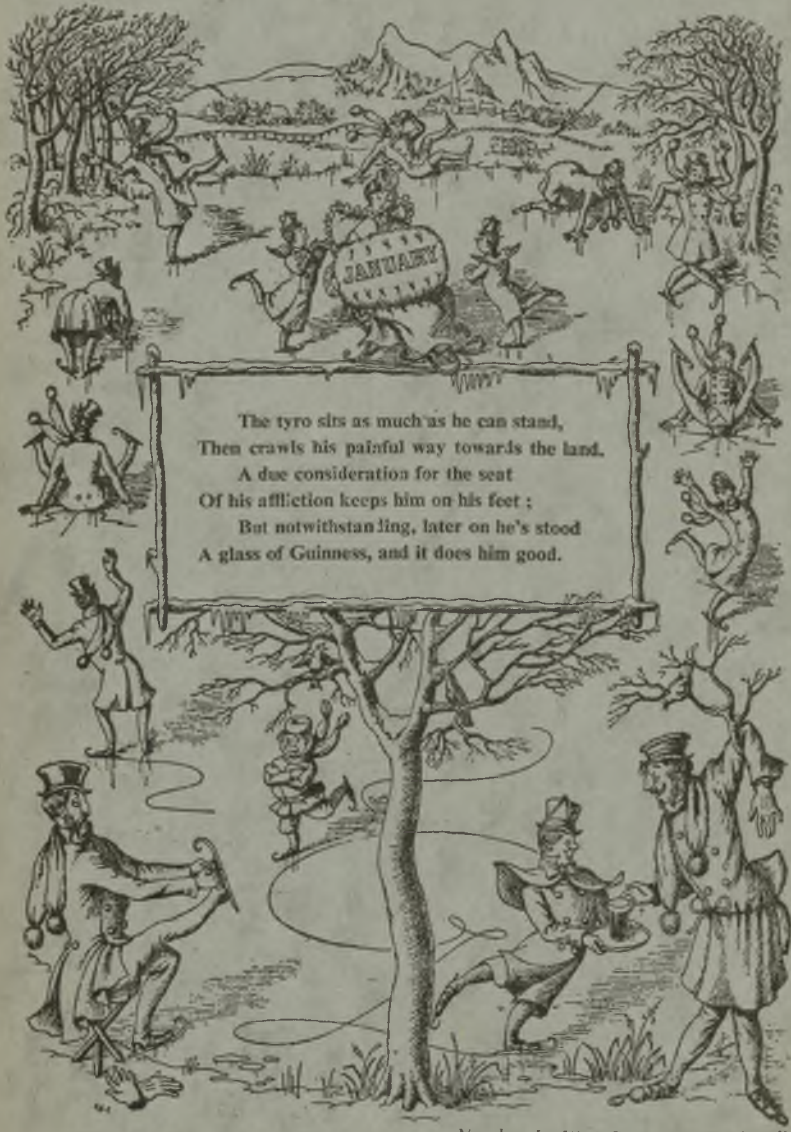
The Gryphon

One Shilling



G.E.1525.B

Number 1 of "A Guinness Sportfolio"

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

The National Union of Teachers is accepted by Parliament, by the Ministry of Education and by Local Education Authorities, as representative of the whole of the teaching profession in England and Wales.

The Union stands for the unification of the teaching profession. Its membership, therefore, embraces teachers in all types of primary, secondary schools and schools and colleges working under the Regulations for further education.

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The Union has been in the forefront of every phase of educational development in the past 50 years; its organisation affords members the means of translating their educational ideals into practice.

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The annual subscription is one guinea and, in addition, a Local Association fee which varies in different districts.

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Every profession has its organisation; the NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS serves this purpose for those who are engaged in education.

Total Membership, 1948, exceeded 187,000 Accumulated Funds exceeded £1,840,855

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The Gryphon

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Contents

EDITORIAL

ROBIN SKELTON HAS LEFT US! Claimed by the exigencies of a third-year programme, singing his swan-song in a Christmas issue of outstanding merit he went, "leaving the vivid air signed with his honour," and now we are left scratching our heads and wondering how the devil we are to maintain the standard which he and our other worthy predecessors laboured so hard to establish. But it would be a sad thing to start a new year with a tale of woe. We will not do it. We will wish Mr. Skelton success, in June and thereafter; will offer him our homage and our thanks; will solicit from him an occasional contribution; and for the rest will bite on the bullet. But we shall miss him.

And we shall try to maintain the standard. *The Gryphon* is a University magazine having a certain obligation, to its readers and to the University, to set and to maintain a standard consistent with such an identity. Copies of *The Gryphon* go to Public Libraries, to the British Museum, and to other Universities in exchange for copies of their own magazines, and *The Gryphon* has thus a representative function to fulfil as well as its more obvious one. It has other functions, too, not the least important of them being the provision of a platform from which aspiring writers in the student body may launch their early work, and of a practice-ground in which they may improve their technique.

No magazine, not even *The Gryphon*, can print what it does not receive. The most that any editor can be asked to do is to print the best of the contributions which are actually received, and to take steps, if not enough material is forthcoming, to obtain it from any source available to him in order to fill satisfactorily the reading space for which his public pay their money. And that, no more and no less, is exactly what we who are concerned with producing *The Gryphon* invariably do. If, as frequently happens, the bulk of the contributors come from an Arts Faculty the circumstance has nothing to do with policy. It is perhaps natural that people whose studies are of the character to be expected in an Arts Faculty should tend to have a primary interest in the written word, and to attempt themselves to write; perhaps natural, too, that people whose primary task it is to concern themselves with other equally necessary but widely different things should be less inclined to take time off from their particular study in order to write stories, articles or poems. Yet it does remain a fact that a number of the contributors whose work has been, and continues to be printed are from Faculties other than Arts Faculties, and that their contributions, notwithstanding, are generally of the very type most castigated by those who still hug the illusion that *Gryphon* policy is somehow influenced by the Faculty to which the writer of any given article belongs. —Explanation ?—Nay, don't ask Us—ask THEM !

Send us your stuff. We want to see it. If it is up to standard and is of more than purely limited interest we will print it so far as our space allows. If it is not up to standard then the same editorial privileges apply to *The Gryphon* editorship as to that of any other publication. We shall reserve the right to "regret," and to ask you to try again later, not letting one refusal deter you from further submission. Few established writers have ALL their stuff accepted—even fewer found print with their first submissions. Life is like that.

Everything submitted to *The Gryphon* is read, and there is an Editorial Staff whose opinions are taken into consideration in every doubtful case. And we can't say fairer than that, can we ?

