

The Gryphon



One Shilling

LEEDS

UNIVERSITY

ARCHIVES

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

1949

O my deir hert. young Jesus sweet
Prepare þy creddil in my spreit
And I sall rock þe in my hert
And never mair from þe depart

But I sall praise þe evermoir
Wiþ sangis sweet unto þy gloir
þe knees of my hert sall I bow
And sing þat richt : Balulalow



The Gryphon

FOUNDED 1895

CHRISTMAS NUMBER, 1949

THE JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Contents

	<i>page</i>
EDITORIAL	2
THE FIGHTING FISH	<i>George Willis</i> 4
A MEDIEVAL CHRISTMAS	<i>A. C. Cawley</i> 8
A DECADE OF DRAMA	<i>Neander</i> 12
OBTUSE ANGLES	<i>Cumberbatch</i> 19
THIS THING OF DARKENESSE	<i>W. A. Hodges</i> 21
BRITISH BALLET SINCE DIAGHILEV	<i>Charles Kingham</i> 25
APHORIST AT LARGE	31
A CHRISTMAS STOCKING	<i>Bill Moody</i> 32
FOUR POETS	35
PRAYER ONE	<i>Derrick Metcalfe</i> 38
IDENTITY	<i>Gerald Robinson</i> 39
PEN-Y-GHENT	<i>W. A. Hodges</i> 40
CAROL	<i>Robin Skelton</i> 41
HINTS TO A YOUNG MAN	<i>Alan White</i> 42
THE WHITE DEVIL	<i>Charles Kingham</i> 45
LET THE FROG SING	<i>Stan Collier</i> 50
DR. JAMES COLVIN	54



“THE GRYPHON” STAFF

<i>Editor</i>	ROBIN SKELTON
<i>Editorial Staff</i>	W. A. HODGES, L. MINSON, BILL MOODY, A. GRIFFITHS.
<i>Business Managers</i>	STUART SHAW and DENIS SYDDALL.
<i>Sales Manager</i>	JOHN FRICKER
<i>Editorial Advisers</i>	PROFESSOR BONAMY DOBREE and MR. KENNETH MUIR.

EDITORIAL

ALTHOUGH IN THESE DAYS we are unable to keep the feast of Christmas with as great ceremony and jollification as our fathers, we are not yet, thank Heaven, so pallidly "civilized" as to proscribe the Christmas spirit, or be totally unmoved by the traditional cry of "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards men." A few cranks, it is true, regard it purely as an occasion used by their weaker brethren as an excuse for gluttony, and one or two cross dullards maintain that they "see no sense in it," but the majority of us enjoy the celebrations with a fine disregard of its attendant discomforts, the after lunch lethargy, the tuneless children on our doorstep, and the probability that we will receive from our oldest aunt yet another plaid tie. We emulate the Cratchits in our appraisal of the Utility goose, and hum appropriate tunes with resolute good humour as we drape masses of tired hobby above our engraving of The Stag at Bay.

Even Editors have been known to feel this Christmas spirit, and the magazines and newspapers are made festive with colour plates and Christmas stories. Holly decorates the once austere pages of the Reviews, and Leader writers grow pleasantly reminiscent over their typewriters. *The Gryphon*, not to be outdone by its more wealthy brethren, determined also to celebrate Christmas in a suitable fashion. With the aid of a Union Subsidy the Editorial Staff were able to brighten up the cover and add more pages. Although the gentleman who has been writing an article on Pantomime ever since we first met him once more failed us, Mr. Kingham came to the rescue with an article on Ballet, which the generosity of Sadlers Wells and Mr. Clifton Parker enabled us to illustrate with an Art Supplement. The resolutely anonymous Neander wrote us a much needed article on our own Theatre Group, and Alan White, feeling that even the most festive occasion should not be allowed to pass without some consideration of Life's more serious aspects, contributed a word of wisdom on Life in Lodgings. The University poets, not to be left in the shade, provided us with a fine selection of verse, which, in response

to a general appeal, we have prefaced by a short critical and explanatory appreciation.

The Gryphon Christmas Number began to take shape. Mr. Robinson sent in a scraper board design, and Mr. Cawley made us properly nostalgic with a description of the festivities that took place when Christmas was a real feast, and England indeed merry. Mr. Moody filled us his Xmas stocking, and, as if this good fortune were not enough, other contributions poured in until the Staff began to believe that the millenium had arrived. There just was not *room* for all the good things we wished to print, and, at the last, with wild-eyed writers queuing at the door, we had to cry "Enough," and bury our head in our hands in an ecstasy of astonishment, embarrassment and delight. Our plate was full, and, as the Cratchits agreed, "there was never such a goose!"

Tastes differ, of course. Some prefer turkey, but ours is a poor family and we cannot afford both. Our income is a small one, and if it had not been for the generosity of our Union Committee Uncles this would have been a much poorer spread than it is. But if you enjoy it all our trouble will have been worth while, and our contributors will feel amply rewarded. And it is in the hope that, our Editorial term ended, we will be able to say with pride and Mr. Cratchit, "its... size and cheapness were the theme of universal admiration," that we send our fowl to the kitchen, and await your verdict with anxious anticipation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Our best thanks are due to The Sadlers' Wells Ballet for the photographs which we reproduce in our Art Supplement, to Mr. Clifton Parker for the half-tone blocks of Miss Yoma Sasburgh also printed in the Supplement, and to all our contributors and helpers who have made this issue of *The Gryphon* possible.

To all of them we would like to say Thank you, and to wish them, early though it is, a Very Merry Christmas.

George Willis

THE FIGHTING FISH

ALL HAD BEEN QUIET, peaceful even, until the coming of Zona. It was not that he was quarrelsome, but he made mischief, carrying tales, and altering them considerably in the process. Nevertheless, I have heard Zona praised—oh yes—strangely enough I have heard him praised.

Every afternoon, when the light down here is latticed with shadows, I have watched from my resting place under the boulder and have seen the man and the boy walk up to the edge of our pool, and lie down to look in at us. And Zona, as always, having to see for himself what these human creatures are, goes—straight, and I admit very gracefully, like a silver arrow, to the surface, round in a wide, flashing circle, and then dives steeply to the bottom, shouting to all the world that the men are there again.

Many times I have heard the boy say to the man, referring to Zona—"Look, wasn't that the 'barbus partipentazona?'"—and the man's invariable reply—"Yes, that's it—Typical.—Silver body—striped with vertical black bars—black band through the base of the dorsal with scarlet immediately behind it.—Beautiful—beautiful!"

I often used to wonder what they would say if they could see me, down here in the depths. I am the Gourami. My admirers call me the "pearl Gourami," or, sometimes, the "Mosaic Gourami," because of the pearly lustre on all my myriad dots, with all the blues you can imagine shading to a pale yellow—and from my chin to my anal fin, and on both flanks, a pale pink—"salmon pink," my enemies call it! I'm quite big, too, as we fishes go, four inches long at my best. But I am wandering from my story.

The way it happened was this; our pool was some distance from the river, but last summer, when the floods came, many of us were lifted bodily by the raging water, and hurled and tumbled along with it until we were thrown head

over tail into the pool in which we are now. Gradually, the floods subsided, and when the pool became calm again we were able to see what sort of a place we had come to. It was, as you would see if you could come down here, a deepish pool, perhaps you would say four feet deep. What lies at the bottom under the yellow and brown leaves I do not know, and have not cared to venture to find out. But we very soon found out that under the great tree which sends down its gnarled and twisted roots into the water there is a shallow cave. And in that cave lives the Fighter. He is a handsome, savage creature—blue, red, and green, together, a rare combination among fish. The man would call him "Betta Splendens" because of his colours, but, frankly, we do not like him. He is strong, and beautiful, but with all his beauty he is cruel and vindictive—and a killer—the more dangerous because of his deceptive quietness. See him when he is in a hurry. A sudden start, and he is off, too fast for the eye to follow, so that often it is impossible without a considerable effort, to see where he has got to. We soon learnt to give him a wide berth.

It was not until after the floods had subsided, and all the swirling currents, full of leaves and twigs, had gone, that Zona arrived. That morning our pool was calm, and as smooth as glass, the early sunlight striking across the middle of it, flooding every corner with topaz light. But later the sunlight drifted out of the pool along the east wall, and we were left in a clear, yellow gloom. The stream connecting the pool with the river had dried to a mere thin trickle. Then, suddenly, with a plop and much shouting, Zona arrived. His first few hours were hectic. So pleased to have room to swerve and dive and climb again, he ignored us, and spent them in exploring the pool at top speed. None of us were able to sleep for the whole of the afternoon, so that by feeding-time we were rather bad tempered with the newcomer. Not long after that he was back and, singled me out for his news—and it was news, indeed—that at the south end of our own pool was a smaller one, shallow, leaf-lined, and always in sunlight, so that the sides and bottom glowed with yellow and red. It came to be known with us as the "Golden Bowl." But the rest of Zona's news filled me

with dismay. He insisted that in the golden bowl there lived another fighter, and I knew what that would mean. There is no room for more than one fighter in any one pool. I begged Zona not to mention it to the others, but felt very uneasy, seeing him to be an inveterate gossip, who would probably revel in the trouble he made.

But Limpok, the glass catfish, with his half dozen or more whiskers which gave him a somewhat confused appearance had also heard Zona's news, and added his entreaties to mine, until in the end we persuaded him to keep his mouth shut, at least, for a time. And, as it happened, the fighter from the golden bowl did not show any inclination to interfere with us, and I began to hope that, after all, we should all be able to live together happily enough.

But one afternoon, just as I had settled comfortably under my boulder, with our fighter nowhere to be seen, Zona off on one of his trips to the golden bowl, and Limpok dozing comfortably nearby, there was a dull splash, and the pool was darkened by ripples, circling, swirling, corrugating the sky, and when the pool became quiet again I saw, almost directly above me, a huge, coloured globe, white and red, and a tenuous thread of fishing silk.

We knew that somewhere in the pool there would be food of some sort, on a hook. Dangerous things, hooks! I still carry the scar of my only experience of the things on my lower lip.

Zona was back in a flash, of course. We saw him streaking past us on his way in from the golden bowl. Then we saw the worm, wriggling slowly and gracefully on the hook. Tantalising! It looked such a clean, delicious worm. Zona, in his greedy way, was circling round it, trying to take a bite without getting too near to the hook. Then, with a sudden swirl, the fighter had arrived! Zona bolted for the shelter of my rock, and though none of us spoke, we were all thinking how much easier life would be if only the fighter would attack that hook.

He did nothing of the kind, of course. He knew as well as any of us what hooks were for. We watched him circle slowly round and then alongside the worm, in the way that fighters have. His great anal fin hung, a beautiful red curtain,

his bright-blue-tipped dorsal laid along his back, his gill-plates extended, transparent pectorals fanning smoothly, his caudal fin in a graceful fold. Now, I was thinking, he is just going to take a chance, and bite—when past my astonished eyes came a great green and brown fighter! Limpok was so surprised that he turned over on his back. Zona let out a whoop and dived behind us. The brown and green fighter turned slowly and glared at us, his little red eyes unwinking. There was a terrible silence which seemed to last a whole summer, and then, from the direction of the baited hook we heard the red fighter snarl.

