic conscience. Nowhere is the horizon so narrow, the intellect so limited, the mode of thinking so petty, and tittle-tattle so common as in

[1] A "Gross-Stadt" means a large town which is also great as a focus of the best spiritual and intellectual life of the country, which is most truly "urbane". It might be translated "Metropolis", with the proviso that this need not necessarily mean the political capital. Edinburgh and Boston might reasonably claim to be (or, at least, to have once been) more "gross-städtisch" than Glasgow or New York.

the "first circles" of the "Gross-Städte". No matter how fluently they talk or how great a show of wit they make, it is all a thin veneer; it is a harlequin garment of boulevard trivialities, behind which stands a cipher; it is a faded Philistia, which has lost even the naïve and amusing features we meet in small places.

In each of our "million inhabitant" towns there exists a dull Philistine nucleus, the denatured relic of a former civic individuality. As this class of citizens has an exaggerated idea of its own importance, derived from the monuments which they pass in their daily walks, they know well how to make themselves distinctly annoying on their summer migrations. This is by no means an exclusive prerogative of the "properly born" citizens of Berlin; the genuine Parisian bourgeois, the shopkeepers of St. Petersburg and Vienna, do not yield to them in this matter. The only difference is that they do not travel so much, because they do not like to give up their habitual atmosphere of metropolitan gossip for even a few weeks.

Alongside and above these heaven-born Philistines we find the first characteristic element of the Great City in the *Monde*, or Society in its most exclusive sense. Historically considered, this is an offshoot of the Court; its representatives were the courtiers or court noblesse, its manners were "courtly". The phrase "la cour et la ville" indicated that the court set the fashion and the town imitated it. In the court life of past centuries the most important elements of "Society" in the modern sense of the word were already included—*viz*. a certain levelling of all classes before the monarch's precedence

and (above all) a recognition of the aristocracy of intellect. Long before the French Revolution, a "noblesse de l'esprit" was practically in existence; this was seen in miniature at the courts of the Italian Renaissance, on a grand scale at that of the French Bourbons.

Modern gallantry, or the predominance of women, had been established at the French Court as the chief element of "Society" by the end of the seventeenth century. So long, it is true, as the Court formed the centre round which Society grouped itself, the latter lacked the peculiar features of the "Great Town"; we had court gossip side by side with town gossip, and generally both together. When we read the French Memoirs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we are astounded at the virtuose dexterity with which they manage to treat everything, even questions of European politics, from the viewpoint of the gossip. There came, however, a moment when Society freed itself intellectually from the Court, and began to make its laws for itself and to criticise the Throne. When we find the Maréchale de Luxembourg contemptuously calling King Gustavus of Sweden "provincial", because he did not know how to dress (*i.e.* because he wore pink silk ribbons); when we find the ladies of the French noblesse asking whether Joseph II, the venerable Roman Emperor of the German nation, knew how to behave properly—we have before us the modern *Monde* or "Society", though not yet exactly of the metropolitan type.

The "Great City" society needs yet another trait, *viz.* the predominance of the masses over the classes. This

change came to pass in the nineteenth century. On the attainment of a certain population, or (rather) of a certain excess of population, the intellectual or aristocratic élite loses the power of dictating the social laws of a town. An invasion from below takes place. The Boulevard triumphs over the Faubourg, the cocotte over the lady, the man-in-the-street over the fine gentleman. Between these two forces there emerges at last a continual process of equalisation, which is of great importance in impressing its character on a Great Town, while the provincial citizen remains as before. Though strictly separated in private society, the two "great town" elements are found together in public life, on the streets, at banquets, in the theatre. They borrow from each other. The fashionable man likes to let himself down a little, the climber tries to accommodate his manners to those of good society; both one and the other regard the provincial with mocking indifference. "Canaille" passes for a legitimate genre, but "provincial" is beyond the pale. A prince may fraternise with a groom, but not with a bourgeois professor. This fused "big city" population shows quite distinct characteristics, which repeat themselves almost exactly in every place and at every time, in similar conditions. We find them in the Athens of Nicias, in the Rome of the Cæsars, and in modern Paris and St. Petersburg. The ancient Syracuse, in the days of the Hieros, also shows " great townish " symptoms.

Above all, there exists here what does not exist in small towns—*viz.* a genuine society, consisting of daily private associations of persons of both sexes, selected

not for their position, or their family, or their profession, but simply for their powers of entertainment. For this, the predominance of woman is needed; where woman does not set the fashion, we have neither society nor a metropolis.

That the influence of woman upon society is fraught with benefit needs to be neither asserted nor proved. It is a factor in culture of the very first rank. Of great importance, too, is the wonderful system of recruiting by which the great cities attract, among other classes, the élite of the nation. Nor must we forget the salutary give and take arising from the meeting of highly cultured men, the daily emulation in the most delicate regions of moral and spiritual life. From all these considerations it would have been easy to foretell what we see in actual fact: *viz.* that the great towns are the collecting basins of culture. They also produce an intellectual life of their own, superficial, perhaps, but still intellectual. Flexibility, and readiness, and amiability are among the chief marks of the urban intellect. The wit is sharp and quizzical, but seldom venomous. Those who come from a great city to a small town are struck by the spiteful nature of the provincial judgments on their neighbours.

The citizen of a metropolis knows all and pardons all; he mocks, but he does not condemn. His easy good nature in the matter of spending is rightly proverbial; he knows how to give without humiliation to the recipient, a talent that is often absent from the charitable manifestations of smaller towns. His intellect is not exactly virile, it is rather childlike, and he shows a

marked inclination for nonsense, with which he likes to coquette. This must not, however, be confounded with stupidity or thick-headedness. He draws his instability and good temper from the child, his elasticity and keenness from the woman, his dependence on others from both. The metropolitan cannot think when he is alone, he requires company. Removed to a small town, he acts like a fish out of water; in the country he is like a strayed fowl.

Freedom from prejudice is one of the chief ornaments of a metropolis; life in it is, accordingly, easier and freer. The inhabitants plume themselves on their receptivity, equally hospitable to the highest and the most absurd. This receptivity, however, arises from a pressing need, the need of acquiring intellectual and conversational material. How it happens does not matter, if they can only get hold of something that will minister to the common entertainment. For the metropolitan always thinks collectively, and considers that the final end of all that happens is conversation, the strongest lever of sociability.

The metropolitan's love of mockery is nothing but affirmation of his broad-mindedness, for wit illuminates and badinage makes free. This broad-mindedness goes so far, that raillery directed against himself really gives him pleasure, whereas there is nothing that the ordinary man resents more bitterly. And his pleasure in this is really unbounded. In a great town the man who most unmercifully derides the metropolitans themselves becomes inevitably, if he does it with cleverness and wit, the most popular figure in society.