Alan White

HINTS TO A YOUNG WOMAN VISITING A STUDENT

THE YOUNG WOMAN visiting a student in his residence will have to take a difficult decision. The problem of Utility or Decoration was never harder to solve. Speaking not with personal experience, but an acute knowledge of the other side of the matter, I refer to Dressing for The Occasion

Pastel-chiffon undies, mascara'd eyebrows, and chic shoes—I can see you standing pensively before your sister's wardrobe. My dear—you can forget all such nonsense, reach into the bottomest drawer, and wear the outfit in which you toured the Pyrenees last summer. Yes—hob-nailed boots, slacks, short-sleeved jumper, and large rucksack. The discomfort of each item will be repaid before the end of the evening, and you'll gaze in scorn at those amateurs who, hobbling home in platform shoes and high-dudgeon are taking solemn vows to spend all future evenings " at the pictures."

You'll bless the boots as you climb the drainpipe on the way in. I never knew a student who could find all his keys, and where's the fun in being entertained in a University locker or microscope cabinet ? Show your merit in this first contretemps, lightly fling a leg over the sill, and throw a hearty greeting in the direction of the largest pile of books. There is no need to murmur elegantly " Oh, don't get up," he won't anyway. Remove the pan of burnt milk from the gas ring, ignore the piles of cast-off shirts, socks, and handkerchiefs, repress the shudder at the state of the term-long unmade bed, sweep a glance airily round the room, and say, " Where do I wash up." He won't know, of course, but the detective instinct and a sense of smell will soon lead you to the pile of rotting vegetation hiding the sink from view. This can be left undisturbed if you have a strong stomach, but I recommend you to throw it through the window, under the bed, or on to

a blazing fire. Yes—all but the kitchen sink—the strain of this will take the surplus of energy with which you arrived and leave you in a fit frame of mind for the next piece of advice.

The Elizabethans were keen on a booklet "A Hundred-and-One hints to a young Lady desirous of becoming a Gentle Woman," in which they were taught to elevate the little finger when drinking tea, to remove crusts, and defer to the be-moustached, be-spatted, and benighted gargoyle at whom their little heart was a-fluttering. Times have changed: oh—how they have changed. If I were writing such a pamphlet (and that's what I'll be doing when I've sold all the matches) I'd seek advice from James Thurber or an R.S.M. of Life Guards. Ignore the wretched bed, carpet, lack of chairs, dust, and charivari of sports gear, and keep the evening on an intellectual basis. The latest film of the local is as good a subject as any, I suppose, though a lot can be made of cafeteria coffee, those odd forms the Grants and Welfare Committee send out from time to time, or the inaccessibility of the top floor of the new block.

The evening wears on, and you wear out. The time for coffee appears—when he finds a seat next to you on the sofa. His " Pawn to K4 " will be a quotation from D. H. Lawrence, or a reference to the City Palace of Varieties (variety is the spice of life, and what about living—it's the oldest, corny-est gag, but the only one he knows). Unfasten the enormous rucksack, then check and mate in one move by producing your own clean percolator, cups, sugar, coffee and spoon. (This will be his opportunity for another, equally corny gag—I hit Mabel when she used it last year). He can safely be left to provide the water; I gave him hints on the gas ring in the first article.

The slacks prove invaluable when lounging in front of the tepid gas fire to make toast—you'll need two forks to keep the bread, and him, at arm's length. Resist the temptation to have any of the *pate* from the dusty tin at the bottom of the cupboard—these " mystery pastes " were made at the start of one of the wars for the B.E.F. and unscrupulous traders have been palming them on students ever since—I hear that under

another name they are used to stop leaks in worn radiators.

Consideration must be given to the time of arrival and departure. It doesn't matter whether you arrive immediately after tea or just before supper, in both cases you will have the tea crocks to wash. If you arrive before dark you'll be able to see to help him repair the electric light assembly. You will also be able to plot the direction of the longer lengths of flex with which the room is festooned, though inevitably you will forget the lead from the electric blanket to the back of the radio. If you can remember to pack an electrician's outfit, it'll be useful—if not he will be able to do the necessary with your hairgrips, nailfile, and suspender button. If you particularly want to hear the programme on the Home, open the window. when you'll get a selection of Third, Home, and Light, neighbour's sons, and cats.

If, however, you arrive after dark, be sure to announce your entry to the other occupants of the house—lest they wonder when you came. If you have stayed all night, you're loose, but if you stay all day as well, you're abandoned. Above all, get to know the expected time of departure—if he's in hostel you can tell by the furtive footsteps in the passage, which start a half-hour after the official, ignored, closing time. Be warned against having a bed made up for you in John's room (he's away for the week-end). Somehow he alway's turns up again in the middle of your favourite dream with a half-dozen riotous pals. They insist on smoking and singing at the foot of the bed until morning, and the fug, drive them away.

There, unfortunately, I must finish this series. I had intended to deliver it in the form of a lecture to the Freshers' Conference, but the Freshers heard of it in time. I will, of course, be pleased to answer any correspondence, which should be addressed to my home. Where is he living, you will ask—How has this self-styled expert solved the problems of student residence ? The experience gained throughout a number of years, living in the types of places about which I write, has qualified me for my present situation—washer-up at the Queens with—and here's the point—all found.

C. E. West

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE

ONCE UPON A TIME, Gaul, we are told, was divided into three parts. Our authority for this is Julius Caesar, and since he had occasion to visit the place it seems very probable that he was in a position to know the truth. In the same way, mankind is also divided into three parts. Our authority for this (myself) will not, perhaps, be as respected as Caesar. But he has been dead for about 2,000 years, and is thus invested with the aura of historical respectability. Who knows, in 2,000 years from to-day, our descendants may be just as willing to accept the tri-partite division of mankind as we are to accept that of Gaul. Until then, we must leave it as a dogmatic assertion.

These sections of mankind are: those who love art, those who hate art, and those who read the newspapers. The first two sections detest each other heartily, and the third section is unaware of the existence of anything except royalty and criminals. The purpose of this essay is to try and reconcile the first two groups and make them tolerant of each other. For there is little tolerance in the world to-day, and that is a woeful thing.

The arguments which are to be put forward will undoubtedly bring forth scorn and ridicule from the aestheticians, and even from those people who have been properly educated. They will be termed heresy against every word that comes out of the mouth of professors of English literature throughout the world. But they will at least be individual; and that, surely, is something.