Like a flash, the green and brown spun to face in that direction, his fins spread, his wide, gill-plates extended, his tail narrowed to a thin line, ready for defence or attack in a twinkling.

The red and green fighter dashed forward, and then, in the sudden stillness we saw them lying side by side in the way fighters have, sizing each other up, all fins spread, tense, perfectly controlled, watching for an opening. Then a swirl, too fast for the eye to follow, and there they were side-by-side again, the red fighter nearer to us, his anal fin torn from top to bottom, a thread of viscous white curling from the rent like a feather of smoke in the rays of the yellow, afternoon light. Time after time, as we watched, the process was repeated, first the red nearer to us, then the green. Both showed signs of the battle. After a while we saw that the green had almost lost his dorsal fin. The red had a long, white scar on his right flank. Another frenzied bout—and another—and then we saw them turning slowly over and over, their jaws locked, turning deliberately in a cloud of milky fluid, now tinged with red.

By this time, Limpok had recovered from his surprise, and watched the combat intently. "A great feast in store for us to-day," was his cryptic comment, and we knew that he was not speaking metaphorically. Zona was quivering with excitement, his silver scales sparkling with every movement of his slim body. "I hope red wins"—he kept repeating—"He will make tough eating should he happen to be the loser."

There was another confused swirl, a flash of red, green, and red, then green again. Then, when they released their holds we saw that red would never fight again. He turned slowly away, his tail, now torn to ribbons, slowly sinking as he turned over and sank gently to the bottom. Green was not going to repeat this combat, however. With a great effort he followed red down, and then, in a last, furious attack, almost tore his head from his body.

We waited breathless, to see if red had any fight left in him, but the beautiful fighting machine was now a ragged, helpless hulk. Green circled slowly round, his fins in ribbons. His off-flank, deeply scarred, bloodstained the water as he went exhaustedly back to his golden bowl.

As to red, he certainly was tough eating, but we enjoyed the meal for all that.

A. C. Cawley

A MEDIEVAL CHRISTMAS

SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK that we have Charles Dickens to thank for the happy convergence of spirituality and conviviality, of sanctity and surfeit which characterizes a good old-fashioned Christmas. This is not true. Long, long ago, when southern men still said "hem" instead of "them" and nearly everyone swore strange oaths like "By cokkes bones" or "Maugre the teeth of hem alle," the religious and worldly instincts in man came to terms at Christmas time. Most of the year the soul and the body were at war, heaping abuse on each other, engaged in spiteful recrimination. But at Christmas time they both surrendered to the general longing for peace and goodwill, and called off their internecine warfare. For fifteen days from Christmas Eve till the Octave of the Circumcision on January 8th, and sometimes for as many as forty days from Christmas Day till Candlemas (February 2nd), religion and revelry sank their differences and behaved like boon companions.

It is quite proper that the holy days of Christmas should also be holidays. Christmas is primarily a religious festival celebrating the nativity of Christ, "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But, in addition, Christmas celebrates the *incarnation* of grace and truth: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The miracle of Christmas has always prevented the Church from condemning the body as something essentially evil. For better or for worse, man has a body as well as a soul, and Christmas reminds us that the two can live together in harmony.

This harmony is to be found in many of the Christmas carols, plays and customs of medieval England. The refrain of one carol bids us

"Make we mirth
For Christes birth
And sing we Yule till Candlemas."

And this is typical of a large number of "refrain poems, hilarious but at the same time religious in character" that were written down in the fifteenth century.

Of all the Christmas plays, the *Second Shepherd's Play* is the best known example of rustic clowning and true devotion joined together in perfect amity, although a later age (which had forgotten what Christmas signifies) came to regard it as "the most revolting blasphemy in connection with the sacred mysteries of our religion." Admittedly, the comic plot reads like a parody of the Nativity itself: Mak, the sheep-stealer, hides the sheep he has stolen in a cradle, and tries to persuade the three shepherds that his wife has just given birth to a "knave childe." But all this is a simple translation of the mystery of Christ's birth into the realistic and intelligible terms of a shepherd's life. There is no irreverence intended or achieved. The persons in the play are rude, "uplandish" men, and they behave as such. Instead of grubbing about for irreverence and blasphemy in the *Second Shepherd's Play*, we might do better to remember that the Nativity is the birthday of a humble man, a carpenter's son, and so realise how

appropriate it is that three humble shepherds, still sweating with the effort of tossing Mak in a blanket, should be among the first to see the infant Christ.

In this remarkable play the shepherds give as presents to the infant Christ a cluster of cherries, a bird and a tennis ball. A medieval theologian would have enjoyed himself analogizing and tropologizing these three gifts. But it is enough here to point out that the cluster of cherries had the rare value of any out-of-season fruit. And we are reminded of a medieval Christmas poem called *Sir Cleges*, in which winter cherries have an important part to play, and in which rough comedy and true piety once again become the most natural of bedfellows.

The hero of this poem, Sir Cleges, is a knight who has impoverished himself by the magnificence of his hospitality to rich and poor at Christmas time, in honour of Christ's birth. It is not surprising that Sir Cleges reduced himself to the direst poverty if his expenses were at all on the scale of those of Richard II who, it appears, entertained the papal legate with "200 tuns of wine and 2,000 oxen with their appurtenances." In a royal or noble household the numerous entertainments must also have cost a pretty penny. There were minstrels galore as well as dozens of itinerant entertainers of a humbler sort, who included players of interludes, mummers, "acrobats, rope-walkers, jugglers, conjurers, tumblers, dancers and contortionists."

One of the best descriptions of Christmas festivities in a royal household is that given in the fourteenth-century poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: "King Arthur lay at Camelot at Christmas, with many of his lords, great knights, all the noble brotherhood of the Round Table, and they kept high revel with carefree merrymaking. There were many tourneys, with gallant jousting of knights, and after the jousting they rode to the court for song and dance; the festival went on for full fifteen days, with all the banqueting and jollity that could be devised. . . . On New Year's Day there was a great banquet, with double portions, for the whole company. First, Mass was sung in the chapel, with loud chanting of the priests and the rest, and they celebrated the octave of

Christmas. When the service came to an end the King came into the great hall with his knights, and some hurried forward with the New Year's gifts held high above their heads, and there was a busy contest for them; those that won a prize were glad, but even the ladies who won nothing laughed at their failure. So they made merry till it was time for dinner, and then they washed and went to their appointed seats, the noblest, as was right, at the high table."

There is no mention in this poem of the humbler folk. But we may suppose that they got what was left over from those generous "double portions." And it may be that they amused themselves with some such Christmas gambol as "a yawning match for a Cheshire cheese; the sport began about midnight, when the whole company were disposed to be drowsy; and he that yawned the widest, and at the same time most naturally, so as to produce the greatest number of yawns from the spectators, obtained the cheese."

Meanwhile, the clerics were by no means having a dull time of it. In the curious ceremony of the Boy-Bishop we find, as in the *Second Shepherd's Play*, a gallimaufry of gaiety and piety, of religion and parody, and the same laudable desire to give the underdog his day. Elected by his fellow-choristers for his voice and good looks, the boy-bishop ruled supreme on Childermas or Holy Innocents' Day (December 28th). On this day the usual hierarchy of the church was turned upside down, and the boy-bishop, dressed in episcopal vestments, with mitre and crosier, "exacted a ceremonial obedience from his fellows, who being dressed like priests, took possession of the church, and performed all the ceremonies and offices which might have been celebrated by a bishop and his prebendaries." One of his duties was to preach a sermon, and we still have the words of a sermon preached by "John Stube, chorister," in Gloucester Cathedral as late as the year 1558. Unfortunately, the boy-bishop was not allowed to deliver a sermon of his own composition, and this becomes obvious enough when we listen to John Stube solemnly observing that children are not what they used to be: "I have heard say of my elders that a child was wont to continue an innocent until he was 7 years old,

and until 14 he was proved to be of such virtue and honest nurture that he deserved the love and praise of all people ; and now we shall not find such a one at 7 as was then at 14, nor at 5 as was then at 7. . . . Tell me, you boys, you childer, you little ones, are you not ashamed that you are so soon corrupted, so soon ripe, and so soon rotten ? " It is to be hoped that Master Stube's own " virtue and honest nurture " were not laid aside when he sat down with his fellow-choristers to their great feast on the eve of Innocents' Day.

We see, then, that the people of the Middle Ages were " great adepts in the art of enjoying themselves in the service of religion." We no longer seem to have their appetite or their faith. A boar's head, if this delicacy were now obtainable, would turn our stomachs. And we smile indulgently when we read that it was commonly believed the oxen knelt down in their stalls on St. Stephen's Eve in honour of the Saviour's birth.

DECADE OF DRAMA

by " Neander "

" **T**HE WHITE DEVIL " will be Theatre Group's thirteenth major production upon the Riley-Smith stage. However ominous this may sound to the superstitious, the Group is likely to reflect that thirteen major plays in less than ten years (and what years !) is no mean achievement. Basking in the halo of conscious attainment few members are likely to think back to the misty days when the Leeds University Dramatic Society put its Annual Productions upon the stage in the Great Hall. In March, 1939, Kenneth Muir produced " All For Love," the last play in the Great Hall, for already work had started across the way upon the building which, perhaps more than anything else, was to give Leeds University an eminent place in amateur drama. The new Union building included a large and well-equipped stage, adequate dressing rooms and an auditorium which, even if somewhat oddly shaped, was large, airy and had a gallery.

To the L.U.D.S. the prospect must have appeared delectable and in spite of the war Shaw's "Heartbreak House" was produced in March 1940, and was thus the first play upon the Riley-Smith boards.

We read of "difficulties" and of the stage-crew's hard work (there is a familiar note here) and we learn that Captain Shotover was hampered by a shaggy beard, Hector Hushabye struggled with an over-generous moustache and Mrs. Hushabye's wig was too red. However, Kenneth Muir's production, according to the reviewer, was a great success and the way was prepared for his presentation of "Coriolanus" in 1941. The witty Prologue which he wrote for the play was reprinted in *The Gryphon* and the production itself was in modern dress so that all could see "Shakespeare's remarkable modernity." The reviewer was unimpressed however, and felt that pianos and revolvers were unwanted frivolities. Strangely enough the play was also given as the "Rag Play." It is perhaps interesting to record that Daphne Wilde, the Union's only woman President, played Lady Utterwood in "Heartbreak House" and Volumnia in "Coriolanus" (this ought to prove something or other), and that students evacuated from Middlesex Hospital helped in the Shakespeare play. English Society in May, 1941, arranged a visit by the Pilgrim Players, who gave Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" to an appreciative audience.

In February, 1942, in spite of *The Gryphon's* doubts as to the "capacity of the L.U.D.S. for Greek Tragedy," Kenneth Muir's production of "The Trojan Women" drew good houses on its two performances, even if the chorus alternated between "wooden uniformity and over-exaggeration." Meanwhile the Society continued its usual play-readings and a party visited the Unity Theatre, where the Red Flag waved in an atmosphere thick enough to support a mattress. No doubt too a party visited the Grand in the Spring of '42 to see Gielgud's "Macbeth."