The metropolitan is not only elegant, but well-built and (contrary to the general belief) usually healthy. This is because he takes plenty of exercise, is fond of sport, keeps himself clean, and (as a rule) eats and drinks in moderation. In the great towns there are no considerable sections of the population that could be described as imbecile, stagnant, dirty, deformed, or habitually drunken. The metropolitan is not a lounger. His good health, however, does not usually amount to genuine delight in living, to joy in the possession of a strong muscular development, to a solid and permanent feeling of well-being. The charming, cheerful, and naïve laughter and smile of the countryman are seldom his. In order to get some enjoyment out of his life, the metropolitan has to be conscious that he is properly dressed. Till that end is achieved, he mourns over existence in general and his own lot in particular. At the hour of waking, a plaintive moan is emitted from every bed, for our metropolitan lives in rather strained relations with his digestion. Towards evening, however, the life-weary gentleman becomes notably lively. And at night, about the time the provincial is sitting, rather melancholy, over his glass, the metropolitan is just beginning his revels. And his jokes (*i.e.* his own "chestnuts") give him a highly exaggerated sense of jollity.

Art meets in this field a welcome, which at first sight seems pure gain. Above all, it finds here fame, which nowadays is taken for granted by the great cities as their especial province. Fame in the big cities is comparatively free from envy; it is given rather extravagantly

than grudgingly. To him that hath much shall be given. This is because it is accorded by the fashionable world, the most responsive section of mankind. Fame in great cities is also sweeter than elsewhere, for its dividends are paid by a refined society. This is why artists and poets are so ready to fix their residence in the metropolis. On closer inspection, indeed, the conditions seem a little less favourable. I am not speaking of the "spoiling" of celebrities or of the danger of the "swelled head". I mean rather that the unrest, the whirl of the faster life, are unfavourable for creative work. The observation has often been made that the great cities produce relatively few creative intellects.

The most ominous point seems to me, however, to be the fact that the taste of the great cities indirectly prescribes the laws of the arts, or, at least, seduces those artists who are not absolutely firm and independent in character. This taste, in contrast to that of the old Courts, is neither choice nor delicate; in fact, not to put too fine a point upon it, it is simply crude. Preference is given to the outré, the loud, and (what belongs to the same category) the over-refined. The judgments proceed from cliques, groups, and classes rather than from individuals. A "success" immediately becomes fashionable and is worshipped without discrimination, until, one sad morning, its turn comes to be thrown on the rubbish heap. Those artistic pleasures that are enjoyed in solitude (such as home music and reading) are pushed into the background, whereas collective institutions occupy the whole interest: concerts, festivals, and the

theatre in every form, whether gladiatorial sports and fights with wild beasts as in Ancient Rome, or operas and dramas as nowadays. I am no enemy of opera and drama; but I cannot shut my eyes to the conclusion that, whenever a nation devotes itself to an unlimited cult of the theatre, its great literature comes to an end. The case, therefore, is not free from apprehension. If only art reigned in the theatre and not merely the mass-instinct of the big-city public! If the latter come to pass, we shall live to see that he who devises the most ultra-refined effects or invents the most logical methods will drive all the others out of the field.

The taste of the great cities moves in a series of contrasts; the motive force, however, is disgust with itself. Every decade sees the idol of the previous decade condemned and trodden under foot. And when a metropolis has tried everything else and has sampled every form of dissatisfaction, it falls back on the puerile, in the hope of thereby effecting a return to nature.

Free as the metropolitan may be in the intellectual field, he is still a slave in point of character. He who lives a wholly social life, who thinks collectively, and feels with the herd, is quite incapable of being individual and independent. You may demand every form of courage from him, and every sacrifice, but you must not ask him to wear an unfashionable necktie or profess views that are commonly laughed at. No oriental despot tyrannises over his subjects with more resistless force than the social laws of the great cities. Since, nowadays, art, literature, and the theatre are subject to the rules of society, the citizen of any metro-

polis is the most docile, the least self-willed, the least independent member of a herd. The *mot d'ordre* of the day lashes him at its will towards the right or the left, just as the wind blows the clouds whither it listeth. And even if he mocks, he does not move in the direction of his mockery, but in that of the very catchword he is making fun of. Thus even the most cultured metropolitan behaves in matter of art like one of the rabble. He allows the literary material, upon which his judgment is often very shrewd, to be prescribed for him by fashion. The metropolitan may sneer at a fashionable book, but he will scarcely leave it unread.

The deepest and most pitiable serfdom, however, is that of the inhabitant of a large town which wishes to be a real metropolis, but has hardly attained that standard. He must hum (incorrectly) tunes that he has never heard, obey laws that he does not know, and speak a tongue that he does not understand; in other words, he must serve the alien. For only the very greatest cities have the honourable privilege of giving birth to their own follies; the other big towns import them from foreign parts, chiefly from Paris. And the importation is generally effected through middlemen, not directly. Thus, in German art and literature, during the last thirty years, we have witnessed a toilsome series of evolutions, carried on at the command of unseen drill-masters, especially since Berlin and Munich have been getting up on their toes.

Thus, *e.g.*, when Paris, in its grim and blasé humour, plays the coquette with *fin de siècle* and *décadents*, we see the fairly robust young men of military age in Berlin,

Vienna, and Munich adopting a rotten form of literature, merely to prove that they too are really "metropolitan". This means that when a neighbour is ill, or affects to be ill (for Paris gets over all her follies as easily and with as few evil results as if they were measles), we paint boils on our own cheeks. The humour of the situation is that, as Paris revolves more quickly than we, we are always one or two "isms" in the rear. Berlin has scarcely had time to import Realism from Paris, before Realism has become unfashionable there and has been replaced by Naturalism. When the Berliners have begun to grasp that, Naturalism has disappeared in Paris, and the key to existence has become Symbolism, or Pre-Raphaelitism, or Primitivism. Each of these must, of course, be hastily overtaken, so far as one understands them. But the understanding is generally rather shaky. In short, we have breathless haste and unholy confusion. That does not matter, however, since we feel that we are at least really and truly Citizens of the World.

FUNDAMENTALS

ABRUNDUNG ("ROUNDING OFF")

DO you feel the same as I do? I have always to overcome a certain reluctance before I read in print such scientific or æsthetic lectures or similar productions as were originally intended to be spoken.

It is not only that there is something lacking (such as the personality or voice of the speaker), but there is also a disturbing element. What is this element? The preliminary preparation, which the personal address demands and generally gets more or less, consciously or unconsciously.

First, there are the additions: the introduction and the peroration, which contribute nothing of importance, at least of essential importance, to the subject, but have their *raison d'être* in the psychology of the audience. The introduction coaxes the hearers by gentle and yet logical approaches to the theme; the peroration sends them home well stimulated with courageous thoughts. There is nothing really wrong in this, but it is rather superfluous and seems rather musty to the reader.

The introductions and conclusions written specifically for a book sound quite differently, more exact in thought, more pertinent to the theme. To say nothing of the fact that very serious writers (I mean such as are earnest for the truth, and have much that is important to say) are apt to dispense with introduction and summary

even in a book. The introduction and conclusion generalise; all that is worth knowing is, however, something definite and particular. He, therefore, who is entitled to speak, either shortens the introduction and ending of his book, or leaves them both out altogether. Notice (*e.g.*) how impatiently Jacob Burckhardt plunges in medias res.