The remarks which follow will be about literature. But they apply equally as much to every form of art, from the ballet to boogy-woogy. Literature is chosen because most people can read, and what can be read is literature. Which is the first heresy and the basis of all the rest.

For when we say literature, we assume that writing is

divided into two sections, that which is good and that which is bad. That which is good is called literature ; that which is bad is called all sorts of things. This division assumes an objective standard of goodness. And that assumption is the first point for consideration.

The aim of any art is to create happiness. There are, it is true, other theories. We are told that the function of great art is to reveal truth, to teach goodness, or to create beauty. All of which are really forms of happiness. The only theory which does not mean the creation of happiness is that which declares that great art is a means of self-expression on the part of the artist. And that is selfishness, and cannot, therefore, be great anything.

Now happiness takes various forms for various people. For some it is created by the spectacle of two muscular gentlemen doing their best to reduce each other to unconsciousness for ten or more seconds by bestowing blows on each other with their fists. To others, it is created by seeing a snowdrop, hearing a skylark, or working out a mathematical problem. Thus, happiness is an intensely personal thing.

This being so, it is obvious that goodness or badness in literature is also an intensely personal thing. A piece of writing which makes one person wildly happy may leave another person completely unmoved. That piece of literature, therefore, is good in the eyes of the first person and bad in the eyes of the other person. And whatever the authorities may say to the contrary, that fact still remains.

There is, of course, the question of taste. We are told to cultivate good taste, that is, to reduce our tastes to conformity with those of the eminent. Such a course is nothing more than the nationalisation of criticism. It means that we have to submit ourselves to direction in deciding what is going to make us happy. And that is the worst form of dictatorship imaginable. By what conceivable right we are to allow ourselves to find happiness only where we are told we may do so is beyond comprehension. If we find more happiness in reading the work of Peter Cheyney than in reading the work of Walter Pater,

then we have a perfect right to do so. And for us, Cheyney writes greater literature than Pater. Scorn may be poured on us for our choice. The answer to that is to pour scorn on the scorners for their intolerance.

But, the defenders of the faith will cry, if all this is true, how is it that some books have lived through the centuries and others have been remembered for only a few weeks? The answer is simple. Individualism has always been frowned on and regarded with suspicion. There has always been a section of the community, with ways and tastes in common, which has been able to ensure that those things were considered good which it considered good. This class has been able to project its taste through the years as being one aspect of the tradition which has formed so important a support of its continued power. And so, what the members of this group said was good has been considered good, and consequently has been preserved, by their descendants. It is not a matter of the endurance of some writings through quality, but of the endurance of a way of thought through tradition and power.

Let us, then, be a little more tolerant about literature. Let us acknowledge that, though we may not see it, others may find good in the work of a writer whom we detest. At the moment the aesthete sneers at the tired business man, and the tired business man jeers at the aesthete. There is room enough for both. Let us, if we wish, disagree with a man's opinion. But let us never condemn his choice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

To the Editors of *The University of Leeds Review* for a complimentary copy of that magazine, to the Editors of all University magazines who have sent exchange copies to *The Gryphon*, and to all contributors who have sent articles which, for considerations of space, restricted interest, or other reasons we have been unable to print.

OBTUSE ANGLES

KULTUR (Contd.).

BELLES LETTRES. III.

Readers of this column will already be familiar with the superlative poetry of Dai Omega, and any comment, particularly after the cosmic consciousness of the dynamic last line of the poem printed below would be unmitigated insolence. Without further preamble, therefore, I publish it in the secure knowledge that all those who appreciate truly great art will not fail to be moved by it.

GONG.

There are no body forces and no accelerations,
no rotations
about the axes
Ox and *Oy* ;
there is no shear
parallel to the planes
of *yOz* and *zOx* ;—
the stress components
rr, *UU*, and *rU*
can be expressed
in terms of a stress function,—
V !
There are no body forces and no accelerations—
the stress components parallel to the axis of *z* are zero.

DAI OMEGA.

SOCIETY NOTES.

Hearing yesterday that Lady Fredegonde Horsch proposes to give one of her notorious dinner parties early next month I called on her this morning at her Hoxton flat, hoping to glean some advance information for my more socially minded readers.

Lady Fredegonde received me in a negligé consisting of spun glass panties and a bull's wool brassiere, decorated with a motif in catgut and nail-parings—("My own," as she laughingly explained), and after a few furtive sallies—unsuccessful I am glad to say—the following conversation took place :

MYSELF (Carefully taking up position between the door and Lady F.).—Er,—about the dinner party Lady F.—Could you—er—

LADY F. (Poised on her toes, waiting for an opening)—The silly, silly man—so keen—so damnably keen !—Of course I could !—But you really shouldn't waste time you know—not just now anyway. (Getting ready, rocking from side to side)—The emphasis—(Here she sprang, but I eluded her, retreating to a position two paces nearer the door)—is to be on conversation, as with the Japanese you know. —Uplift and all that—

MYSELF (Deciding to delay bolting for it until I can see the whites of her eyes).—Uplift ?—You mean—er—

LADY F. (With a sinister laugh).—Naughty, naughty !—I meant the party.—Everybody in London—but EVERYBODY—just talking and talking for hours and hours So brilliant—so LEARNED, dear !

MYSELF (Edging nearer the door).—But what about the dinner ?

LADY F. (Getting ready for another spring).—Oh THAT ?—Don't be dreary dear.—They'll be handed a packed meal when they leave of course.

MYSELF (On the other side of the door, hanging on to the knob like grim death).—And what about MUSIC ?

LADY F. (Wrenching the door open in spite of my efforts). Zithers, clot—zithers ! Nothing but ZITHERS !

I ran for it. As I came out into the street I was further startled by the noise of a window opening, followed by a peal of diabolical laughter from Lady F. I looked up only to be blinded by the impact of a soft but heavy object. It was the bull's wool creation which Lady F. had apparently hastily removed and filled with Jaffa oranges in order to hurl it down at me as I passed. " Keepsake "—she yelled, slamming the window, but not before a number of passers-by had had time to take in the embarrassing picture. Mortified, I slunk into the nearest taxi. I think my nose is broken.

ENVOI.

" It is better to be spitted alive on a bamboo stake than to be beaten to death with clubs."

Old Chinese Proverb.

CUMBERBATCH.