Oscar Wilde's "Importance of Being Earnest" was given in 1943 and a strictly wartime *Gryphon* says little about it



A SCENE FROM "THE ASCENT OF F.6." (1945)

except that it was successful enough to make the first profit for years. The Red Cross P.O.W. Fund reaped the benefit.

Kenneth Severs became in 1944 the "first student to produce the annual production in ten years," when he presented "Thunder Rock." In spite of long speeches, a lack of action and a set which nearly didn't arrive, the reviewer was satisfied. The play was revived in January, 1945, so as to form part of a programme of drama given to a party of American Servicemen attending a short course. Photographs of scenes from the play printed in *The Gryphon* were, we believe, an innovation. Two one-act plays were also given in 1945, to allow Freshers to gain experience in acting, production and stage management.

One of the American visitors, taking the frankly commercial attitude to drama characteristic of some American Universities, criticised the amateur approach of the L.U.D.S. He suggested that there should be a company called the "University Players" which should go on tour during the vacations under a professional producer who, during term, could undertake speech-training and play-production within the University. This suggestion was never taken up.

Later in 1945 Kenneth Severs produced Ben Jonson's "Alchemist," and played Sir Epicure Mammon in this rarely-seen gull-baiting satire. The Society attained the dignity of a full-length review in *The Gryphon* of June, 1945, and we learn that except for moments in the Third Act, the play was acted with speed and verve. The Rag Play in this year was "You Never Can Tell" (it went to Harrogate for some reason or other), and in October the Adelphi Players gave three shows. Finally, to round off an interesting and crowded year Theatre Group, which had replaced the L.U.D.S., gave "The Ascent of F6." Kenneth Severs produced this expressionistic verse-drama by Auden and Isherwood; it received good write-ups and photographs appeared in *The Gryphon*. . . . good enough for one to be able to notice the horrible wallpaper in one of the sets.

"Marriage a la Mode" in February, 1946, was a new venture. for a professional producer, Mr. Eric Howard, was in charge. Mr. Howard was successful with this piece of



A SCENE FROM "MARRIAGE A LA MODE," (1946)

seventeenth century hokum and Theatre Group gained much experience from him, but professional severity and student casualness were bad mixers. The problem of obtaining a producer was now acute. As an article written by "Thomas Heywood" in December, 1945, pointed out, only long and continuous rehearsals could produce "University drama" as distinct from "amateur theatricals." Five weeks of strenuous labour went to make "The Alchemist" the success it was, but rehearsals on this scale throw a great strain upon the producer. The writer suggested that the University might appoint a "Reader in Drama" who would combine academic knowledge with an enthusiasm for actual production using the resources of the student society.

The University took no such step but early in 1946 Mr. G. Wilson Knight joined the English School and seemed to possess the very qualities needed. His sensitive interpretive appreciation of Shakespearian drama was combined with an intimate knowledge of the theatre and a flair for producing poetic drama. The "Agamemnon" of Aeschylus in MacNeice's translation showed Mr. Wilson Knight's qualities as a producer and the masterly groupings, the handling of the chorus and the evident teamwork of the cast foreshadowed later productions. First presented in November, 1946, this production went to Birmingham for the 1947 Drama Festival, where it was highly praised.

An interesting experiment was W. G. Baines' production of Eliot's "Sweeney Agonistes," received with mixed feelings by a lunch-time audience which understood quite as little as the cast what everything was about. "Love from a Stranger," 1947, was the last Rag Play up to the present, although last year's zestful Rag show was a revival of an old pre-1939 custom.

Theatre Group was by now in a very healthy state financially and it needed to be, for "Athalie," proposed for 1947, seemed to have all the makings of a resounding flop. It was "Classical," based on a Biblical story, a translation in verse, it had choruses, beards and no love interest and seemed altogether a brave choice for an audience to whom the Bible

was an obscure volume associated with the pains of childhood and Racine a mere name. Yet this translation by Kenneth Muir, produced by Mr. Wilson Knight with all his understanding and flair for ritual, was successful by box-office and artistic standards. In spite of the heavy demands made by the November production, Theatre Group was able to put on "Saint Joan" in the Spring of 1948. This ambitious play was produced by a student, David Coombs, and although there were occasional weaknesses the general effect was competent and the play made money and prestige.

The next production was "Timon of Athens," in November, 1948. Mr. Wilson Knight has a peculiar attachment to this play which imposes "...on the crude facts of human greed and selfishness the mighty periods of great poetry." He believes that it "...correctly diagnoses our recent world-conflict, sensing the emergence of our contemporary opposition of (i) an effete capitalism relying on concepts of law and justice, and (ii) stark, unadulterated militarism." How far the audience were able to follow this argument is difficult to say, but there was no doubt as to the play's enthusiastic reception. Using his own acting version Mr. Wilson Knight created a fluent, swift-moving production embodying all his feeling for grouping and colour, and his Timon was conceived and acted in the dying tradition of the "Grand Style." The play was given at the Arts Festival of 1948, and in the summer of this year it went to a Drama Festival at Harrogate.

There is no room here to deal with more recent history of Theatre Group, such as its sponsoring of Spanish Society's Lope de Vega play and Music Society's "Dido and Aeneas" play early this year. Nor have we been able to deal with the host of "background activities," such as the visits of famous actors, and the shows given by guest companies. Perhaps the most astonishing thing about Theatre Group is the fact that, far from monopolising all dramatic activity in the Union, it has actually stimulated by its success a whole series of plays by the English, French and Spanish Societies. Nothing, it seems, is so infectious as success and no doubt "The White Devil" will take its place, superstition notwithstanding, in the long line.

OBTUSE ANGLES

KULTUR (Contd.).

“CHRISTMAS—A CURVE IN SPACE.”—Prof. SCHUTZ.

Speaking last week at a meeting of the “Bash Bergsonism” Society, Dr. Jos. K. Schutz, of the University of Chios, Pa., stated:—“Many people will asseverate that Christmas is, in fact, what it seems to all of us to be,—a straight line. This view does not take into account either Relativity or the limited powers of the human intellect.—Christmas”—he went on—“Is actually a curve in Space.”

A HECKLER: “What about the Golden Bough?”

Prof. SCHUTZ: “The Golden Bough is scurrilous and filthy balderdash. It is Bergsonism at its worst. It sets out to pervert all the natural aspirations of Humanity. Besides which—it is only nine carat.”

At this there were prolonged cheers, but the heckler persisting Prof. Schutz picked up a large drum which was lying at the back of the platform and began to beat it loudly with the water carafe, which he first emptied into the waistband of his trousers. After some minutes of this, he glanced hurriedly over his shoulder, and then, shouting—“Xmas the Spot!”—hurried from the platform, hiccupping loudly.

A hearty vote of thanks was passed, in Prof. Schutz’s absence, by the lady chairman, Miss Gertie Grudgeon. (The dirty Lickspittle!).

BELLES LETTRES. II.

Since I published, in my last column, an extract from the work of one of our younger prose-poet-physicists I have received many letters of appreciation and requests for more samples of his work. The following, which I have chosen personally, represents, I feel, all that is best and finest in this young man’s work, and it is with sincere pleasure that I offer it to my readers, to whom it will, I am sure, offer a ready solution to many of their most pressing difficulties in these times of worry and shortage.

It has never previously been published.

“DITHYRAMB FOR A WOMAN SCIENTIST.”

“My God!

How your anastigmatic eye,
set in the formal patterns
of your face,
fully corrected for first- and second-order spherical and
chromatic aberrations,
Anti-reflection coated on all glass-to-air surfaces,
girds up my ragged loins
with its translucency i
Focussed,
in my ophthalmoscope’s pellucid rigor,
it shows me, on your retina’s red graticule
the vein-like patterns of my turgid love.”

. . . This, I think, is utterly superb.

PERSECUTION.

The indignation of my readers will again be aroused when I tell them of the continued persecution of myself by the individual signing himself “Sidney Haul,” whose foul activities I exposed in my last column. As I suspected, his name is not “Sidney Haul” at all. He is, as I have now ascertained (through spies), the notorious Stanley Haule, the unsavoury nature of whose constitution and activities is well known from Poona, in the East, to San Francisco (Since the late War), in the West. This foul and spiritually deformed character is that same man who so rudely interrupted (as readers will no doubt remember) my performance at the 1889 Band Festival at the Crystal Palace, where I was conducting the Haggerston Prize Silver Band in a performance of Inderdreck’s Tone Poem, “Happy Medium In Fawn,” by climbing up on to the rostrum in the middle of the sforzando passage in the twelfth movement, and after mimicking the movements of my baton arm for a few seconds made several obscene gestures to the trombonist, and then, twining his arms round my surprised neck bore me bodily to the ground.

I warn him again. My resolution is bloody but unbowed. I am not to be intimidated.

CUMBERBATCH.

W. A. Hodges

THIS THING OF DARKENESSE

AT THE END OF THE ORCHARD, under the hedge, Thomas was burning rubbish. In the sharp, still air of the late November afternoon the blue smoke hung low between the trees, drifting out in wreaths from the crackling red glare at the heart of the bonfire. I sat in the crutch of the big pear tree under which Thomas had burned out the wasps' nest that summer, slowly swinging my legs and watching the smoke as it curled down through the long lanes between the trees, quietly past the Cox's and the Bramleys, the Worcester Pearmains, the three kinds of Plum, the early and late Pears, and the short line of James Grieves' which my grandfather had planted, so my mother said, in the very year of his death.

As it drifted, the smoke grew thinner and thinner, until, somewhere away at the back of the house, it became impossible any longer to identify it as smoke, and it merged imperceptibly with the thin mist which always came down over our valley in the late afternoon at this time of the year.

The whole orchard was full of the smell of the smoke. It wrapped itself round the trunks of the trees, the older ones slimy with the damp and the green lichen which grew on them, and my eyes smarted a little as the smoke suddenly billowed out in my direction and travelling across the orchard engulfed me in its pungency, showering minute particles of grey wood ash down upon my hair and clothes, making me cough suddenly. As it cleared and swung away from me again, I caught old Thomas looking across at me out of his narrow, wrinkled eyes. He was smiling in that strange way of his which always made me feel afraid of him because of the way he opened his mouth—as if he meant to laugh, really, only since no sound would come out between his bluish gums, was forced to turn it into a queer smile. It was like one of those masks on the cover of uncle Mervyn's *Stage Review*, only more horrible, because Thomas was alive, and the masks were not.