The evil of the introduction and conclusion is complicated when the orator, for rhetorical reasons, tries to make the two sound the same note. To refer back to the introduction in the peroration, and so forth, is a very effective rhetorical device. Indeed, many consider it an indispensable accompaniment of oratory; sermons, *e.g.*, inevitably follow this course.

What is the reason for the great, the almost unfailing effect of this linking the end with the beginning? It rests on æsthetic grounds, especially on the laws of proportion and co-ordination or rounding off. Truth, however, is not round, but sharp; it is not mellow, but rough. This is the cause of our discomfort when we see a harmonious thinker lubricating the truth, whether for rhetorical or for cosmic reasons.

There are, however, other disadvantages, such as the casual grouping; the light touch on the subject, instead of a resolute grasp; the popularisation of it; and the inevitable optimism (for no orator can allow his hearers to depart in a mood of depression).

In short, so much skilful cookery is employed in a masterly, well-rounded oral treatment, that later, in reading it, one finds it difficult to sift out the essentials from the batter in which they are embedded.

ORIGINALITY

NO conscientious writer ever strives to be very original. If he has a significant personality, he will only too easily be more original than either he or his readers care for. Where this is not the case, there is no better road to a healthy originality, to a truly individual quality, than to do each of his tasks in an honest and forthright way. He who always does this, and (*e.g.*) writes prose intelligently and simply, differentiates himself strongly from the great majority, for there is nothing rarer than what is at once simple and accurate.

DIDACTIC POETRY

DIDACTIC poetry, as we know, plays a very important rôle in the world's literature, and this, be it noted, in the very best periods of the most poetical races. The examples of this are so numerous and so patent to everyone that I need not name them. With us, however, didactic poetry languishes under a ban; nay more, there prevails a kind of superstitious fear of it. It is as if we were afraid that didactic poetry might infect the other branches of the art with a linear and leathern prose bacillus.

But how shall we explain the attraction that didactic poetry has, in exceptional cases, for the genuine poet? By the coexistence of a sense of surplus virtuosity in

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language and form with a momentary absence of inspiration. The same lure, in fact, that led Goethe to versify the story of Reynard the Fox. If he had grown up in another atmosphere Goethe would have put his theory of colour into a poetic dress, just as Haller, brought up in a French atmosphere, put his scientific theories into his long poem on "The Alps". In my opinion Goethe's theory of colour would have gained by being put into verse-form.

FIRM AND LOGICAL TREATMENT

THE creator doubtless hesitates a little to accept all the consequences, on every side, arising from the first and highest vision that inspires his work, especially when he knows that work to be of a purely subjective nature, remote from the general interest. The ulterior consequences, however, drive him farther than he originally foresaw and wished; and how can he hope to preserve the sympathy of the reader for things of the second order, when even the sovereign aim of the work may very probably leave him cold?

Those who think thus underestimate, in the first place, the readiness of men to enter into the preconceived idea of a work of art. The reader or spectator, if he is not an absolute slave to some particular æsthetic theory, gladly follows any object and any guiding hand, provided he realises that the hand is a sure one. If this condition is absent, even the best-intentioned reader becomes mutinous. Naturally; for, though he was quite

willing to transport himself to the poet's world, yet that world must be a legitimate one, with clear outlines and definite laws. That which does not present form and firm foothold to the imagination is not worth thinking about. Infirmity of purpose, therefore, I consider the most disastrous of all mistakes, the veritable suicide of a work.

So then, the conclusion "when the fundamental idea is alien to the reader, and so on" must be wrong. For, on the contrary, the firm and logical development may, in the long run,dispel the lack of interest in the main theme. This may result either from the overpowering beauties that appear in the process, or from delight in the masterly craft of the artist. It would go ill with the permanency of works of art if interest in them depended on the interest in their main theme. All the works of art of past times have lost for us all subject-value, and enchain us only by the skill of their treatment and the beauty of their motif. Finally, it is precisely the most subjective artists and the most capricious works that exercise sway over the world, provided they show the most fearless acceptance of consequences. This is always true of the world of the future, though comparatively rare in the contemporary world. Subjectivity, though at first it lames and chills the interest, works in the long run as an attraction. Nothing can be more idle than the prophecy that this or that can never become popular, can never reach the people. The people, perhaps not, but all the more the peoples. We are, in fact, whirled round on a crooked earth, where stark facts determine right and proportion and modify

our native impulses. A work of art that springs from subjectivity, but rests confidently on itself and is consistently carried through, must be numbered among the stark facts.

From all this it follows that one should not be diverted by even the most unwelcome consequence of one's theme. Consideration, doubt, hesitation, come *before* the resolve; *after* the resolve the only salvation is doing thoroughly what one has set out to do. An artist must know the meaning of the word "must".

EMASCULATED PROVERBS

PEDAGOGIC and andragogic wisdom simply cannot endure the robust mother-wit of the healthy popular soul. It twists the proverb, or even reverses its meaning, in order that it may not have a bad educational effect. Most of our proverbs that have a "not" in them were originally positive. The "not" was inserted later to water it down, out of prudence. "Put off is not given up" is a platitude, not a proverb. But "put off, never done" is a home-truth, a genuine popular warning, gained from experience. "Dare wins, dare loses" is a piece of eunuch's wisdom; we need no proverb to know this. The natural indecision of the weak-willed man tells us this at once. The Dutchman says "Wie waagt, die wint" (he who dares, wins), and undoubtedly the German originally said the same. It is due to this paltry ethnogogy and moral schoolmastery

that we have to-day so few cheerful and encouraging proverbs in German. How charmingly consoling to the unfortunate in Dutch East India is the proverb "Everything in India ends well in the long run". And how sunny sounds the Italian saying "God helps the cheerful man".

MEASURES AND LIMITS OF THE FANCY

EVERYBODY knows of the naïve astonishment of the peasant over the fact that the expected king, when he finally appears, is no larger than other men. We smile at this, but we do the same ourselves in another place, *viz.* the theatre, where we experience a slight shock when Lear or Hamlet appears for the first time. We, too, had involuntarily "imagined" that Lear would loom larger in relation to his environment. We here stumble on a natural law of the imagination. Let us follow up the spoor. In reading an epic it is absolutely impossible for us to picture the landscape in its proper proportion to the persons of the story. The walls, the towns, the mountains, the woods—are all dwarfed; man, on the other hand, increases in stature. Try, *e.g.*, to imagine Achilles entering a house through an ordinary door. It simply cannot be done; either Achilles dwindles to a mere Greek soldier, or the door evaporates, or Achilles stays outside.