W. A. Hodges

"DENNIE—DENNIE!—"

DENNIE PLODDED UP THE LONG SLOPE chanting to himself a vague, wordless, tuneless song, stringing the notes together just as they came without regard to tone, pitch, or meaning. Less than four feet from him on the road the traffic passed and repassed, filling the afternoon with the smell of hot oil and tar and exhaust fumes, but Dennie paid no attention either to the traffic or to the other people on the pavement, though many a passer-by turned for a moment to stare at the small boy in the grey jersey as he plodded abstractedly up the hill, rattling his stick along the railings, singing his meaningless song. For all the difference they made to him, he might have been the only person about on this sweltering late summer afternoon.

At the top of the hill, where the dusty privet hedge which ran along inside the railings divided for a moment, there was a small gate. It gave on to a narrow clinker path which ran precariously along the edge of the great cleft which the engineers who built the waterworks had cut into the chalk of the hill over which the road passed. It was always locked, but on tiptoe, with his face pressed between two of the green painted railings, he could look over at the reservoirs, eighty feet below, spread out over the floor of the gorge as far as the pumphouse away across on the other side, with its yard gate opening on to the small lane which came out into the High Street a little below the back street in which he lived. The reservoirs fascinated him. Vast iron tanks, their insides white with chalk, the water in them clear, blue, menacing, as still as death, he could never watch them for long without experiencing a strange feeling of excitement—coiling and leaping somewhere deep in the pit of his stomach. It was being afraid, he thought—though there was more to it than that. It had in it, too, something of the feeling which came when, as sometimes happened, his mother had been particularly angry with him over something, perhaps unjustly, and then, suddenly, for no

reason at all, seemed to relent, hugging him when he least expected it, so that his throat tightened with hard sobs, and his eyes were full of the tears of his sudden, blinding love for her in place of the sullen anger which her unfair scolding had roused in him a moment before.

This afternoon the reservoirs seemed to carry a particular fascination. Under the brilliant sun there was something in the eerie clearness of the water and in the blinding glare of the chalk walls of the gorge which seemed to dominate him, making it difficult for him to tear himself away from them. The water seemed to be drawing him with invisible fingers, down, down, softly as a feather or a dandelion clock—down through the warm stillness of the afternoon into its own depths, so infinitely more still. He felt almost as if he were half asleep save for the leaping excitement in his stomach. After a while, however, with a sharp intake of breath, he turned, slowly and regretfully, and idled away down the other side of the hill past the shops and into the High Street. The day was over. Now there was only tea—perhaps an errand or two for his mother—and then bed.

He turned into the entry which led to their backyard. It was like a railway tunnel, only taller and narrower, bored through the middle of the mean row of houses in which they lived. His footsteps echoed with a musical note—dank, dank, dank—as he stamped though it, lifting his feet purposely to make them sound as much as possible. As he stumped into the kitchen he saw that something unusual was toward with his mother. For the first time since his father's death she had waved her hair and had powder and lipstick on her face. She was wearing the new frock which had been bought for the christening at Aunt Emily's when they had all gone in the tram and had iced cake and port wine. She seemed altogether younger—different somehow—smiling as she greeted him, and all the strange unhappiness of which her eyes always seemed so full seemed to have gone from them, leaving them clear and mischievous, like Ruby Ollifer's at school who was always getting into trouble for the tricks she played in class.

" Hallo Dennie "—she said, hugging him—" Bit late aren't you dear ? "—

" A bit.—Stopped to look at the shops "—he lied, and, drawing on a chance observation of that morning—" Claypole's have a new model railway in the window."—

" I know "—she said—" I've seen it." Then, almost defiantly, as if she feared some unspoken question of his—" I'm going to the pictures," she said.—" I'm fed up of sticking in night after night.—You'll have to get yourself to bed for once, ducks.—Don't mind, do you ? "

" No mum," he said.—" I'll be alright." But he felt uneasy as he finished his tea. She never went out from one year's end to another what with all the blouses from the factory to finish, and all the washing and mending as well, and the idea of being left alone in the house for the first time he could remember filled him with a secret dread.

After a few minutes she kissed him, putting on her thin coat. " Bye bye, ducks," she said. " Be a good boy.—I'll do the washing up when I get back." Then she was gone and he was alone.

As the door closed behind her he felt a quick prickle of uneasiness across his scalp. He felt utterly lost. He went to the dark cupboard under the stairs and brought out the scruffy pile of comics which the neighbours gave his mother for him. For some long time he sat reading them—the house all the while seeming to be coming in closer and closer upon him—hardly daring to raise his eyes from them for fear of what he might see in the shadows which slowly gathered along the walls as the evening light faded outside the tiny kitchen window. As it grew slowly darker his fears increased. The photograph of his father over the mantelpiece seemed to be coming alive. The eyes, in the half darkness seemed to be watching him intently. It was growing too dark to read, but to reach the light switch he would have to go over to the darkest corner of the room. With a tremendous effort he got to his feet, determined to rush over and click it all in one sudden, impetuous movement, but as he straightened he caught another swift glimpse of the photograph. The intent eyes seemed to hold him, and then, in one dreadful shrieking instant to flicker, as though the eyelids had blinked rapidly across them. Panic seized him.

crawling like snakes across his scalp, pushing him in the small of the back—get out, get out, get out !—He leapt for the door and fumbling at the knob in blind terror wrenched it open, fleeing madly into the backyard, now almost in darkness, crashing the door shut behind him. The tunnel flung crazy echoes at him as he raced through it and out, not stopping until he reached the lights of the High Street.

Once there he began to feel foolish.—Suppose his mother should come home and find him not in bed and the house in darkness !—If only she had said what cinema she was going to !—Then he remembered that she would have to come along the High Street to get home in any case, and deciding to meet her and face it out he began to wander slowly up the hill.

At the top, as he came abreast of the fish and chip shop next to where the Waterworks railings began, he heard her voice. Thankfully he turned to go in but there was a long queue at the counter. Peering between the people he saw her at one of the tables by the wall. There was a strange man with her. He hesitated, uncertain whether to go in or not. She had not seen him. For some reason the sight of her with a strange man made him somehow afraid and he stood there in complete bewilderment not knowing what to do. After a few moments of indecision he slunk back into the shadows of an adjoining doorway to wait for them. When they came out he did not at first recognise them. But when he did he realised with another shock that they had turned away in the wrong direction, and were already some yards ahead. He saw that the man had his arm about her waist and that she was laughing in the same queer way as Mrs. Cappler did when she had had too much to drink. He had been about to call to her, but somehow, at the last minute, he did not dare. He followed slowly after them full of a sick bewilderment, something inside him aching miserably for no reason that he could understand. Obviously they were aware of no-one but themselves.