I did not like Thomas. It was not simply that the boys all said he was mad, and that his cottage garden was full of the bodies of stoats and stray cats, which he caught alive and hanged—they said—just for the fun of watching them die. I had been to his cottage with my mother many times and had never seen any dead stoats or cats, though I was more than half convinced in my own mind that he probably did do what they said he did. But it was not that. I was afraid, horribly and desperately afraid of him without exactly knowing why. There was a terrible fascination about him, too, so that I could not keep away from him, but if he happened to be anywhere about in the orchard, to which he came two or three times a week to do the odd jobs which my mother could not tackle, I just had to go out and watch him, though from a safe distance, waiting, with my scalp tight and tingling, for the moment when he would turn his head and look at me with his mouth opening and his face slowly stretching itself into that mask-like smile. He never spoke to me, but would just stand for a few moments, smiling, and then, very slowly, turn away, with a kind of hatred in the lift of his rheumatically shoulders, and I always found myself half-expecting him to spit. And afterwards I used to lie in my bed thinking about his smiling face until I broke out into a sweat from sheer terror, and when I did eventually get to sleep had nightmares so that I screamed in my sleep and woke up and my mother would come in and talk softly to me until I went to sleep again.

I knew that my mother worried about the nightmares but I could never tell her what they were about. I found that I could not mention Thomas and his smiling either to my mother or to anyone else. So I usually would tell her that my dream had simply been about a man with a horrible face—just that, and nothing more. And in the meantime, every time Thomas came, I had somehow to contrive to slip away out of the house and into the trees to watch him and to wait for the smile to come. And in the end it became so that it almost seemed that he was expecting me, and that I should go mad, or die, or some other fearful thing would happen to me if I did not go

to him, and even when his back was turned and he did not see me coming I grew to know that he was expecting me, and knew that I would have to come, and sooner or later would turn silently and look at me with his face slowly creasing into that horrifying smile.

One day, my teacher wrote to my mother. I knew that she had done so because she had given me the sealed envelope to take home with me after school. After my mother had read the letter she raised her head and looked at me. Her face was pale and she seemed to be on the point of crying. But she said nothing and just came over to me and put her arms round me and hugged me, so that for a moment I was able to forget the horror of the smile which hung over me and bury my head, weeping bitterly, in the warmth and smoothness of her flowered, cotton apron.

The next day we took the red bus into Cambridge and went to a large, grey house with trees in the garden and a doctor's plate on one of the grey stone pillars which stood on each side of the gate. We went into a big room with a heavy desk and chairs and books in it, and a tray full of shiny metal tweezers and syringes, and the most tremendous window I had ever seen looking out across the street to a large church, with a great spire, and a huge clock which played a sort of tune when it struck the hours—not the usual tune, but something more like a hymn. Sitting at the desk the doctor talked quietly with my mother. While she told him about the nightmares and the teacher's letter, and how the teacher said that I had been one of the brightest in the class until lately, I sat staring out of the window at the great clock, and the figures of the saints carved in the grey stone of the church tower. They all seemed to be smiling at me like Thomas did and I started to cry, but as soon as I started to try to explain about Thomas and the smile my mind seemed to go blank and no words would come.

For a long time the doctor asked me questions, but I could only stammer, and eventually, after my mother and the doctor had talked together again, too quietly for me to hear, we came out into the street and walked silently to the teashop where

we always went when we came to Cambridge. My mother bought me cream cakes and biscuits but did not seem to want to eat herself. She just sat staring alternately at me and at her empty plate. Then we went out into the street again and caught the bus home.

That night I had the worst nightmare of all. I woke screaming, bolt upright in bed, paralysed with a terrifying anticipation of something unnameable which was about to happen. I heard my mother jump out of bed, and hurry across to the door, her feet bumping on her bedroom floor. Then, just as her light-switch clicked, the door opened and Thomas came in. He seemed as if he were half-asleep, walking with a queer, sidling motion across the floor towards me, his wrinkled eyes half-closed and full of malignant hatred where they glittered out from between the stretched lids, his mouth a black hole in his face in the half-darkness of the bedroom. He came on until he stood only an arm's length away from me where I sat, dumb and rigid with fear. Then, slowly, still smiling, he lifted both his arms and placing his yellow, wrinkled hands on my shoulders brought his cold, damp face close up to mine, so that I could hear the gasping of his breath and smell the dirt and old age on his skin. I heard a noise like the roaring of the sea in my ears, and knew, vaguely, that I was shrieking. Then there was a blinding light, and I could dimly hear my mother's voice talking to me somewhere, very faint and far away. I sank backwards, down and down, into a pit of blackness.

When I came to myself again it was broad daylight, but whether the next day or weeks afterwards I had no means of knowing. I felt very thirsty and saw my mother sitting in a chair beside the bed. I must have spoken, for she stood up and leaned over me, intently searching my face. I saw some of the anxiety pass out of her eyes as I asked her for a drink of water. She put her arms behind my shoulders and lifted me in the bed and held the cup to my mouth while I drank. Then I caught sight of the cover of uncle Mervyn's *Stage Review*, a copy of which my mother happened to have been reading and everything came back with a rush. Terrified,

my scalp beginning to prickle in the old, horribly familiar way. I tried to scream—"Mummy, mummy," I pleaded—"Please don't let Thomas come." My mother's arm tightened slightly behind my shoulders and relaxed again.—"Thomas, dear?"—she said, her forehead wrinkling with puzzlement—"But Thomas is—,"—and then, as if recollecting something, she smiled, reassuringly, giving me a little comforting hug. "Don't worry, darling,"—she said—"Thomas won't be coming here ever again."

And then I knew that Thomas was dead, and that I would never again have to go to him out in the orchard; never again wait for him to turn and look at me with his face slowly stretching into that horrifying smile. He had had to go without me after all.

Charles Kingham

BRITISH BALLET SINCE DIAGHILEV

IN A SENSE, the title of this article is tautologous, as the story of British ballet does not really begin until after the death of Serge de Diaghilev on August 19th, 1929. There had, of course, been individual British enthusiasts before that time, and dancers, some of whom worked under Diaghilev; but ballet proper, supported by the general public, did not appear in Britain until after Diaghilev's death. Three societies—the Ballet Club, the Vic-Wells Ballet and the Camargo Society—and four people—Alicia Markova, Anton Dolin, Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert—led the way towards setting ballet in Britain on its present sure footing.

The first of these three societies to be founded was the Camargo Society, which came into being in 1930 through the efforts of P. J. S. Richardson and Arnold Haskell. The latter has himself said that the Society was "a management without a company, a shop-window without a store." It was formed simply to encourage ballet in Britain

by giving performances in which the best-known native artists, and representative foreign ones, appeared. Naturally, the two groups to which it turned for performers were the Vic-Wells Ballet and the Ballet Club. Of these two the latter was formed earlier. Marie Rambert, who had taught eurythmics for Diaghilev, and had then run a studio in London whence her most promising pupils were destined for Diaghilev's company, kept her group together after Diaghilev's death, and in 1930 the Marie Rambert Dancers gave two short seasons at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. In the next year her group appeared as the Ballet Club, giving performances from then on at the Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill Gate. Among her dancers in those early days were Pearl Argyle, Frederick Ashton, Harold Turner and others who themselves were to become major influences in British ballet. From the Ballet Club, of course, sprang the present Ballet Rambert. Its policy has always been experimental, though well-known classical Russian ballets have been produced, giving young dancers the chance to show their abilities in that direction. Altogether, the Ballet Rambert has contributed greatly, and is still contributing, by means of an Empire tour, to the enlargement of the achievements and reputation of British ballet.

The Vic-Wells Ballet, which is now the Sadler's Wells Ballet, came about primarily because in 1931 Lilian Baylis took over the Sadler's Wells theatre in addition to the Old Vic, and began to stage operas there. She asked Ninette de Valois (who had originally been with Diaghilev's company, but had left in 1926 to form an Academy of Choreographic Art) to form a small company to dance in the Vic-Wells operas. Miss de Valois took a company of eight girls; she began by staging the opera ballets, then had an occasional evening devoted entirely to ballet, and later the company was enlarged, guest artists appeared, and the Vic-Wells Ballet had arrived. By this time (1933), as there were two English ballet companies growing, and de Basil—who had inherited Diaghilev's mantle and his company's proven repertoire, but lost their permanent home in Monte Carlo—was giving regular seasons in London, the Camargo Society dissolved itself. Its chief *raison d'être*

was gone; but its funds, and the ballets which had been staged for it—Ninette de Valois' *Job* and Frederick Ashton's *Capriol Suite* among others—were left to the Vic-Wells. From then on the Vic-Wells Ballet grew in size and importance. It was fortunate in having as composer and conductor Constant Lambert, and as leading dancers, until 1935, Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin. Both these had been with Diaghilev, Dolin having had a great reputation and Markova a rapidly growing one. They stayed at the Wells until Ninette de Valois' policy of building a school as well as a company had achieved its end, and their going did not mean an irreparable loss to the company.

When they left to form their own company it immediately became obvious that their departure had not detracted from the popularity or the abilities of the Vic-Wells company, and these two attributes have grown steadily ever since. Even the war years, which might have wiped out ballet completely, only served to stimulate and increase public interest, to such an extent that the years prior to 1939 seem now to have been only preparatory. It may be as well now to examine some of the personalities who have emerged since those early days, and here a further word about Ninette de Valois would not be out of place. Her main work has been as Director of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and as choreographer for that company, though she has occasionally danced. As director, she has insisted on classical technique and training, and has retained in the Wells repertoire five entire traditional ballets—*Giselle*, *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Coppelia*, *Casse-Noisette*, and *The Sleeping Princess*. At the same time she has encouraged new work, and as choreographer has herself made notable contributions, among her major works being *Job* in 1931, *The Rake's Progress*, 1935; *Checkmate*, 1937; *The Prospect Before Us*, 1940. Her policy of contrasting the traditional and the more modern works has been an advantage to both types. Associated with the Wells since 1935 has been Frederick Ashton, who is still the company's chief choreographer. He has danced in a great many works; as a choreographer his first work for the Wells, in 1933 when he was still a guest, was *Les Rendezvous*, a

divertissement built around Markova; but he had already done notable work then, having mounted, after *Capriol Suite*, *Facade* and several others for the Camargo Society. His later work has included *Apparitions*, *Les Patineurs*, *Harlequin in the Street*, *Dante Sonata*, *Horoscope* and many others, including since the war *Symphonic Variations* and *Les Sirènes*. He is an inventive choreographer on orthodox traditional lines, with a marked ability in the handling of dance enchainements and ensemble work generally; he approaches his work from the musical standpoint rather than the purely dramatic one; and his work has perhaps done more than any other's to convince of the validity of English ballet those people who venerate the memory of the Russian companies. Miss de Valois and Robert Helpmann (who is the third of the leading Wells choreographers) work on rather different lines—originality of dramatic presentation is their chief virtue, while the national element is strong in their work.