And so on, in a thousand examples. Even the most clear-headed man cannot retain sections of time or space

in his recollection. The mere spiritual impression cannot alone, without extraneous help, decide for us which was the longer of two tunnels we passed through yesterday, which was the higher tower or the loftier mountain-peak. Further: no imagination, no recollection can move forward steadily; it advances by leaps from one picture to another, and each picture has a fixed point of vision. Further: an orator or a poet portrays a landscape or a face for us, with exact measures and lines. All in vain; the imagination cannot retain it, much less synthetise it. Dante's Inferno is geometrically so exactly described that topographical maps have been made of it; but who can envisage Dante's Hell clearly in his imagination? In conclusion I give another example, which proves that the imagination declines to enter by any door except the ventricle of the heart. Who does not know Rome and the Monte Citorio, with the Camera de' Deputati? Who cannot easily call them up in his recollection? All right. But when a telegram appears in our newspapers to the effect that "at Rome, on Dec. 20th, the Minister of Agriculture introduced a measure in parliament", which of its readers actually sees Rome in his mind's eye, the Rome of stone, with its colour, light, and shadow? Not one of them. Here we content ourselves with the geographical idea of Rome, the Rome of the map. The true and actual Rome appears to our memory only when an emotion respectfully invites the scene.

Enough. From all our researches it appears that imagination and memory contend for the natural and real proportions. Instead of spatial measure, we have

here to do with measures of worth and significance. Behind a human body, increased to heroic size, the whole world is forced into the background and is there foreshortened, shrivelled up, and wiped out. No physician can help here.

NAÏVETÉ

NAÏVETÉ is, perhaps, the chief lack in our contemporary literature. I mean naïveté in creation. He produces naïvely who tries to solve the problems set him by his inspiration and theme, simply by following a bee-line to his goal, regardless of models, rules, and prohibitions, or of the wisdom and judgment of his contemporaries. Whether his unconcern proceeds from ignorance or from intentional ignoring is a matter of indifference. One may be naïve in creation, even if one is a man of the highest culture, possessing the most extensive knowledge and even exhibiting a subtle and sophisticated quality of mind. The cardinal point is that no other considerations, no other laws should be recognised as end or means to an end. Degenerate lack of courage, listlessness, and over-reading, nervous thought of unapproachable models, and so on, hem, hinder, and disturb the others, paralyse their will, and lure them to détours and by-paths, in order to avoid the beaten track. The naïve writer says: "What is that to me"? He does quite naturally what he wants to do, and follows the thousand-times trampled over road for the thousandth-and-first time. He writes an *Iliad* after Homer, if his heart urges

him so to do, or, if another model attracts him more, he produces a *Romeo and Juliet* ("in the village")[1] after Shakespeare. He rhymes love and dove, or heart and smart, whenever the sense demands it, without any thought of their triteness. And, lo and behold, the threshed-out sheaves produce new grains of wheat, and the by-paths blossom under his feet, as if they were the very spot chosen by spring as its dearest haunt. Teach and prove as much as you will that so-and-so cannot be done, the naïve writer proceeds to do it and shows that it was not only possible but easy.

A preliminary condition of naïveté in creation is richness of endowment. Perfect unconcern in face of retarding conditions (difficulty of the theme, danger of error, and so on) cannot be attained by pure ignorance or intentional ignoring. In every material lurk germs of difficulty, which unawares get in the creator's way, so that he must attend to them, whether good or evil. For this reason I in no wise share the opinion that naïveté in certain primitive epochs comes of itself. No; naïveté is only then successful when the poetic pictures fill the soul of the creator so richly and with such illuminating power, that they gain undisputed sovereignty without demur. Then, but only then, all doubts are silent, all dragons take flight, and all doors fly open. Faulty reasoning and dusty commonplaces have always existed, in the so-called childhood of man not less than to-day, but a good flower grows through all the dust and blossoms still.

[1] The reference is to Gottfried Keller's dramatic tale, *Romeo und Julia auf dem Lande*.

THE WORST OF ALL

MUCH is said and much evil is wrought in all good faith. But one thing is inexcusable, one guilt we must never incur. No father or teacher should ever say to a child, "Of course you can never reach so high a position as so-and-so". No author should ever say to his people "Full stop, the thing is done, close the door; the great period of literature is over, there will never be another Schiller or another Goethe".

In the first place, this is gratuitous folly, for one does not know the future till afterwards, and nature provides no programme. Did anyone make this prophecy in 1740: "Attention, dust your shoes, put on your Sunday clothes, for classic literature is just about to begin, and the great Goethe will very soon be born"? Or did ever a schoolmaster present a boy to his class-mates with the words: "Take care what you do with this fellow, for he will one day be the great and world-renowned genius, X"? No; he has always called the budding genius an ass.

In the second place, it is a piece of arrogance, for to belittle others is not modesty but impudence.

In the third place, it is a bad and conscienceless action. No one has a right to give a death-blow to the courage of the rising generation, or to spit in the face of posterity's young and sacred hope. That is simply a Massacre of the Innocents.

DIRECT ADDRESS IN POETRY

OF the two chief ingredients in every longer poem, action and speech, it is probably always the former that most interests the reader or hearer. This is true at least of the moderns, for with the Greeks and Romans, thanks to the dialectic training of their minds, the reverse seems to have been the case. The modern Frenchman, too, whose best culture still roots in the classic Renaissance, regards every event as an incitement to speech.

From this predominant interest of the public in the action or plot, it has come to be assumed that action has in itself a primal virtue. Thus arose (*e.g.*) in the theatre the custom of cutting short the speeches as much as possible by the use of the infamous telegraphese style. This extravagance may now be held to be squelched, thanks mainly to the realists; but the tendency to relegate the spoken part to a back-seat still prevails, so that it is not superfluous to make a remark or two about it.

Among the multifarious reasons why the direct address, though it is distinctly the less interesting, must yet be allotted a very considerable space in every long poem, is one which (in my opinion) has not yet been sufficiently recognised. Among other qualities the direct address has a moderating power; by compelling the imagination to dwell upon a given scene, it bridles the inartistic, purely concrete curiosity that is so distasteful to the poet. Here comes in the time-value of direct

address (which is also its spatial extension), its external proportional relation to the extension of the action element. A drama, in which the direct address does not provide a spatial counterweight to the action, seems barbaric; an epic seems fantastic.

In the epic, moreover, the direct address heightens the vraisemblance of the narrative. The illusion of a character, who, in direct address, uses my language and thinks my logic, is stronger than the illusion of a character represented, in indirect address, merely by action or by a rough summary of his words. In *Homer* the preponderance of the direct address is so overwhelming that the action often seems merely an introduction or an appendix to the speeches. Whether such a preponderance as this is eternally desirable seems to be doubtful. It must probably be attributed, like the speeches in *Thucydides*, to the national idiosyncrasies.

We moderns, however, would be none the worse for a little more cultivation of talk in our poetry.