As they came abreast of the green gate they stopped while the man fumbled in his pockets. There was a jingle of keys and he heard the gate creak open in the darkness. The man said something to his mother too softly for him to catch

the words, and he heard her giggle. Then they went in, their feet crunching along the clinker for a moment or two, and then—silence.

He stood in an agony of indecision, uncertain whether to go in after them or to wait until they came out. Then he remembered the lower gate by the pumphouse.

He drew a quick breath and made up his mind. The gate was still unlocked. Slowly and fearfully he eased it open, and crept in after them, keeping to the thin grass verge between the path and the railings so as to make no noise. After a few steps he was startled by the sound of his mother's voice again, not three yards away. She was talking to the man in the same quiet caressing way, as she had done to him when he had been ill last year and his heart seemed to go like lead. Then there was the sound of a kiss, and he heard his mother sigh. She seemed from the sound to be trembling violently, and something seemed to break inside him. He burst into a passion of weeping.

There was a muffled exclamation from the man and a sharp squeal of rage from his mother. Then she was standing over him, her whole body shaking, her breath coming in great gasps, her voice shrieking, full of a sort of mixture of rage and hopeless despair. The fingers of one hand were twisted savagely in the wool of his jersey, with the other she was battering him madly about the head and shoulders. The tears were streaming down her face. He heard the man expostulating with her, but she seemed not to hear—" I'll teach you to follow me you little swine "—she shrieked. " I'll kill you, you—dirty—little—rotten—spy "—hitting him between every word, crying all the time as if her heart was broken. Dazed from her blows he broke blindly away from her and plunged up the path towards the gate. Suddenly he caught his foot against something in the darkness and felt himself falling. There was a scream—" Dennie—Dennie ! "—from above him, and then he was aware only of the faint brightness of water with the dim glow of the night sky reflected in its quiet surface floating up to meet him. Then all lights were gone. The dark surface broke beneath him and closed again over his head.

His back broken with the impact of the long fall Dennie sank like a stone, knowing nothing of the water which flowed into his lungs and which soaked into his thin, darned clothes, chilling his blood through the skin and flesh of his undernourished body. He did not break surface again.

Charles Kingham

THE ART OF THE FILM

DURING THE COURSE of my long career as a film critic, I have often been called upon for articles of this kind. Usually I have managed to serve up to my already blasé public articles neatly polished, stylish, and possibly even containing a few valuable comments on The Film. They have all lacked, however, what our transatlantic cousins are pleased to call " pep." This last error I now propose to remedy. Whatever else this essay may be, no-one will be able truthfully to call it tame. Its style may be criticised as being almost illiterate—though if it should be so thought of, I will meet the critic and attempt to convince him, forcibly if necessary, that his ideas of literacy are wrongly conceived. There will be little polish about it, since it is extempore ; there will be no valuable comments (I tell you this at the outset in order that you shall not be disappointed later) ; but at least it will have *punch.*

And now, after this preliminary build-up, " revenons (as the French say, or used to say, or more probably were merely reported as using to say) a nos moutons." The title of this article suggests to me the question " Is there any art in the Film ? " which naturally leads to the corollary questions " Is there any such thing as the Film ? " and " Is there any such thing as Art ? " and if so, " What are they ? " Having now got enough questions to give us a fair start I must now attempt to answer them. Firstly, what is the Film ? Well, there are, briefly, three types of film : (*a*) Local boy makes good, getting local girl in the process ; (*b*) Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl (social standing of either protagonist being of no importance) ; (*c*) Un-American. The first two classes may or may not be what are described as " musicals." The last class contains very few " musicals," those which are

made in this genre being either not musical or not good films, or both.

I can now proceed further to distinguish between the various species of film, taking first class (*a*). This kind of film may be either comedy, drama (pronounced "drehma"), or a mixture of both in the Elizabethan manner, on which the film industry is notoriously expert. The comedies are often, indeed almost always, "musical" in the sense that plenty of opportunity is afforded by the writer or writers of the screen-play for the abilities of a well-known band, composer or singer to be exhibited. In this case the local boy makes good on the stage, being himself a singer, song-writer or band-leader, according to which stands highest in popular preference as conceived by the makers of the film. The comedy, as such, is provided either by the uproarious witticisms of the hero himself at the expense of everyone he meets, or by some such stock comic character as the hill-billy philosopher from the boy's home town, the negro servant, or the highbrow. This class of film may have a heroine instead of a hero, but the technique is the same. The other kind of "local boy makes good" film is usually a bitter, human, gripping, starkly emotional story of one man's fight against the forces of evil; his fight for human values, democracy, the freedom of the individual and his right to smoke anywhere on the train. Cub-reporter breaks down political machine and is made Mayor; cub-reporter tracks down and rounds up gang of crooks single-handed; young lawyer, accountant, chemist's assistant—(sorry, drug-store clerk)—is accused of murder, forgery, fraud, parking on the wrong side of the street, and clears himself after a heroic struggle. In this kind of film the heroine either gets into trouble (no, not that way) with him, or she is in distress when he meets her, and he rescues her therefrom. This situation may be familiar to students of Middle English, but not to Film Producers, who are ordinary men and know what the ordinary man (or woman) wants. It can only be a defect in my own character which makes me find the charming, witty, noble-minded and efficient heroes of such films rather nauseating, from Rudolf Valentino down to that lean type with a small moustache and a clear-cut profile whose name for the moment escapes me.

This brings me to a consideration of the class (*b*) film, although it needs to be said at once that it is often very difficult to distinguish between the two classes, so much so, indeed, that class (*b*) often appears to be merely a sub-species of (*a*), and vice versa. However, for the purposes of this essay I shall adhere to my original definition of a class (*b*) film as one with the formula—boy meets, loses, and finally gets girl. Normally the boy is rich and the girl is poor, or vice versa; although it is not unknown for a successful film to be made in which both the lovers belong to the same social class. In class (*b*) again the film may be either a "comedy" or a "drama," the latter classification always implying, in the Film World, the opposite of the first. "Tragedy" within the meaning of that word does not exist as a classification for the film-maker, being regarded rather as a word signifying a quality implicit in the story itself as, for instance, the poignant tragedy of a man's life warped by the necessity of marrying a woman other than she whom he originally wanted. Should a class (*b*) film be a Comedy, the wit is almost always provided by the rapid verbal give-and-take between the various characters. It is then, in fact, what it is meant to be—a reflection of the general level of conversation among the wealthy and famous—the Comedy of Manners as Congreve knew it. (The film industry is, of course, as expert in this manner as it is in the Elizabethan). Should the film be a Drama, it offers, more perhaps than any other type of film, a superlative opportunity to the producer of reaching the very heights of pathos. Could there, for instance, be a more moving story than that tale which has inspired so many epics—the simple, human tale of the young, sensitive composer attempting to express himself in great music, finding in the love of a good woman after struggle and heartbreaking disappointments, the inspiration which allows him to plumb the uttermost depths of the human soul? Surely there could be no place for comedy in such a film? Only the starkest of stark realism could possibly express the infinite nuances of emotion and sensibility contained in the situations of a story like that, unless it were intended, for greater artistic integrity, to dwell for a moment on the unspoiled grace, the sweet, piping tones of the little child who

helps finally to reunite the couple after the hero has been lured from his destined mate and inspiration by the voluptuous but insensitive creature who cannot understand his music, though she may pretend, for a time, to do so.