It was not until 1942 that Helpmann began as a choreographer, but since then he has done much controversial work. *Comus*, his first ballet, was clear and harmonious, and warmly received; but *Hamlet* a few months later, *Miracle in the Gorbals* in 1944, and *Adam Zero* in 1946, all raised storms of criticism. Helpmann's name has been made, of course, as a dancer, and it is as a dancer that he is primarily thought of. He is Australian, and joined the Wells company in 1935, replacing Dolin as leading male dancer. His technique is not impeccable, but he has musical understanding, versatility, care, zest, a strong sense of line and superlative distinction as a mime. The name which will always be associated with his, as a dancer, is that of Margot Fonteyn, who joined the company almost at the same time as he did, replacing Markova; she has since thoroughly earned the description of "prima ballerina." She has considerable technical powers, and a strong poetic feeling and expression; greatly sensitive, there have been few, if any, ballerine who could outshine her in such parts as require a mixture of serenity and tenderness. These two have been, and are still (though Helpmann is not now a regular dancer), supported at the Wells by a number of more

than adequate dancers—Moirá Shearer, who is achieving fame in her own right as a premiere danseuse, Beryl Gray, Margaret Dale, June Brae, the late Pearl Argyle, Alexis Rassine, David Paltenghi, Michael Somes, Harold Turner of the brilliant technique, to name only a few. A recent Wells foundation, in 1946, has been the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet (the Sadler's Wells Ballet having moved to Covent Garden), under Ninette de Valois and Ursula Moreton, which has provided a meeting-place for the talents of the major company, the Sadler's Wells school, and the Ballet Rambert, the last company having done some notable work of its own.

Besides early work by Frederick Ashton, the Rambert company was fortunate in possessing ballets by Antony Tudor, who was choreographer with them until 1937. His three major works for them, *The Planets*, *Jardin aux Lilas*, and *Dark Elegies*, were all controversial, the second and third being studies in frustration. He then formed his own company, the London Ballet, but they merged with the Rambert when he left them to go to the Ballet Theatre in the U.S.A. in 1939, with which company he still is. Andrée Howard has also done much work for the Rambert company, *Death and the Maiden*, *Lady into Fox*, and *The Fugitive* being her most noteworthy achievements for them, while in addition she has put on several works recently for the Wells Theatre Ballet. Frank Staff and Walter Gore have also mounted ballets for the Rambert company. The former is now resident choreographer with the Metropolitan Ballet, New York, but Gore is happily still with us, and may be considered the leading male dancer of the Ballet Rambert, while his most noteworthy achievement as choreographer has been *Mr. Punch*. Rambert's premiere danseuse is Sally Gilmour, delicate, charming and stylish—her best role has been in *Lady into Fox*.

There have been other groups who have contributed to the success of ballet in England—the Trois Arts Ballet, for which Celia Franca, now with the Metropolitan, did her first choreography; the Ballet Group; the Ballet Guild; and most important, the International Ballet, formed in 1941 and directed by Mona Inglesby with herself as principal dancer.

Its only notable new work has been *Everyman*, and it has never equalled the standard of artistry at the Wells. Celia Franca and Moira Shearer have danced for it, but its performances are (as might be expected where the director is principal dancer) somewhat characterless. In addition, the Ballets Jooss, who have evolved an individual technique of dramatic dancing, have been known in England for many years. Rudolf von Laban's researches into the relationship between movement and emotion attracted Kurt Jooss to him, and in 1927 the Jooss-Laban school was founded in Essen. Jooss, having studied the classical technique, concluded that it imposed limitations upon the range of dramatic expression, and justified his theories in his remarkable ballet *The Green Table*. In this and subsequent creations Jooss showed how the contemporary scene could be reflected with greater dramatic force than in the compositions of other choreographers using a more formal technique. To-day in England interest in modern dance is being stimulated by Sigurd Leeder in London and by such artists as Yoma Sasburgh, who has given recitals all over the country, including one at this University earlier this year. The present renaissance of British Ballet is mainly due, however, to the classical artistic integrity and the established reputation of the Sadler's Wells company. These attributes, coupled with the striking success of the Wells dancers in New York during the past few months, have combined to make London now the ballet centre of the world.



The Gryphon would like to apologise to Ivor Nicholson and Watson Ltd. for an error in the review of the "Three Parnassus Plays" published in our last issue, when the book was described as being published by Ivor Nicholson and Ward.

* * *

The Gryphon would like to congratulate Bill Sharpe on his engagement to Joyce Minns, and wishes them both every happiness.



Beryl Grey
as the Winter Fairy in "CINDERELLA"



Beryl Grey, Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann
in "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY" (Act 2)

SS



Yoma Sasburgh



Yoma Sasburgh

APHORIST AT LARGE

The thing that impresses me most about churches is their paganism.

Civilisation consists of herds of egotists all asserting their right to fertilise one field.

I do not object to a man consuming peas with the aid of his knife, but I detest one who eats his religion with a ladle.

Examinations are like gates in the middle of a field at a sheep fair ; their only use is to show the tyranny of the crowds' belief and the perseverance of the shepherd.

Why be ashamed of one's sexual body when one so consistently pretends that it is a function of the soul ?

Man is constitutionally afraid of the dark and socially, equally disinclined to light ; the ideal atmosphere is a sort of tactily accepted fog.

Desire is knowledge of incompleteness.

The trouble with the world to-day is that 99% of the population has learnt to read and write without having learnt to think.

The Strong Silent Man is frequently one who has nothing to say and less to be strong about.

The one goal of Knowledge is Realisation : the one fruit of Realisation is Shame.

The man who seeks popularity has my sympathy. One who is so eager to unbar the shutters of his house is hardly likely to have much within.

One must endeavour to overcome the two main difficulties of life : that of living it fully and, consequently, that of living it down.

Man may climb a little way
the pitted precincts of his mind,
but ever trips upon a truth
and bruises brain's behind.

One likes writing Epigrams—a sort of intellectual Christmas motto ?

A CHRISTMAS STOCKING

filled by Bill Moody

OUR INVARIABLE CUSTOM.

When they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snapdragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins were gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look and a jolly sound that were perfectly irresistible.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is indeed comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Everybody sits down with us on Christmas eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait, until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with forfeits and old stories."

CHARLES DICKENS. *Pickwick Papers.*



A MERRY KESSEMAS.

*God bliss t'maister o' this house,
 An' t'mistress also,
 An' all yer lahile childeren
 That round yer teeable go;
 An' all yer kith an' kindered,
 That dwell beeath far an' near;
 An' Ah wish ya a Merry Kessemas
 An' a Happy New Year.*

Cleveland Vessell Cups Song, from
The White Rose Garland.

DEAR LADY BE NOT DISMAYED.

Gawain gripped his ax and raised it on high ; the left foot he set forward on the floor, and let the blow fall lightly on the bare neck. The sharp edge of the blade sundered the bones, smote through the neck, and clave it in two, so that the edge of the steel bit on the ground. The Green Knight neither faltered nor fell ; he started forward with outstretched hand, and caught the head, and lifted it up ; then he turned to his steed, and took hold of the bridle, set his foot in the stirrup, and mounted. His head he held by the hair, in his hand. Then he seated himself in his saddle as if naught ailed him, and he were not headless. . . . Though Arthur the king was astonished at his heart, yet he let no sign of it be seen, but spake in courteous wise to the fair queen : “ Dear lady, be not dismayed, such craft is well suited to Christmastide when we seek jesting, laughter and song, and fair carols of knights and ladies.”

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,
trans. Jessie L. Weston.



SO HALLOW'D AND SO GRACIOUS.

*Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated
The bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet.*



AND FOUR CAMELS.

Christmas Day and a good one. We have done 15 miles over a changing surface. First of all it was very much crevassed and pretty rotten ; we were often in difficulties as

to which way we should tackle it. I had the misfortune to drop clean through, but was stopped with a jerk when at the end of my harness. It was not of course a very nice sensation, especially on Christmas Day, and being my birthday as well I had got cold and a bit frost-bitten on the hands and face, which made it more difficult for me to help myself. . . . Dinner consisted of pemmican, biscuits, chocolate éclair, pony meat, plum pudding and crystallized ginger and four caramels each. We none of us could hardly move.

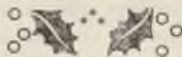
Lashly's Diary, *The Worst Journey in the World*.



BABE IN THE SNOW.

*No, no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose His royal head ;
See, see how soon His new-bloom'd cheek
'Twi'xt mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we, no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow*

RICHARD CRASHAW,
The Shepherd's Hymn.



ENGLAND TEAM DISAPPOINTS.

This has been a strange Christmas ! All has been peaceful except for some occasional sniping on our right, but none on our front. The most extraordinary scenes took place between the trenches. In front of our bit our men and the Germans got out of their trenches and mixed together talking, exchanging cigarettes, etc. Some of our people actually went into their trenches and stayed there for some time, being entertained by the enemy. All joined together in a sing-song, each side taking it in turn to sing a song, and finally they ended up with "God Save the King," in which the Saxons sang

most heartily. This is absolutely true. One of our men was given a bottle of wine in which to drink the King's health. The ——— Regiment actually had a football match with the Saxons, who beat them 3—2.

Officer's letter quoted in *The Times*,
Jan. 1, 1915.



BEFORE AND AFTER CHRISTMAS DINNER.

*God bless us all, an' mak' us able
To eit all t'stuff what's on this table.*

*We thank the Lord for what we've gotten,
But if more had been cutten
Ther' wod more ha' been etten.*

West Riding Graces, from
The White Rose Garland.

FOUR POETS

THE FOUR POEMS that we print in this issue are a very pleasing indication of a revival of interest both in reading and in writing modern poetry at this University. It is not, however, easy for many of us who have not the time to study the modern poetic idiom, to appreciate some kinds of modern verse, and it is in response to a general desire for some kind of critical introduction to the poems that we print, that I am attempting to write this article.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes one about the following poems is their widely different styles. Mr. Metcalfe is hard-hitting, almost strident, with a clear precision of satire that compels our attention and our admiration. Mr. Robinson's poem on the other hand is in a minor key. He reflects upon an introspective problem, and his only conclusion is a question. "Prayer" is objective, bold, and satirical; "Identity" subjective, subtle, and sentimental. The subjective poem is,

as is often the case, the more difficult to appreciate, for in order to enter into the experience of the poem we must be able not only to accompany the poet in his search for Identity, but also to probe into our own experience of similar intuitive feelings. Mr. Robinson has captured the strangeness of the self in his poem. He asks the age-old question, "What is the essential I?" and brings to the problem a new and sensitive attitude. As one reads the poem one can see the "stranger," in whom some have thought they found light, life, and love, and one can feel oneself, sitting apart with the "I" of the poem and knowing that "Nobody knows me in this place." And yet the stranger is also the "I" of the poem whom others have seen from the outside and perhaps "thought they found a light in him." Whether or not others have thought such things, however, the puzzle of obeying the urge of "Man, know thyself," remains, and one is never sure that one really knows oneself at all.

It is a mark of the poem's depth of sensibility, and its subtle implications that everyone who reads it must have a slightly different interpretation, for it concerns a problem common to all of us, and for each of us that problem is slightly different. The phrases are clean and there are no superfluous adjectives. "The lamb-white-meekness of the heat," for instance, is impossible to paraphrase. One might say, lamely, that it meant the purity of his animal health and energy; one might grow complex and refer to The Lamb of God and the Pentecostal fires; one might even regard it purely as an expression of the quiet grace of a fine personality, and in each case one would be right and wrong, for the line includes all this and more also. Again, the subtle bathetic cadences of the colloquial cliché, which one can remember having heard so often, following with its unanalytical statement the thoughtful probing of the previous lines, has an effect which is almost magical in its poignancy.