AN ÆSTHETIC FRAUD

EVERYDAY and everywhere in works of belles lettres, from the flimsiest feuilleton sketch up to serious poetry and biography, we find the following little deception. The author begins with a lively scene in a vital situation in order to mislead the reader into the belief that he is being plunged in medias res. Thereupon, after the opening scene, the story is not, as we are led to expect, continued in the same style and

tempo. On the contrary, the author now tackles the mash-tub, the family pottage, the statistical register of the hero, on the omission of which the reader has just been congratulating himself. And he narrates all this in the most easygoing and chatty manner, only in the pluperfect instead of the imperfect tense. "N.N. had at an early age. . . . His father. . . . His mother. . . . His education", and so on. I do not consider this justifiable. Either, when a writer does not know how to plunge the reader in medias res (and a good deal of skill is needed for this), he should not pretend to be able, but should begin, honestly and openly, with the preconditions and preliminaries of the story. Or, when he thinks he *can* do it, when he takes the risk and tries to plunge the reader in medias res, he should at least keep the promise that he has substantially made to the reader in his opening chapter. This seems to me a law of common honesty. What do we call the conduct of the costermonger when he puts the big oranges on the top and the little ones underneath? Well, this is just what I should call the conduct of a story-teller who begins by unfolding an exciting scene before my eyes and then goes on to serve up a series of biographical and genealogical details, of which exciting is the very last word that could be used.

CREDIBILITY

WHY do we work in narrow, confined, and compactly fitting conditions with clamped beams? To attain tension and climax? This explanation might, at a

pinch, serve and satisfy for the drama. But a self-contained "dramatic" treatment of the action is by no means a peculiarity of dramatic work; it applies equally to the novel, the romance, and the epic. Has not the *Odyssey* (*e.g.*) its end in view from the very first word, just as much as *Macbeth* or *Wallenstein*?

The chief advantage of a self-contained development rests rather on this, that it heightens the credibility of a work. Naturally I do not mean credibility in the eye of a peasant, which tests everything by the possibility of its happening, but poetic verisimilitude or credibility. In other words, the possibility that an intelligent reader can transport himself with heart and soul into the world of the poet, whether that world is one of reality or of dreams. This kind of credibility is established by a definite and restricted handling, and that in various ways.

The foreknowledge of a goal lends purpose and sense to the road and intensive significance to the intermediate stages. It underlies each momentary event, every single word, by adding to its immediate value as action or language an explanatory and symbolical value for the main scene held in reserve. The least inkling of a purpose forces us to a closer contact with the work. This is an artistic advantage, which (after Schiller) has been used oftenest and most consciously by Conrad Meyer, the Swiss poet and novelist, who impressed his readers so strongly with the purposiveness (*i.e.* the goal-indicating, secondary significance) of his preliminary scenes and descriptions, that no one could overlook it. I might almost say that he rubs his reader's nose in it.

So (and this seems to me the most important point)

a definite aim involves a multitude of relations—not only the already mentioned relations between the parts of a work (beginning and end, different sections), but also the interrelations of all the persons represented. The greater interchange of relations within its own circle of representation a book shows (no matter of what kind the relations are), the more credible it will become; the more strongly it brings us under its spell, the more unquenchable will be its life in our soul. The credibility of a character in a poem comes home to me much more when another character in the poem believes in him, than if he stood alone (however faithfully delineated) or in loose association with others. Of all proofs of mutual faith the most convincing is the continual influence of one character on another, such as results from definite handling. From this law of relations springs the fact, noticed by Schiller, that the surest way to represent a character sympathetically is to show how it works sympathetically on others.

And what is the psychological explanation of this law of relations? It runs as follows: we know all the forces of the earth, including the soul of man, simply by their effects.

POETRY AND INTELLECT [1]

IT is a fact that intellect is not poetry, nor a guarantee for poetry, nor a substitute for poetry. It is likewise

[1] The German word here is "Geist", of which, perhaps, a better translation than any more rigidly English word would be "Esprit", taken in its widest sense.

a fact that one can conceive of poetry devoid of wit and thought—*e.g.* the poetry of emotion and temperament. It is, yet again, a fact that a frivolous mind, toying with the surface of things, does not become the poet—a fact that Wieland (*e.g.*) most unfortunately overlooked. It is, finally, more than a fact, it is a profound truth, that apparent simplicity, springing from a naïve and childlike disposition, is one of the most precious manifestations of a beautiful soul. The pure simpleton, the youngest son of the German fairy tale, dreamily seeking for happiness while wandering through an alien world, is one of the most deeply significant inventions of poetry. This character alone is enough to prove the marvellous poetic endowment of the German race.

On the other hand, it is equally true that the most elevated and greatest forms of poetry not only tolerate intelligence, but severely demand it—and intelligence of the highest perfection. Only an intelligence of the first rank can be a poet of the first rank. At all times great poets have also been great thinkers.

Further: though theoretically the minor kinds of poetry, like songs and lyrics, do not need the help of wit and thought, yet experience tells us that no one succeeds even in these without a high measure of intelligence. It takes a Goethe or a Heine or an Uhland to show complete mastery of the simple and modest song-form, although songs have apparently nothing to do with thinking. It is difficult to say why this is so; but so it is.

By accident, indeed, a mediocre talent or even a

dilettante, in a weak moment, may possibly succeed in producing one tolerable song; but he is very unlikely to repeat the offence. Such once-in-a-way small successes of mediocre minds and feeble artists are known in literature as folk-songs.

Why do nine-tenths of all the hundreds of brilliant talents, discovered by the nation every year (especially about Christmas-time), afterwards pass into oblivion?

Why do the youths of the greatest promise and the finest gifts do so little as men?

Because they are lacking in character or intellect or in both.

As regards our repugnance to thoughtful poetry and to logically sharpened diction, there exists here a national error in the formation of taste, which must be corrected. It rests on an incomplete development of the feeling for language and an unbalanced way of thinking. Other nations value the thought within the poetry more highly, and accordingly make the poetic diction logically keener. Take, *e.g.*, the sophistic dialectic of the Athenians, the antithesis of French tragedy, or (if this comes nearer home) the ingenious subtleties of Shakespeare.

And now we come to the question of mental exuberance and superfluity of mind, to what we (somewhat superciliously) term cleverness or ingenuity. Yes, but it is not so easy to be clever as you may imagine. It is neither an innate gift nor a conjurer's trick of thought that we may be taught. No; it is the honourably attained fruit of a lifetime of honest thought. The first essential of wit or cleverness is that it must always be in harmony

with serious truth. If a man does not possess this, he may be a jester but he will never be a wit. You may possibly ask, why then not present serious truth simply and seriously instead of humorously? Well, just for the same reason that the poet does not convey his sentiments in solemn and sober prose, but in musical rhythms and tuneful rhymes. In a word, from a feeling for style. The poet speaks in verse, not to entertain his reader, but because he himself neither may nor can do otherwise. The wit does not show us the sparkling side of the truth he has to offer from a wish to give us pleasure, but because he feels it a duty laid on him.

It is like the natural and graceful movement of a delicate, ethereal hand. One could present the same object with a rough hand and a rude gesture; the gift would be unchanged. The delicate hand, however, cannot do otherwise than give gracefully.

In conclusion, I shall show you that supreme intelligence may be combined in the same person with supreme folly (in the poetic-pathetic sense).

All that is wanted is for a man to be wittier than his contemporaries; then, of course, he passes for an absolute fool.