There is very little to be said about class (*c*) films, that is, if one has been well brought up and has any moral standards at all, and it is fortunate that few films of this type escape the Hays Office. Where this does happen, however, it is usual for the offending Director responsible for the film to flee the country before (or occasionally after) the Committee of Un-American Activities can get at him. These films are realist in the barest and most literal sense of the word. They attempt to show real people living real, normal lives. This means, of course, that they often imply that Life is not always happy in the long run, and that small events which happen daily and which have been often seen or experienced by most members of the audience have themselves some importance or interest—a view to which no experienced producer who knew his job or had any sense of the fitness of things could possibly subscribe. It is a sad commentary on the present state of Western Europe that such films are not only being produced, but are being enjoyed both in Britain and on the Continent.

If one thing remains to be said to carry ultimate conviction as to the claim of the film to be an Art Form, it is the pointing out of its value to Literature. Films which have been based on books have tremendously increased the popularity of such books, and the fact that, as a rule, only one sentence (or three lines of dialogue) from any given book is actually used in the making of the film does not interfere with the greatly enhanced popularity of the book nor with the author's royalties. The average income of the literary profession is generally low save for those fortunate few whose works have been used, in the way already mentioned, towards the making of a film, and in this fact alone, it would seem, resides the truth that the Art of the Film is one vital to and integral with the glorious and unparalleled civilisation of the twentieth century, in the making of which the American-speaking world is even yet engaged.

Ken Grace and W. K. Percival

BOARDERS IN PARIS

EMERGING FROM THE UNDERGROUND, somewhat bewildered and travel-sore, we asked the first passer-by the way to Rue X. With the careful use of our map and the ntricate directions of our acquaintance we made our way through a maze of geometrically arranged streets. Blocks of flats rose high and solid on each side of us like neatly-cut pieces of cake. We turned a corner. There, facing us, was a painted sign, hardly legible through its coating of dirt. " Pension de Famille " it read. It was attached to a house tucked away in the corner of the street—a house which added its own sombre solemnity to that of its surroundings, its shutters a nondescript greyish colour, the paint on its windows long-since robbed of any suspicion of colour by the inroads of time and atmosphere upon its substance.

There was, we found, no need to knock. We walked straight into the dark passageway where a plump cook introduced us to the multi-coloured dressing gown, orange, green and flame on a dirty apple-yellow background, which graced the morning prescnce of Madame herself, about whom it was wrapped. And what a presence ! Tall, elderly, active, obviously of peasant stock, her hair a patchwork of grey and golden-brown, touched up with a spot of blue here and there, she was a striking and unusual figure. She approached us with a show of impatient friendliness which a packet of English tea transformed into an almost naïve delight. Her eyes shining with complete trust she directed us to our room.

The house was an architectural puzzle, and as we groped at Madame's direction up the dark little back staircase we found that we had completely lost all sense of direction. But we found the room quaint and attractive, fitted, satisfactorily, with bookshelves and a waste-paper basket. We made the startling discovery that the small window placed inexplicably in one of the internal walls of the room looked straight into the privacy of Madame's own room ! The outside window over-

looked the roof of the salon, bound in by four sheer walls which rose round it giving, through the square opening which they formed above our heads, a glimpse of the sky, and in the depths a hint of dirty washing. It was an ideal room—Wilde, Verlaine, Gide—any of them might easily have lived in it, here in the very heart of the quarter in which not merely they but so many other famous artists and writers had actually lived. We were charmed with it.

At lunch-time we made the acquaintance of our fellow-inhabitants, but it was not until dinner that we really came into contact with our fellow boarders, and also with all the others who came daily to take their meals in the pension.

At dinner, with the dressing gown of the morning a mere memory, unreal, incongruous, Madame showed herself in all the dignity of her office, sitting at the head of the table, quiet, firm, reigning like a queen over the assembly. There was no conversation in which she did not feel qualified to join, no person who did not at some time or other share her confidences. For all her regulars she had an individual serviette. She knew the whereabouts of everybody's bottle of wine. We found that from the first we were to be denied none of the privileges of the clientele. She gave us a key so that we might enter the house late at night if, as, and when we wished (Madame herself retired early)—we could play on the salon piano, argue violently with the maids, sit next to madame at meal times, with all the incidental profit which this entailed, take afternoon tea with her (free of charge), use the telephone and, we found, sit on the cats without exciting any more protest than the animals themselves were capable of expressing. Madame even went to the lengths of inviting us to accompany her to Les Halles one morning to watch her astute dealings on the Black Market.—("Que voulez vous, alors ?—Il faut vivre, n'est ce pas ?") The only single privilege which was not offered was that of pouring down the sink the vile ersatz coffee brought into our room every morning by the maid, but this, surely, was a case where one might justifiably fly in the face of authority. And we did.

The very air of the place smelled of freedom and un-

restraint. One had nothing to fear from any ever-watchful authority. When you knew her Madame was the soul of jollity and fun, like most elderly people quite content, for the rest, to live and let live and to enjoy her own peace and quietness in her own way—except perhaps for an occasional—(perhaps not so very occasional)—soirée to add a little sparkle to life—a soirée like the one she held to celebrate the passing of his baccalauriat by her grandson. There was no lingering suspicion of any formality or solemnity on that night. The wine was good, Madame had seen to that—the humour was good—and nobody was refused. The salon became a dance-floor. The piano and the gramophone came into their own. People whose talent had been hitherto unsuspected (and indeed, once the soirée was over might again remain in doubt until the next occasion called it forth), sang without let or hindrance, heartily and *ad infinitum*. But we, we believe, provided the highlight of the evening—at least it was the highlight so far as we were concerned. One of us, dressed in farcical white pants, first performed a mock Indian dance, and later a wild can-can, draped in a Russian dressing gown. This display made good conversation for months afterwards, the plump cook having been known almost to double up with laughter at the mere mention of it.