One might believe that to speak of the magical in an attempt at a reasoned criticism of poetry is an evasion, but it is not necessarily so. Mr. Hodges' poem, for example, contains much that is of the stuff of magic; the landscape he

describes is old, pagan, and disturbing. Anyone who has stood nervously on the edge of a precipice has felt that strange infatuation for the leap, an urge which, though explainable physiologically, always has a somewhat supernatural smack about it. "Pen-y-Ghent" describes this mood well, but it is more than a mood poem, for in the second verse the poet *does* make a leap, down into the problems of birth and death, of the birth and death of the individual and of Man himself. Here we cannot coldly analyse. The dark waters and the shattering light make their impression on us in ways other than the purely logical. We recall our nightmare fevers, and the times when we ourselves had to fight to survive the dark and, having recovered, felt as if we had been returned to life from the dark mysterious places of death, the bourn from which no traveller returns. The imagery of this poem is powerful because it is universal. Water, light, dark, and mountains are matters that affect us all a great deal, and as they are used here to describe and consider an experience we have all felt to a greater or lesser extent, not a few of us will turn away from the poem and say "How good that is!—Exactly what I feel."

When I come to discuss the last poem, my own "Carol," I am somewhat at a loss. I cannot evaluate it, for to me it is more an attempt to say something than a poem which actually conveys anything to its reader. I cannot tell how much of my meaning or my feeling has come across. To me it is an expression of one aspect of the Nativity in the form of a song, a description of Mary the mother, and the wonderful nature of that birth. As I wrote the poem my mind wandered from the scene in the stable, where Mary, "of the white bone" (referring to her fundamental inner purity) lay tired by her labour and the long journey that preceded it, to the journey itself. Jesus' mother wandered, I thought, as Jesus himself did. And I remembered too the Kings' journey, and from remembering the Kings it was an easy step back to the stable and the new born child.

That is all I can say about it. I rather like it myself, but then, you see, in this case at least I am not a reliable witness.

Derrick Metcalfe

PRAYER ONE

Oh Jesus Christ, I kneel on Sunday,
Sermon listen, bow and scrape ;
But my God, upon the Monday,
Everything I see I take.

Ah, good Christ, you see I'm holy,
My penny's in the brass church plate :
Yet, great God, don't week-day own me,
I'd gladly steal the Pearly gate.

See Lord Christ, I'd have you know me ;
On Holy day I am a man :
Stay oh God, do not disown me !
You built the six day beast I am.

*Gerald Robinson***IDENTITY**

Some had heard this stranger talk,
the polished phrase and blinded cry
and thought they found a light in him
 Nobody knows me in this place.

Some had seen his hands and head
had seen the shift of breath and blood
and thought they found a life in him
 Nobody knows me in this place.

Some had felt his silent reach
the lamb-white-meekness of the heat
and thought they found a love in him
 Nobody knows me in this place.

I have not heard this stranger's speech
nor looked into his brittle eyes
 Nobody knows me in this place.
(Do I, behind the fragile face?)

W. A. Hodges

PEN-Y-GHENT

I am that monolith upon a height
sharing the windy fluxes of the world
with small, innumerable, unnameable things
when the dumb blood sings
and nostrils wince the acid reek
of peat-moss and brown water over rock,
where grinning is a dead sheep
and death is the infatuated leap
over precipices
and the curled terror of light.

In the beginning there was water
and the coiled sleep in the dark—
deaf ears, blind eyes in the dark.
The beginning was the plunge
downwards through the water
into the pain and terror of light,
the searing agony of sight
and sound—
the terror of the drowned.

The grey wool and the grey bone
crumble between the grey rocks
and the long cloud is a grey death.
The foetor of the breath
congealing in the whiteness of sepulchral snow
is the slow
disintegration of eroded stone.

Robin Skelton

CAROL

All praise be to Mary
of the white bone,
stirring within the straw,
drained of her son,
while threefold shepherd stands
under a star,
wan in the twilight
of winter and war.

All praise be to Mary,
shaping a thought,
big on the dark road with
wanderer of light,
while far in their burdened eyes
Kings clutched a cry,
turning their fluttering hands,
lost, to the sky.

All Praise be to Mary,
whose child skin lay love
beside her new breath and
her dark eyes of dove,
deep and unseeing,
All Praise, so the morrow
bring us as near the joy,
distant the sorrow.

Alan White

HINTS TO A YOUNG MAN ON GOING TO LIVE IN LODGINGS

THERE ARE POINTS ABOUT LODGINGS that should be brought to your notice. Not for your education, but to give you a yardstick, some standard of infamy to which you can refer in discussions of skull-duggery.

First—a few definitions. *Host*—is the person in whom the power to evict you is vested—handle with charm, and delicacy. The other person, who appears in the evenings and carpet slippers, will be the husband (or wife) of Host. Has no social significance, though sometimes acts as moral support in raising the rent. Treat with cigarettes, or offers of pints of ale. *Baby*.—The outcome of the union of the first two mentioned. This is the major pitfall, and has a potential depending on age. All below the age of three should be addressed as “Gosh, isn’t she like her father” (insert mother if the brat looks remotely human). All above three and below eighteen must be avoided from the first time you step on the roller skate on your way to the bathroom. They are vindictive, evil, have superhuman strength of endurance, and an astute knowledge of torture, third degree, and the methods of the modern gangster. Between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four they form useful material for practising your newest jokes (type to depend on sex) and parlour manners (see last bracket). *Bedroom*.—A repository for the old furniture that cannot be parked in the attic, a meeting place for younger members of Host’s family, and occasionally a place where you snatch a few hours dog-tired rest. *Dining Room*.—A rendezvous for the odd characters who pound the landing at night, and your only opportunity to discover who was in the bathroom for two hours this morning. *The Front Door*.—Is an obstacle similar to those monstrous erections over which enormous paratroopers vaulted with cat-like agility during the war—you will have to master it at once if you wish to retain your self respect.

It is provided with a lock, into which your key will not fit, a bolt, which you haven't the strength to unfasten, and an ingenious home-made catch, which up to now has caught no one but you. This door must not be left open in summer, closed in winter, crossed by your friends after eleven-thirty, hammered with the heel of your shoe, or broken down. Try to ignore it, it has no commercial value.

Having defined, like all eminent philosophers, my terms of reference, I would insinuate you into the art of living in the midst of this perpetual holocaust. When greeted by the one who is to become your second mother, it is proper to state clearly the terms under which you intend to live. Think carefully, form mighty arguments, statements of dazzling rhetoric, impress her with the *savoir faire*, *esprit de corps*, and *je ne sais quoi* of the items you cover—mealtimes, guests in (and out) at all hours, duplicate key kept where you can always find it, room dusted and swept every morning, books never disturbed, tea in bed, and above all complete and utter harmony and peace—and then mumble, “Hello—I'm Smith, the Billing Officer sent me, where do I dump my things?”

You will be shown a cupboard the size of a small postage stamp, under the stairs. It will be fumingly hot, or icily cold and contain a squeaky bed, a rickety chair, and a three-legged, wobbly table. If it has a gas fire say nothing, for it will be removed with the carpet sometime when you are trying to catch a little sleep in the Union. All other articles of furniture can be dismissed as useless, or wishful thinking. Remember the piles of washing up waiting for the next occupant of your recently-vacated furnished flat, and count your blessings. In reply to the vivacious, but somewhat threatening “How do you like it,” you can say charming, sweet, or even nice, but must not say what you think. If there are oddities—a kipper hanging from a beam, no glass in the window frames, or a peat fire, you can say “This place has Character,” when you will promptly be thought of as an artist, and Host will send Baby at the first opportunity with chalk and easel.

While we are on the subject—nay, problem, of Baby, here are its characteristics. It is important not to forget that it has

a photographic memory for the phrases you do not want repeated, and will explode them at mealtimes in the form of an innocent question to Mama. Baby will ask you to draw for him (twelve times a day), to fight with him (four times an hour), to play with him (incessantly), to sing for him (each morning at cold, early dawn), or pull faces at him (you will do that all the time anyway). He must not be refused, accepted, discouraged, encouraged, stroked, or bashed. I suggest you take up pelmanism, and learn to ignore him.

Mealtimes will belong to you, for by a variety of subtle innuendoes you will be able to convey to Host some idea of the indigestibility of the gastronomical perversions set before you. Refer to mother, but get to know the name of the gooey mess first. The devastating finality of "Mother told me never to eat Welsh Rarebit" is a little lost if Host can retort "But its Lemon Cheese Meringue." If you have endurance, establish a good alibi by lying awake at night uttering soul-destroying groans, followed by refusing the stewed kipper offered as a tempting titbit at breakfast next morning.

The "other Person" referred to in the Glossary of terms, will doubtless have a hobby. You will be invited to inspect the variety of objects manufactured in the small back room. Stick to "What the blue blazes is it," for if once you say "my, isn't that jolly interesting" or "gosh, you're very clever with your hands" you are hooked. You will be "persuaded" to buy the material for a home-made fur coat for Aunt Polly in the Christmas Vac, and as you go for summer holidays will be told "the material ran up" and handed a furry dusting mop. You can take revenge by borrowing a chisel to scrape your pipe, by spilling hot glue on the nearest polished table top, or by playing the radio in the audible range for the rest of the evening.

The final, and most heart-rending point, concerns Guests. If they are Host's Guests, say nothing, and earn a quick reputation as an eccentric genius. Your Guests will be of three types, Male, Female, and Unwanted. I had a set of rules printed, and handed them to the former or the latter as they came in through the Front Door (opened by Host with much

indistinguishable muttering). They referred briefly, and pithily, to the shortage of cigarettes, the complete absence of bottled beer, a great need for sleep, the lateness of the hour, and a debit balance at the bank. They were size five by four, and I found them very useful. Female Guests may be subdivided into those with a future, and those with a past. Though girls with a past show promise for the future, they should be given a copy of the leaflet, and not allowed to sit down. Those with a future may be allowed to tidy up the room, dust the carpet, charm the Host, and do the thousands of little things that require a woman's touch. They should be given a pair of slacks to wear—why, you ask?—have you ever seen a woman trying to climb down a knotted sheet five minutes after closing time in a Dirndl skirt?

Charles Kingham

THE WHITE DEVIL

“Webster was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breastless creatures under ground
Leaned backwards with a lipless grin.”

These words of T. S. Eliot seem to imply that John Webster, author of “The White Devil,” was concerned solely with the exploitation of the macabre. In fact, however, this was far from being his only weapon as a dramatist. He had, in addition to it, a certain insight into human psychology (especially its darker side), a considerable power of characterisation, and a gift for writing, on occasion, fluent blank verse of an artistry almost Shakespearian—and many dramatists of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean era achieved success with far less efficient equipment for their trade. There is still controversy as to what plays Webster did actually write or have a hand in, but two—“The Duchess of Malfi” and “The White Devil”—are acknowledged to be his unaided work. These two plays are alike in many ways, but the latter is perhaps the less polished of the two.