REALISTIC STYLE (1901)

THE Realistic Style in its right place, when managed with conviction and conscientiousness, is not merely a fashionable vagary, which one may contemptuously

ignore, but a serious form of artistic expression, which must be tried and put to the proof. And then we shall find that it is not so terribly easy to photograph nature. Its guiding-star, as we know, is the most drastic adherence to the actual fact. Truth of fact, however, though not on the same plane as poetic truth, has yet its own value—for instruction, for study, sometimes even for salvation. It furnishes documents, sketches, and models, and may cure the chronic literary sickness of a generation by bringing back seriousness to literature. For all truth is serious. Through its seriousness the genuine realistic style triumphs victoriously over all hankering for the insipid, the dull, the conventional, the pseudo-ideal. For truth, even if it be merely truth of actual fact, is worthy of a man's thought, whereas the mental cobwebs of mediocre brains, such as conventional lyrics or machine-made plays and novels, are not worth thinking about. The average Realist is much superior to the average Idealist.

One can read any book written in a genuine realistic style—*i.e.* with honest and self-forgetting truth to fact. I confess, indeed, that in the domain of prose narrative, I myself care to read nothing else.

I say prose narrative. For, naturally, the realistic style, being concerned with actuality, is confined to prose and can be used in poetry only episodically.

Now we pass on to Realism or Naturalism. He who writes in the realistic style is not necessarily on that account a Realist, any more than he who eats peas and cabbages is necessarily a Vegetarian. A Vegetarian is one who allows nothing to be eaten except vegetables; a

Realist is one who recognises no other style than the realistic, which he would like to force on all literature as the only panacea. Here is where nonsense begins.

To place the realistic style in competition with poetry, or to use it as a kind of Pan-Realism to supplant poetry, is an enormity, possible only to narrow-mindedness or dishonesty, or to both combined. The narrow-mindedness may be either national or personal. The national form, allied to Nihilism, is found in Russia and Scandinavia; the personal, in Goncourt, Zola, and their henchmen. Wherever we meet narrow-mindedness, we have also fanaticism.

The world has never seen more dismal pedants than the Naturalists.

In German Pan-Realism we have before us a picture of ambition rather than of narrow-mindedness. There is in Germany scarcely one true Realist (and, after Goethe and Schiller, there could hardly be one); this is betrayed by the fact that they all, sooner or later, abandon the gospel they once fanatically preached. German Realism was never a conviction, but only a mask, behind which all kinds of venom found refuge and concealment, especially the venomous hate of Schiller and his elevated and ideal muse. To-day it is a spent force. It became simply intolerable.

Though Realism may combat false Idealism with justice and success, it fails miserably when it dares to attack the true Idealism, *i.e.* Poetry itself. How heaven-high genuine Idealism towers above Realism is shown most strikingly by the fact that the best realistic works have always been written by Idealists.

No drama by a Realist can rival in realistic force and greatness the *Kabale und Liebe* of the Idealist, Schiller.

No romance of a Realist attains the realistic mastery of the *Madame Bovary* of the Idealist, Flaubert.

Thus the Idealist has to show the Realist how to write realistically.

On the other hand, when the Realist ventures upon idealistic ground he produces the most wretched abortions. He plunges head over heels into the nearest pool of superstition, and becomes a foolish bigot, spiritualist, or what not.

He does not dare to attempt the artistic forms of Idealism, even in a tentative manner, so well aware is he in advance that that would be but to court disaster.

All the same, it is to be noted that among the Russians and Scandinavians, where realism rests on a national foundation, an abundance of memoranda and fugitive pieces of high value as human documents have been produced, even if masterpieces of world's literature are absent. There, in the works of Garshin and Görki and Hamsun, we find the genuine realistic style.

On the other hand, little of value is to be found in the pedantic and theoretical Realists in the old literary nations of Western Europe.

To sum up. Every writer should occasionally try his hand at the realistic style, in order to learn what it has to offer. The nation which wishes to get to the bottom of things, beyond both Idealism and Realism, will be well advised to consult those who are something of both rather than those who know nothing of either.

IDEAL STYLE

STRICTLY, every kind of art and poetry expresses itself in the ideal style, and its aim is the creation of a second, more elevated and more noble world. The desire of every nation and of all men is "upward and onward". When we meet the antagonistic cry "a full life and a merry one", as we did lately, we have to do with a reactionary tendency. This note is heard only when a wandering into the lifeless, *i.e.* a false Idealism, has preceded it. Just so the appeal to "Nature" betrays a previous unnatural state; so anxiety about health, the supping of gruel, and the imbibing of iron show that we have been ill and still are. A sound man does not worry about his health; a natural generation does not yearn for nature; a living art does not cry out for a soft life.

By the ideal style in the realm of poetry we mean the representation of something special and apart. Such a style, that is, as strives with intent to free itself from the commonplace; that has set nobility before it as its aim and allows it to prescribe its laws. It is ready to follow unflinchingly the laws of noblesse in all the details of form, both in language and style. The ideal style is the gentleman in art and will naturally be hated by plebeian souls. So the style of Greek sculpture is an ideal style, since the sculptor attained his divine type by ennobling the average human figure through combination, abstraction, and antithesis. Thus, *e.g.*, he made the angle of the nose and brow in the god's face

incline outward, just because that of the ordinary mortal slopes backward.

Like every other style, the ideal style has both its merits and its demerits. The chief defect of the poetic ideal style is its lack of force, in the sphere both of actuality and imagination. This is quite intelligible, as the idealistic style is really a refugee. Very eminent poets, for this reason, do not use the idealistic style continuously or persistently. Dante, in spite of his imaginative idealism, by no means writes in the idealistic style.

Moreover, the ideal style does not harmonise well with personality.

Naïve personal greatness, by its sheer weight, crushes this diffident style, as a heavy person breaks down a fragile chair. Individual greatness, which is naturally rhetorical and full of fire, such as we see in Virgil, Corneille, and Schiller, is the only form that finds itself at home in the ideal style. And, as they use it, it is an ideal style of great force and energy.

Let us now turn to the advantages.

A cardinal merit of the idealistic style is its spiritual purity—purity in presentation, mood, thought, language, and form. There is nothing small about a style which guarantees us that, from the first line to the last, we shall breathe without interruption the air of the heights. If we do not realise this, others do.

The most significant advantage of all is, however, its influence on the feelings. It is thus that a very common reproach of the ideal style is that of unemotional coldness. Certainly, every lofty style is cold when con-

trasted with the lower forms of style, since elevated art does not appeal directly to the feelings. It has other aims. The most emotional songs are composed by poets of the second rank. Every Philistine asserts that there is no appeal to the feelings in classical music, fugues, sonatas, and symphonies. What, then, does appeal to the feelings?

The "Song of the Czar", by Lortzing, or "The Tyrolese and his Child".

> When I go my child to see
> It is his mother looks at me.

High art declares a benevolent neutrality towards the feelings. As, however, beauty, whether it wishes or no, naturally affects the feelings, so high art works on the feelings though in no wise aiming to do so.