Dismal though its external aspects undoubtedly were, this unpretentious Parisian boarding house was anything but shabby and dismal; its personality was the life of the people who frequented it and they too, were anything but shabby and dismal. There was nothing in it or about it of that stiff pseudo-respectability so typical of so many English establishments and yet its most striking characteristic was a sort of thorough-going honesty—not honesty in the legal sense—an honesty resting not on authority but on the complete trustfulness and humanity of Madame herself so that no-one who came into the house could fail to be affected by it and to become himself human and trustful, and thus become an integral part of the small community which the house represented.

Living was sometimes hard, but our stay in Paris, in this atmosphere of friendliness and humanity, of student infor-

mality, had not one moment in it that cannot be looked back upon with pleasure, a pleasure, we feel, which might easily have been spoiled had we been living in that other Paris of shallow, bright commercialism and extravagant luxury. But we breathed the air of the real Paris, untainted by these things, the existence of which the average tourist never even suspects, and can thus claim that our acquaintance with the city and its life is at least one unlikely to tarnish or lose its lustre with the passing of time.

Robin Skelton

OPERA BOUFFE

Mr. O Toffolo,
bearded as buffalo,
what will you say to the
clean shaven toff below
stairs,
where the cares
of cookery domestic all
vanish to airs
operatic, frenetical,
light as the tenor day
shines aluminium,
courting your housekeeper
with an encomium
on her light pastrywork,
offering to carry her
where the white wonders lurk
told in his aria,
seducing her eye from
Mr. O Toffolo,
bearded like bison ?
Shall she let supper go,
mount on his pillion
in a delirium,
dancing delight in

the heart's pandemonium ?
Or shall she remain with the
clean shaven toff below
stairs, cooking kippers for
Mr. O Toffolo ?
Her decision, to say the least,
is problematical,
Mr. O Toffolo's
gouty, rheumatical,
queasy and quarrelsome
over his pabulum,
never poetical,
formal not frolicsome,
yet there is good reason
why she should season
the marital madness
with patience, for she's on
his will for a legacy.
Shall she with cruelty
pepper his porridge with
hastening poison ?
" Ah, yes," cries the tenor lad,
laughing at perfidy.
" P'raps " cries the feminine
terror of beggary.
" No " shouts the hoarse
bellow of Toffolo,
hearing the discourse
over his food below,
" Take a month's warning, You !
Murder will *never* do !
Take trunk and tenor too
off to your bungalow."
What could the couple do,
lady and toff below
stairs, but depart from
the home of O Toffolo,
angry and supperless,
bearded as buffalo ?

GEMINI *by Gemini*

UNION COIFFURES

JUVENILE LEADS

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Gerald Robinson

MARINE

How proud you sit.
The figure-head
knows nothing of the spread of sail
that scuds before the driving wind
but rocks and dips with ocean breath—
blown spray the only tears you show.

The hand that ropes your hanging sheet
is guided by the spinning stars
struck in the night from flashing flint
now bedded deep in sea of flesh.

And if you shatter on this Rock
break the beam and flood the wave
and scatter on the seven seas,
the walkers at the breakers' edge
will gather driftwood from the shore
and treasure fragments, caked in salt,
of days and deaths they never knew.

Stuart Shaw

AUTUMN DAY

(*Translation from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke*).

Lord, it is time. The summer has been long.
Now lay your shadow on the sundials.
Release the wind into the fields.

Command that the last fruits be full,
Grant them two more southern days.
Urge them to maturity, and squeeze
Their last sweetness into the heavy wine.

He who is homeless will build no more.
He who is lonely will be alone for long,
Will watch, will read, will write long letters,
Will wander restless up and down the lanes
When the leaves swirl.

W. A. Hodges

IN DUST NO MERCY LIES....

In dust no mercy lies to mourn,
to bleed for grief the world's long wound,
no pity in the stone shall weep
for pallid lover under ground.

In tears no sorrow lies to shrive,
no anguish, in the mirror's gleam,
but shadows for the clinging shroud
the stalking double of the dream.

No love across the grave may lie
to breathe its living flame
but kindles in the hollow earth
the fire the seed shall climb.

Marian Owen

POEM

Some bright love moved me then
and I danced
with the dense disciples of survival
in a vaulted wood
and prayed with pliant fingers
and spun the beads of agony
in the singing silence.
Some bright beauty had I then
and plotted the world's pattern
and exulted in my barren dream
in the moon's volupting pity.

Bill Moody

STRANGER THAN FICTION

J. B. PRIESTLEY, in his recently-published *Delight*, rejoices at "truth's determination to keep right on being stranger than fiction." After giving some extraordinary details from a newspaper paragraph, he goes on : " No doubt we novelists and playwrights are capable of inventing such characters and such situations, but we have allowed ourselves to be bullied out of them." This struck me at once as being right up my street. I dare hardly associate myself with Priestley's " novelists and playwrights ", but with my hand on my heart I insist that my greatest difficulty in writing stories for *The Gryphon* has been in reducing the truth to the credible.

I can hardly expect you, for example, to believe in a couple I once knew whom I'll call Alf and Mary Binsh. When I first knew them they lived in London. They bought a tandem bicycle and when they had tried it once or twice up and down the street they set off for Edinburgh. When they got there Mary went to bed for three days. They cycled home and Mary was ill for a fortnight, during which time Alf sold the tandem and bought two solo bicycles ; he said she hadn't done her share of pedalling. I called to see them two months later. The bicycles were rusting in the coal-cellar and Alf and his wife were playing flute duets in the dining room. They said I hadn't to expect too much as one flute had an open E and the other a closed E. They returned the visit a few weeks later. When I opened the door an enormous Alsatian rushed by me, tore a piece from our mongrel's ear, seized the joint from the kitchen table, and bounded outside. They sold the Alsatian a few weeks later and in rapid succession took up high-speed photography, rock-climbing, vegetarianism, and an alleged Eastern religion called something like Khamshamdham. They then turned to a new system of medical treatment ; I have forgotten its name and only know that it ended in " -opathy." They bought cases of drugs and cured themselves all day long.