It is a play somewhat loosely constructed, with the fifth and last act taking up rather more than one-third of the whole. Its alternative title, "Vittoria Corombona," is the name of the leading female character—one can scarcely say "leading lady," since part of the story of the play deals with her extremely un-ladylike behaviour. She is not the chief character; her brother Flamineo is the person around whom, and by whose power, the action revolves. He is secretary, and incidentally pander, to the Duke Brachiano, whose love for Vittoria causes him to have his own Duchess Isabella poisoned, and Vittoria's husband Camillo killed by Flamineo, the first death being given out as natural and the second as accidental. Isabella, however, is the sister of Francisco de Medici, Duke of Florence, and her death arouses in him a desire for revenge on Brachiano and Vittoria (who becomes Brachiano's second Duchess); and the latter half of the play deals with his efforts to attain his desire, these efforts being finally crowned with success. He is assisted by two people—the first is Cardinal Monticelso, who during the course of the play is elected Pope. It is he who is responsible for the arraignment and conviction of Vittoria as a harlot, and her imprisonment in a house of penitent whores, from which Flamineo engineers her escape to marry Brachiano. Francisco's second assistant is Count Lodovico, a decayed nobleman who at the start of the play is banished from Italy, but at Francisco's request is pardoned by the Pope and returns to poison Brachiano and, with certain henchmen, to stab Vittoria, Zanche her Moorish servant, and Flamineo, before being himself shot.

There is no point in the play, which is set in Renaissance Italy, at which the action hangs fire. The plot is unravelled in a straightforward manner, without the unnecessary complication of a sub-plot, and moves swiftly towards a climax which seems inevitable. Yet even at the moment of climax Webster gives to the story a turn which, though of minor importance, is yet unexpected—the shooting of Lodovico, the instrument of revenge. Lodovico, though not perhaps an artistic masterpiece, is a good example of Webster's method of characterisation. We are given a picture of a dissolute

nobleman ; ruffling, occasionally cowardly, with a soul not above murder for gold, and a certain relish in committing it artistically :

“T’ have poisoned his prayer-book, or a pair of beads,
The pummel of his saddle, his looking-glass,
Or the handle of his racket
Oh, my lord, I would have our plot ingenious,
And have it hereafter recorded for example.”

Drawn merely in outline though it is, with a few heavy strokes, and not filled in with any detail, Webster’s picture of Lodovico is a credible one. Flamineo is a different kind of person altogether. We may imagine that he is Webster’s idea of the Machiavellian man ; cunning, politic (in the Elizabethan sense of the word), not without courage, curbing anger when necessary and allowing it free play only when it is safe to do so. Early in the play he gives the index to his character when he says :

“ We are engaged to mischief, and must on ;
As rivers to find out the ocean
Flow with crook bendings beneath forced banks,
Or as we see, to aspire some mountain’s top
The way ascends not straight, but imitates
The subtle foldings of a winter’s snake,
So who knows policy and her true aspect
Shall find her ways winding and indirect.”

It is by ways winding and indirect that he proceeds from then on. He is by turns sycophant, plotter, lawyer, bully, rational and courageous man ; but his main function throughout the early part of the play is to act as pander to Brachiano. Nashe says of the trade of the pander “ The deuill himself is not such a deuill as he, so be he perform his function a right . . . Let none euer thinke to mount by service in forain courts, or creepe neere to some magnifique lords, if they be not seene in this science.” Apparently Flamineo agrees heartily with all of this, for he lives up to it. Peculiarly enough, he is so unobservant as not to recognise Lodovico and his associate Gasparo when they disguise themselves as Capucin friars to see Brachiano dead, nor to recognise Francisco when he appears at Brachiano’s court disguised as a Moor. One might have thought that the

Duke's presumably patrician features would be discernible even under brown stain; but apparently the bonds of the contemporary stage convention of the impenetrability of any disguise if the dramatic necessities so require it are strong enough to make Webster forget or overlook the consequent flaw in the character of Flamineo.

Francisco, Duke of Florence, is stigmatised by Brachiano as one whose

“ reverend wit
Lies in his wardrobe; he's a discreet fellow
When he's made up in his robes of state.”

But Brachiano underestimates him. He is clever enough to outwit Flamineo, have his enemies murdered and yet keep his own hands clean of blood—to ensure, indeed, that not even his connection with the killings is known, except (as a savour for his revenge) to those who are his victims. Brachiano, of course, is the sort of man who is likely to misjudge such a one as Francisco. He is sensuous, courageous, prone to anger and “wild and whirling words”; a man who, though he has occasional flashes of insight, lives very much in and for the present, trading to some extent on his rank, and taking both pleasures and difficulties as they come. In spite of these characteristics (or perhaps because of them) he is a man with whom we can feel considerable sympathy. Monticelso, the Cardinal, is an Italian Renaissance divine. No more need be said about him, except that he seems to have a stronger moral sense than was (if we can believe the current stories) commonly the case among the higher clergy in Italy at that time.

Of the women, Vittoria and Zanche are the two characters most strongly drawn. The former has some of her brother's ambition, without his subtlety, and with a lustfulness which he does not possess. She is betrayed to her doom by her hope for preferment at the hands of Brachiano, which she achieves in becoming his Duchess, and by the sensual appetite which draws her to him in the first place. As she herself says, her greatest sin lies in her blood, and her blood pays for it. Zanche is a trull of the type who can thoroughly understand

her mistress' bodily longings; a servant who would rob Vittoria at any safe opportunity, but with a staunch loyalty which shows itself when she comes to die with her mistress, and a lashing tongue which occasionally makes itself felt. Cornelia, mother of Vittoria and Flamineo, is, if one may be forgiven the cliché, poor but honest—she disapproves strongly of the mode of life of Flamineo and Vittoria, yet has enough love for her elder son to defend him when he kills his brother Marcello in a fit of passion; it says much for Webster's insight into character that he should realise that such a defence would be probable. In spite of her excusal of Flamineo, however, Cornelia goes mad and dies after Marcello's death.

It may have been noticed that all the major characters have a considerable streak of evil in them. The virtuous people, such as Marcello, brother of Flamineo and Vittoria, who is a soldier in the retinue of Francisco, and Isabella, first Duchess Brachiano, are shadowy and somewhat ineffectual characters. Isabella only comes to life when inveighing against the strumpet who has captured her husband's love, and Marcello—"the virtuous Marcello" as one of his associates says, in a phrase which sums him up and damns him—never really comes to life at all. Webster, indeed, though Eliot's quatrain is not entirely true, does seem to be most at ease when describing evil. Some of his similes and images have a curiously gruesome tone; but one feels that his piling up of horrors is only to add weight to his moral that crime does not pay. He has been called the most moral of all the Elizabethan dramatists, and this may be true of him; most of all because he is not consciously attempting to point out the right way of living, but has a loathing of evil which is purely subconscious, so that he merely describes it and its results, leaving his audience to judge for itself. For this reason, he is the one of the Elizabethans, apart from Shakespeare, who comes nearest to achieving the catharsis which has been so sought after by all great tragedians. "The White Devil" is hampered by the desire of an Elizabethan audience for revenge, for blood, a mad scene, a ghost, a raising of spirits and all the gruesome trappings of tragedy. Yet it never drags nor bores; and with

its insight into human nature, understanding of human frailties and knowledge of their results, with its pungent dialogue and occasional authentic poetry, it comes near to being a truly great play.

Stan Collier

“LET THE FROG SING.....”

“ I got the blues.

I got the blues.

I got the blues.”

And as we said earlier :

The cartoonists weep in their beer. [Sandberg.]

Maybe you never noticed the bunch of penguins squatting up there behind the music-stands, blowing and hammering, while you count slow-quick-quick-slow between the perspiration and the small-talk...maybe you said “Band not so hot to-night,” just to take your partner’s mind off your feet, or perhaps because you meant it. Maybe the microphone, with its incessant “moon...June...toon,” its “lurv” and its wailing insistence upon the rather more erotic aspects of human relationships brings out your homicidal instincts...on the other hand maybe you just couldn’t care less. If you are a long-hair, an earnest type or perhaps merely a music-lover, then we should never have met in the first place and I shall do my best to keep out of your way in future. For those of the cafeteriat who may have wondered in their more lucid moments just how low you can get in three years, and who presumably endure the hebdomadal horrors of what is popularly termed “crooning,”* it may come as some small surprise to learn how it all began...if I can remember! One ought, of course, to say a word about the impresario who first collected four student

* Vocalists are usually known as “nightingales,” “thrushes,” “canaries”—or that word-you-said-just-now...!

instrumentalists, issued them with as many “ dots ” as he could find and called them “ The Clubmen ” . . . but I doubt if they would print that word and, anyhow the boy has enough troubles of his own right now. All that happened way back, in 1945, I think it was, and the outfit consisted of piano, drums, guitar, and clarinet. Rehearsals took place in the music-room in Devon and between the pianist, a coloured man, and myself, a strong bond existed . . . neither of us could read a note of music.

I only joined the “ Clubmen ” on the eve of their first engagement in the Social Room one Autumn evening of the same year. Previously, I had only sung in light opera and won odd crooning competitions here and there ; frankly, I was strictly dead scared but curiously enough, everything went off extremely well. We didn't exactly roll 'em in the aisles and as far as I know no damsel swooned but the transition from gramophone records to “ live ” music had begun and we played regularly all that year, mostly at the Union, but now and then we had “ outside ” engagements. Our chief difficulty was the band library. We could hardly afford professional copies and on the few occasions we invested in them only the piano and clarinet parts were used and if the number were a “ commercial ” it would stay in vogue for maybe three weeks before it became *passe* . . . not that playing corn and numbers from the “ Hit Parade of 1920 ” worried us overmuch, but I for one was slightly tired of chanting the same words over and over again.

Early in 1946 our pianist left us and Bernard came in ; at about the same time Geoff came in on front line doubling clarinet and alto saxophone and with only one alteration that line-up remained unchanged until this year, though I just could not hand you the line that we were one big mutual admiration society. I personally spent my time midway between griping about why-don't-we-get-some-new-copies, chewing on throat tablets and threatening to quit ; I came in on the off-beat so many times that if I'd dropped 10 per cent. for every bar I slashed out of “ Poinciana ” I should have been cleaned out inside a month. The drummer and pianist killed

time between numbers by indulging in the brand of repartee one usually hears from Parisian tax-drivers, except that this was in Anglo-Saxon. . . . but definitely.

When a new number did arrive I mostly saw it about five minutes before we were due to start, heard it once through and whispered it hesitantly at the mike about half-an hour later, so if you ever thought the words were familiar but couldn't place the melody. . . . you know why. Believe it or not, though, most of my numbers were carefully rehearsed and I used to spend my Saturday afternoons with a bottle of antiseptic in one hand and a bunch of lyrics in the other grimly plugging through that "middle eight" or trying to hit a higher one than the songbird in the shower. . . . they tell me that two of the Four Horsemen were resident in our block that year. Around six-thirty you struggled into a tuxedo and at seven you sat on a stage before a strangely deserted dance-floor with only five valves and a scowling microphone between you and public degradation.