A musical triad is regular, mechanical, and cold; all the same it revives and consoles the grief-stricken soul. All beauty reconciles and emancipates.

The idealistic style strengthens and reinforces that feeling of reconciliation and deliverance which all high art produces. It is the style which hails the arriving guest with "peace be unto thee!" Surely, it is a real emotion (and not one of the coldest, by any means) to be raised above the commonplace, to be rescued from the vulgar, to be able to forget affliction, misery, and contention, to see sorrow and mourning dissolved in beauty. We are told of African travellers who burst into tears on seeing the first white face after long years of struggle and discomfort in the primeval forest.

The white face is the idealistic style.

What is Africa?

THE WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

IF we cast a glance over the whole field of the present practice in art, we find the following facts. Painting and sculpture strive to be poetical, seek inspiration through imagination, are full of thought, speak symbolically, concern themselves with mythology, personification, and allegory. Music does the same, so far as it can; indeed, tries to do it much more than it really can. On the other hand, poetry is expected to deal simply and solely with reality. It may not go beyond the present nor rise above the ground. It must renounce its natural content, *viz.* imagination and thought, as well as its natural mode of expression in rhythmical language. Its aim is prose, with pretentious symbolical titles, that suit the contents about as well as a red ensign would suit a dredger. All other arts may and should be poetical, the art of poetry alone must not poetise.

This sort of thing makes me doubt the superior cleverness of our age, in spite—perhaps because of—its stupendous literary sapience.

Not, on my soul, that I blame my good friend, painting, because it goes in for the poetical. All I mean is that the poetry, which adorns the painter, might also suit the poet not so badly. I do not see why painting should have a monopoly of centaurs. Has it taken out a patent? Has it leased the whole of Greek mythology?

To what art, then, is free invention proper and essential? My answer is the art of poetry. We actually write, make, or produce poems. We do not imitate or repro-

duce poems. To painting, on the other hand, free invention is granted merely as a loan. We do not actually draw or paint either figures or scenes; we simply draw or paint pictures of them.

CRITERION OF THE EPICAL GIFT

THE signs that show a man has it in him to write an epic are, as it seems to me, the following: heartfelt pleasure in a fullness of experience, whether of facts or events; joy in the many-hued richness of the world, and especially, be it noted, the wealth of external appearances; a longing for distant horizons; a thirsty craving for the air of the heights, far above the workaday world, even beyond the bounds of actuality and the limits of the intellect.

The man was never born to be an epic poet who has not such aspirations as these; who does not, with youthful morning-courage, launch himself on the world on the wings of imagination, eager to see what Madame Adventure will throw in his way.

On the negative side, this view may be checked by what seems to me the unfailing characteristic of the man who is devoid of the epical gift. This is delight in characterisation, in the analysis of the soul (*i.e.* psychological problems), in the evolutionary history of the hero, in a carefully motivated and logically harmonious narrative. The epic poet is quite able to characterise, when he wishes, but he cannot wish to do so systemati-

cally, because his gaze is fixed on other aims, which seem to him more important. He certainly will not make Andromache storm and rage like Ajax; but he is quite ready to represent any of his chief figures as a vague, wavering personality, without any attempt at characterisation. Homer (*e.g.*) has dealt thus with Helen, of whom he does not himself know, or wish to know, what he thinks of her or of how he conceives her. The epic poet sometimes characterises unconsciously and involuntarily, just as the musician, when he composes a chorale, evolves, nolens volens, a melody through the scoring. But characterisation is never his main business, not even a very important one.

In his attitude towards psychology, the epicist shows actual repugnance, rather than mere indifference; for it is the supreme law of epical art to transmute spiritual states into objective appearances. It is always a weakness and an error in an epic if it attempts to portray complicated spiritual promptings from within. On the other hand, the triumph of art in the epic is when it invents such materialisations as render it possible, in the briefest and most intelligible manner, to work back to the spiritual postulates on which they rest. Here are two examples. When Odysseus is abused, he simply shakes his head, instead of going through a spiritual struggle for the behoof of the reader. The second example I would advance almost as a paradigm of epic art. In the Italian Orlando epics, it happens that some hero or other (I think it was Rinaldo), having long wooed his lady in vain, finally ceases to love her, whereupon she promptly falls in love with him. An

unepical writer, such as a novelist, would feel bound to explore the psychic foundation of this transformation; and this foundation would form one of the main themes of his work. It would also, of necessity, claim a great deal of space, for he would have to note the first germs of the altered feeling and then depict its doubts and internal struggles, until it finally attains a state of blissful antipathy instead of the former devotion. As, moreover, two human beings are involved in these phenomena of changing feeling, the whole operation must be multiplied by two. And what a nice exhibition of "Bourgetisme" [1] we should have then! Let us see how the epic poet meets the difficulty. He invents a wonder-working spring, which acts as a love-potion on those who drink from it, and another, which inspires hate in the same way. So, instead of psychology, we have the most violent antithesis to it—*viz.* a draught of cold water, the most external, the most improbable, the most senseless of all motivations. But this is just the triumphant art of an epic poem and the most golden beam of poetic beauty. He who can invent after this fashion is an epic master.

And now let us compare with this the problems and expedients of the writer of romance. These are not something of the same kind, on a different plane; they are diametrically opposite in every particular. So strong is the contrast that the mere fact that a man is in the way of writing romances makes me imagine that he could not frame an epic. What remains, then, that is

[1] The reference is to the subtle psychological analysis of *Mensonges*, *Un Crime d'Amour*, and other novels of Paul Bourget.

common to both? The unfolding of a record in narrative form. But this is a resemblance like that between a snail and a hussar. They may be both, it is true, advancing along the same road, but this does not lead us to call the snail a cavalier. A juster conclusion to draw would be that the creature that crawls on its belly was certainly never born to be a rider. And so I repeat: the romancist is the exact contrary of an epic poet.

LITERARY SYMPHONIES

"*DANTE* Symphony", "Tasso Symphony", "Faust Symphony", "Zarathustra Symphony", "Böcklin Symphony". Why not also "Green Henry Symphony", "Beaver Fur Symphony"? I see no obstacle, And when you have reduced the whole of literary and artistic history to musical compositions, what have you gained? And what do you really mean—that your orchestra requires a literary passport before it can play, or that literature needs your bass-viols? I quite understand that you wish to show your culture. But who wants to trumpet his culture to the world with the help of a full orchestra? I'll give you a hint. Just set about composing a University Matriculation Examination Symphony. That would give us a grand, mouth-filling title!

Or do you wish to prove to us that you are abreast of the times, by composing on the same theme that is this year uppermost in the realms of literature and art? This is quite unnecessary; we already see quite clearly that you are up-to-date by your harmonies.

WHAT WORKS ARE OUT-OF-DATE?

A DIFFICULT question, because historical and antiquarian interest prompts us to galvanise dead works and so furnish them with a new lease of (apparent) life for a time. However odd it may sound, there is no doubt that it is the tendency of modern times to strive for an artificial resurrection of archival rubbish. In other words: the most god-forsaken mouldy stuff may smell fashionably to the nose of a blasé, *fin de siècle* taste. The syllogism here seems to be: we are modern and rotten; this piece of antiquity smells rottenly, therefore it is modern. My conviction in the matter may be expressed curtly and decidedly. A work is distinctly out-of-date when a master neither can nor will take it for a model.