Mostly we wore evening dress, but you may recall the off-white bartender outfit that changed us to the "Pubmen" overnight. . . . maybe you were there, too, the night we stopped off at the nearest tavern on the way to a certain seraglio where alcohol was strictly verboten and stored all ours where the female sleuths couldn't touch it. . . . that inspired rendition of "Hurry on Down" was wrecked by the spectacle of smoke issuing from the Bechstein where we'd been throwing our cigarette butts. That week we played at four dances, all winding up at around two in the morning and collected a convincing night-club tan inside five days. We had a pretty full library, most of the numbers being scored in impossible keys for a vocalist so that I went from hitching my slacks good and high to leaning on my Boston bow in three easy moves. . . . coupled with this, the mike at the Union was never first-class, and it was only when I sidled within a quarter-of-an-inch of it that I could see by the expressions on the dancers' faces that I was coming through loud if not clear.

I never claimed to have a voice; I don't believe many vocalists have. What is useful is a "microgenic" larynx and

an easy style ; when you're as close to a mike as I like to get, any strain or forced breathing is apt to sound like the sound effects to the "Lost World."

In the beginning I pinned my hopes on Mr. Sinatra and slid up, down, around and about so many notes that even my sister couldn't take it and she is the only real fan I ever had. It is tough for any vocalist to find a style of his own these days and probably the only reason I ever went on singing was that I have never heard what my own voice sounds like.... don't tell me Madam !! One night, in the bar, George pointed out that Frankie slid on most of his endings, Mel Torme sang with fog in his throat, etc., and that I too would have to find some way of "signing my name" to a song. A sad-eyed character at the bar turned around and drawled : "Oh, but you have one.... You're always dead flat on your first three notes...." George swore afterwards that it was Maurice Miles, but it couldn't have been....

One thing we missed at the Union after an outside "job" was the gratifying sight of those teenagers who came up to the stand with dreamy looks and hung around when the dance was over (it says here !). When Miss Lutchter shrieked at us, Bernard and I spent whole afternoons working out "Fine Brown Frame" and "Cool Water," playing the records smooth in the process and when the end came this year and we disbanded, I, for one was sorry it was all over.... or was I ?

You don't get rich if you're a singer, you lose a lot of beauty sleep (you noticed, hein ?) and it's a sure way to lose any friends you may happen to have, too. Try warbling about thirty numbers after sundown and see what your throat feels like next day ; try going around with your head stuffed with about three hundred lyrics and pitching a big line at your best girl without using them ; try getting home' after midnight three or four times a week and, above all, try to look cheerful up there when you can see someone steering your girl around the floor and giving her line number seven plus.... go ahead and try it but don't say I didn't do my best to talk you out of it.... Meanwhile, know anyone who could use a male vocalistterms reasonable....?

DR. JAMES COLVIN

DR. JAMES COLVIN, B.Sc., Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, died suddenly during the summer vacation. He had been in poor health for some time but nobody suspected that his condition was dangerous. He was working as usual in the chemistry department on the morning of September 5th, but collapsed in the early afternoon and died the same night. He was a bachelor, and the only surviving member of his family is a widowed mother.

Dr. Colvin was 47, and had been a member of the staff of the Chemistry Department for 22 years. He took his B.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees at Liverpool University, and then, in 1925, came to Leeds to do research work under Professor Whytlaw-Gray, and joined the staff of the Chemistry Department two years later.

At that time he worked with Professor Whytlaw-Gray on topics connected with atmospheric pollution, particularly the evaporation of droplets and the coagulation of smokes. Later he turned his attention to the KINETICS of SOLID-PHASE REACTIONS, particularly the DEHYDRATION of SALT-HYDRATES. He published a number of important papers on this work and (except when it was interrupted by the war) corresponded regularly with scientists in America and on the Continent who were working on similar problems.

Throughout the war he was responsible under the general supervision of Professor Whytlaw-Gray, for the direction of the work of a small team of scientists who were engaged in research of high priority for the Ministry of Supply. The team consisted partly of full-time research workers and partly of members of the staff working in their spare time. The work was urgent and the team had to work very long hours with very little holidays. Under such conditions it was important to ensure that the members of the team should be able to collaborate happily and without friction even when under severe strain. That this was achieved was largely due to

Colvin's most outstanding characteristic: namely his great understanding of, and sympathy with, individual people. This same characteristic was fundamental to his work as a teacher. It was not merely that he was a first-class lecturer; that his material was well-chosen and well-presented: so much could be taken for granted. But to him every student was an individual whom he knew well. He could appreciate their difficulties and even anticipate them; students soon took to consulting him not merely about academic matters but about their personal affairs, and Colvin took endless trouble to help them in all such matters, and also, in a quite unobtrusive way, to educate them not merely in scientific matters but in the broader sense. It is for this especially that his loss will be most widely regretted, and his memory most affectionately preserved.

In this connection it is not out of place to mention here, that, as a memorial to him, it is planned to set aside a room in the Chemistry Department which shall be called the Colvin Memorial Room. It is to be a room which chemistry students can have to themselves and is to be provided with a small library of important books, not restricted to chemistry or even to science in the broader sense. Colvin's own books are to be given by his mother to the Department and will form the nucleus of this library, and a fund, The Colvin Memorial Fund, is being opened, which, it is hoped, will provide for the purchase of a few new books every year. It is felt that this is the most appropriate method of perpetuating the memory and preserving the ideals of one whose work for chemistry students was so important and so characteristically his own.

BIRTHS.

WINTER.—To Margaret (*née* Thwaites); English 1939/42, 1943/44, Education 1942/43, Editor of *The Gryphon* 1942/44, Hon. Sec. of the Union 1943/44; Wife of Allan Winter, on September 26th, a son.

c/o. Messrs. Holloway Brothers (London) Ltd.

P.O. Box 64, Baghdad, Iraq.

Telephone
24226

LAWSON
HARDY'S
LTD.

Telegrams
LEEDS
24226

CLOTHIERS and
OUTFITTERS to GENTLEMEN
and their SONS

"NUMBER ONE"
SERVICE and VALUE



Official Outfitters to
LEEDS UNIVERSITY UNION

BESPOKE TAILORING A SPECIALITY

57-59, NEW BRIGGATE, LEEDS I.

Opposite The Grand and Tower Theatres.

Late with C. J. Hardy & Co. Ltd

If you want to get ahead...

GET A HAT!

Ask your girl friend



Banking facilities for Undergraduates



YOU will need a banking account during your University career.

For many years Lloyds Bank has handled the financial affairs of Undergraduates and is accustomed to dealing with their particular problems.

The Woodhouse Lane Branch is conveniently situated and members of the University having an account there are encouraged by the accessibility of the Branch Manager to seek his counsel as occasion demands.

Why not open your account at Lloyds Bank?

Let LLOYDS BANK

look after *your* interests



The Assistant Masters' Association

THE INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT MASTERS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

FOUNDED 1891. **Membership 15,000.** INCORPORATED 1901.

The only Association founded by and organised for Masters teaching in Secondary and Public Schools. Accepted as such by Parliament, the Ministry of Education, Local Authorities and Teachers' Organisations abroad.

Represented on the Burnham Committee and on every important Educational Body.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND PROTECTION.

SPECIAL TERMS FOR STUDENT MEMBERS.

Numerous other benefits of membership. A Student Member who registers with the Joint Scholastic Agency may obtain the same special terms as Ordinary Members (only three per cent. commission). Write to the Registrar, Joint Scholastic Agency, 29, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

Student Members may obtain confidential information and advice regarding posts in all types of schools.

For full details write:—

SECRETARY I.A.A.M., 29, GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

The Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools

Founded 1884

Incorporated 1897

Women of initiative and progressive ideals who intend to teach in any type of Secondary School are invited to join this Association.

It is one of the four Major Secondary Associations and has representatives on the Burnham Committee on Salaries of Teachers and on the Examining bodies which conduct the First and Second School Examinations. Members are also serving on the Secondary School Examinations Council.

It is in the van of educational progress, and development. It publishes memoranda on educational matters in regard to both teaching and policy. It protects the professional interests of its members. It provides amenities by its Loan, Benevolent and Hospital Funds. Its members may use the Joint Agency for Women Teachers at a reduced fee.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP is open to intending secondary women teachers who are urged to consult the Association in regard to posts for which they apply,

Address: 29, GORDON SQUARE, W.C.1.

Telephone - 25345

Lonnergan

Photographer

ESTABLISHED 1899

1 & 3, WOODSLEY RD.
LEEDS 3

★
Specialists in
GROUP Photography

MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL
THE MARIA GREY TRAINING COLLEGE

FOUNDED 1878.

The following ONE-YEAR COURSES are offered for Graduate students :

- (a) the UNIVERSITY OF LONDON TEACHER'S DIPLOMA Course, particularly for Secondary Modern and Grammar Schools.
- (b) the NATIONAL FROEBEL FOUNDATION TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE for students who wish to train for work in Nursery, Infant, and Junior Schools.

Prospectus, giving full particulars of fees, grants, bursaries and residences, may be obtained from the Principal, Miss THEODORA DAY, M.A., Cantab., Maria Grey Training College, 11, The Avenue, London, N.W.6.

For all your
Text Books and
Stationery Supplies *visit*

★
**DUPLICATING
BUREAU**

24 hour
Service

SADLERS BOOKSHOPS LTD. 201 WOODHOUSE LANE
LEEDS 2 • TEL. 22236

WALLACE ARNOLD TOURS

LTD.

● MORECAMBE
SOUTHPORT
BLACKPOOL

● LAKES
DALES
ABBEYS

PRIVATE HIRE
EXCURSIONS
EXPRESS SERVICES

● SCARBOROUGH
FILEY
BRIDLINGTON

● ENGLAND
SCOTLAND
WALES

● TORQUAY
NEWQUAY
BOURNEMOUTH

59, CORN EXCHANGE,
LEEDS.

● FOOTBALL
DANCES
RACE MEETINGS

Tel. 30691-5.

The day of reckoning

No, not the beginning of Schools or Tripos or whatever your own particular ordeal may be—but the day at the end of term when bills must be paid. That is one of the occasions—and there may be many more—when it is helpful to have an account at the Westminster Bank. The Manager of the office at Park Row or of any branch in Leeds will be glad to show you how easily an account may be opened and to explain some of the ways in which the Westminster Bank serves the undergraduate during his University life—and after.

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED
Leeds Office: 8 Park Row, and other branches



JAMES MILES (LEEDS) LIMITED

Catalogues Free

Libraries Purchased

*Old and New Books bought
and sold*

80 WOODHOUSE LANE · LEEDS 2

TELEPHONE 25327

TELEGRAMS MILES BOOKSELLER LEEDS

Awmacks

10-12 THE HEADROW, LEEDS 1

BETWEEN BRIGGATE and VICAR LANE. Telephone 24274.

The
Gift Centre

• ————— for ————— •

Glass, China
Pottery

AND HOUSEHOLD IRONMONGERY.



Guinness for Strength



E. 1459.A

LEEDS
UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES

PRINTED BY WALTER FAIRHALL LTD, 209, BURLEY ROAD, LEEDS 4. TEL 23549