THE SUPERIOR NEWSPAPER

TO X.Y.Z., Esq., Author, in Blanktown.

Owing to lack of space we are sorry we cannot print your *Merlin.*

To Dr. A.B.C., in Whereham.

We accept with great pleasure your highly interesting and scholarly paper on a rough posthumous draft of X.Y.Z.'s *Merlin*, in his own handwriting, and hope to hear from you again.

ON CHARACTERISATION

CHARACTERISATION is now supposed to be the word that solves the riddle. The cultivated literary reader looks out for this first of all. The critic takes it as the touchstone for the value of a work. It is a duty imposed so severely on a poet, that it is taken for granted that in every work every poet must characterise every character. Or am I wrong?

Very well. Now draw up these two series of facts opposite each other.

To the Left. In a hundred towns of Germany hundreds of writers every year portray hundreds of characters, some better, some worse. They seldom fail utterly in their attempts, usually they do it very fairly, and in a surprising number of cases they manage it quite brilliantly. In all our critical notices we find with astonishing frequency such praise, at least of one character, as that it shows "masterly delineation". "Superb forms" and "noble, unforgettable figures" grow as abundantly in our novels as dandelions in our meadows. Even when the critic damns a work, he generally makes an exception for the successful drawing of some character or other. If, five years later, we try to ascertain what has become of all these millions of skilfully depicted characters, we find them, along with the work in which they appeared and the author who created them, in the Orcus of oblivion. My logical judgment on this state of affairs is as follows. If masterly characterisation cannot save a work from shipwreck, it

is clear that it cannot be a main issue, that it cannot be a poetic essential. For essential merits preserve, in spite of all other faults.

To the Right. The poetry of whole nations and whole periods knows nothing of the striving after characterisation. Every village scribbler characterises better than Sophocles or Homer, Corneille or Racine. Wilhelm Jordan found it necessary to improve the characters of the Nibelungenlied. And what of the male characters of Goethe or Gottfried Keller? Or the female characters of Schiller? Any scribbler can do better than that. But the scribbler is not a great man, whereas Sophocles and Homer, Schiller and Goethe, Corneille and Racine are. My logic again says: that which we can neglect, or even do badly, without serious harm, cannot possibly be a main issue, cannot belong to the essence of the matter.

Conclusion. Characterisation is neither a central nor an obligatory task for the Muse, but simply a secondary function in a subsidiary field. Its proper place is in prose, *i.e.* in narratives of fact and realistic drama, and also in humour, comedy, and satire. In more elevated poetry, it affects only the minor figures. Thus our busy factory of characterisation is merely a dilettante mill.

NOTES ON SWISS WRITERS

THE distinguishing feature of the Swiss writer is his diffidence. First there is the spiritual bashfulness, which makes it an enormous effort for the individual writer

to lay bare his inner feelings. Now and then he takes a pseudonym as a protecting veil; he leaves unused his most intimate experiences, especially his love affairs; the really passionate works, pulsating with one's life-blood, remain unwritten. But there is also a civic bashfulness. I am going to say something venturous, but I venture to be venturesome. We are at bottom all ashamed of the name of poet—not, be it understood, of our poetic activity or of the poetic art, but of the popular conceptions attaching to the name of poet. Our zealous, our painfully anxious endeavour is, not to conform to this conception, but to adopt a more vigorous and manly note, to represent a type differing as little as may be from that of other industrious citizens. There is no more welcome flattery than to be told that no one could guess or even imagine that we were poets.

Everyone who feels this hesitancy to claim the name of poet is forced to make the greatest demands on himself; since in seeking for an excuse for it, he sees that the only pertinent one is justification by the production of works deserving of honour. He argues thus, not from ambition or high-flown hopes, but in a spirit of honesty, *i.e.* genuineness, of effort, will, and industry. He must feel that he need not blush before his nation, before his colleagues, before himself.

According to our way of reckoning, a row of ciphers does not produce a positive sum. We give no credit to mere promises of talent; we regard mastery as an individual quality and so as one that can be reached only by its own peculiar path. Hence it follows that, in our view, the budding poet should not be associated

with groups or alliances; he avoids the wearing of a cockade. The novice seeks the innermost nook of loneliness and moults there, like a sick hen, until he has obtained control of his art, his style, and his material. He does not emerge until he is convinced that he can offer something that will do him no discredit.

With diffidence goes a sensitive reserve. From this comes the disinclination to speak of what one feels most sacred, of one's own work, of the convictions of poetry, of art and æsthetics. The same qualities produce a dislike of spoken compliments (though printed commendations are always very welcome), a hatred of advertisement, and a contempt for those who use it. And the final garb of this modesty, when the individuality allows and the mood demands it, is simple rudeness, which is the easiest and the most characteristically Swiss defence against intrusion.

When everyone feels that verse-making is an exceptional occupation amid the nation's work and moreover thinks of himself as an exception among the poets, it is obvious that there can be no talk of the profession of author or of a class-feeling in connection with the craft. In our club-ridden fatherland, where there is hardly anyone who is not president or treasurer of some society or other, and where the Alpine shepherd hangs up the by-laws of a gymnastic association in his hut, I know of a Journalists' Society but not of an Authors' Society.[1] No one even feels the need of such a thing. This is partly because we are born badgers and have isolation in our blood; and partly from the conviction that no

[1] Such a society has, however, been formed since Spitteler wrote.

spiritual interest is served by herding together, while we hope to advance our material interests in other ways and by other methods. But the chief reason is probably that we cannot endure the idea of some dozens of poets congregated in one room. The very thought makes us shudder.

If, then, we have no corporate union with each other, are we at least good friends? Here a distinction must be made. If by friendship you mean partnership of what we may call literary Dioscuri, so that common progress and mutual advantage are fostered by exchange of ideas, I fear no such bond exists, except for temporary purposes and in unimportant details. But why should not personal friendships flourish here just as well as in other professional circles? However, there is something that binds us more closely than companionship, more permanently even than friendship—and that is esteem. We demand it for ourselves and entertain it for others. The most modest beginner, if he shows self-forgetting, honest effort in the service of art, knows that he enjoys this esteem. Personal dislikes and private quarrels cannot impair it. And this esteem has also an active side. Just try to calumniate a highly esteemed Swiss writer! See how all the lonely badgers come popping out of their holes, foaming at the mouth with rage.

I believe I do not deceive myself in thinking that this esteem, especially from colleagues, is the summum bonum of the Swiss author. He values it more highly than fame, honour, and popularity. If this is so, and I am sure of it, it explains the loyalty to convictions, the impregnability to temptation, which I think I may assert

to be one of our characteristics. To gain fleeting popularity, wealth, and honours, at the expense of being considered by his fellows as a traitor to art—this is a bargain which for us has no attractions.

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