It was a fascinating and never-ending occupation because the drugs chased the affliction from one corner of the body to another and you never knew where it was going to turn up next. I was once present when Alf cured himself of headache. The headache went all right but when he tried to get up a minute or two later he couldn't do it; his knees were locked, or so he said. About this time came the first sign of a rift between Alf and Mary. He liked to lie awake in bed at night, talking and chewing apples, but Mary had an old-fashioned weakness for sleeping. She was, however, prevailed upon to take a drug which kept her awake for at least half the night. A week or two later the drugs were thrown out. Alf had bought a book which announced that each one of us had an affinity with a certain kind of tree. When you settled on which was your tree, you went at dawn, stripped off a few square feet of bark and distilled it. Mary had followed her husband faithfully up to this point but she now began to get ideas of her own. She joined the Particular Branch of the Pentangular Gospellers, would not so much as stay in a room where there was a wireless set, and read nothing but religious pamphlets. She was so occupied, in a cold and cheerless kitchen, the last time I saw her. A few days later she ran away with a rat-catcher and Alf joined a pacifist organisation. The following year he was killed fighting in Spain—I don't know on which side.

This story, you see, is quite hopeless because it's true. It has no artistry. It needs watering down. If I were really trying to impress you, I'd write a story in which nothing happened for six pages. But I'm getting old and reckless. Let me get back to my theme.

If you must have the truth, it comes out much better in small quantities. I used to rejoice over detached items in old school log-books. One entry for about 1890 read: "Mrs Slubbins came to school to-day to complain that her son Ernest is making little progress at his lessons. NOTE: Ernest has attended school five half days during the last three months."

It would not surprise me to learn that you have heard this last anecdote before—perhaps even on a radio programme a day or two ago. It is a simple story within the range of

anybody's inventive powers. But note that if you have heard it, you didn't believe it, and nobody expected you to. Nevertheless, I find that the currency of such anecdotes is apt to take the fun out of life. When the event *actually* happens it has been deprived of a good deal of its savour. Many years ago, for example, I attended a fortnight's physical training course for teachers. Part of our instruction took place in a swimming bath. One of our number forgot his costume one day and was allowed to carry on without it. It had to happen of course; on that day of all days a woman inspector came to see what was going on. We were at the deep end when she came in and the instructor was about to race us down to the shallow end. He hesitated, looked embarrassed, and gave us a few exercises. The woman was puzzled at our expressions and disappointed with the exhibition. Finally, the instructor, blushing idiotically, spoke a few quiet words to her. She smiled and went out. I felt wretched. I'd read it scores of times before—I'd seen it in *Comic Cuts* and *Chips* long before I could read. O Nakedness, where is thy joke? Too late for joy, too late, too late!

I felt similarly miserable two or three years ago when fate delivered a slightly bumptious young man straight into my hands. I was drinking coffee in the Union with two girls I knew pretty well and a young man I knew not at all. He had just finished a week's teaching practice and was full of it. The only way to teach kids, he said, was to give them plenty of work and smack them hard if they didn't get on with it. Nobody bothered to contradict him and he was spoiling for an argument. "What do *you* think?" he asked, looking at me. I said I thought there was more to it than that. "You may *think* so," he said, "but have you done any teaching?" I shuffled to my feet and slunk away, murmuring, "A bit." It wasn't fair. I hadn't been trying to wangle the conversation round to this. The situation was hopelessly corny. Too many books, plays and films had knocked all the pleasure out of "Well, I've done twenty years, if you call that any teaching."

Just before the war a little incident led me as deep into philosophic thought as ever I'll go. I heard of a five-year old

girl in our little town who was watching a farmer manoeuvring a cart-load of manure through an awkward gateway. " Where are you taking it to ? " she asked. " I'm going to put it on the rhubarb." he said. She puzzled over this a moment then said, " Oh, we put custard on ours." I repeated this story to a friend of mine. He was not amused ; he'd heard it twenty years before. I investigated my story. I hunted up the farmer and two witnesses. It had really happened. I put the proofs before my friend and for a long time we sat silent, staggered at the implications. Here was something not in the line of stock situations and it had turned up twice in twenty years. He raked among his memories, trying to recall whether the incident had actually occurred twenty years previously or whether it had just been a funny story. He couldn't decide, but it didn't matter. The conclusion was inevitable : Everything that can conceivably happen *must* happen some time and if time goes on it must happen over and over again. It linked up with our old friends, the million monkeys, who, pounding away at their million typewriters, must some day produce the complete Works of Shakespeare, correct to the last comma. Think of some extraordinary occurrence, some fantastic plot, some outrageous piece of behaviour. Because you can think of it, some day it's going to happen, and then again and again. Some time, some where, a Vice-Chancellor will sit and sulk in the middle of a degree ceremony and refuse to hand out any more degrees. A learned scholar will prove that Shakespeare intended his plays to be read backwards letter by letter. More than half the students in a University will buy the University magazine. And then these things are to happen again though you may have a long time to wait. Try not to miss them the first time round.

Yes, everything must happen. I was delighted to hear, not more than a month ago, of an occurrence which, at a rough calculation, is not due to turn up again for another quarter of a million years. A man owned a car which was painted a bright metallic blue. His business required him to leave it standing for many hours in front of his house. This was all very well until his wife bought a canary which she placed in a cage in the front window. The canary flourished

until it cast a glance at the car; it then gave a shriek and sank palpitating to the floor. I have heard tell that it tried to drown itself in its drinking water, but I am rather sceptical about this detail. Anyhow, the canary recovered, only to relapse again whenever it saw the car. Various tests were made and at last the man did the only possible thing; he hunted round car sale rooms until he found a car painted a dull black. The canary is now happy. And so am I.

Dogpole

THE VISIT

YOU DON'T mean to say the WILSONS are coming?—Good God! I'd rather it was anyone but them. Even the Robertsons. Even the Hugh-Stapleys. My God! I'd rather have the charwoman to tea. Afternoon tea, at that—with all the cake-handing and tea-pouring and gossip—especially the gossip. They're the worst gossips in town. If I'd known you were going to ask them I'd have murdered you—strangled you or something. . . . Good God! *I* didn't ask them. I couldn't have. The words would have stuck in my throat. ME ask THEM to afternoon tea? What a laugh! I'd rather ask a crocodile to a swimming gala. . . . He DID?. . . . Well he's a liar, that's all. Just cadging on the flimsiest least bit of an excuse he could find. If I DID say anything it was pure accident. Good manners, rather. If you hit a man over the shin with a club at the eighteenth hole you've got to say something. I didn't even say any day—I said *sometime*. I never *meant* him to come. . . . Well if I DID say Tuesday it was a slip. It was unavoidable. One of those things you're forced into saying. After all if you've just beaten a man black and blue with a golf club you just can't pass it off with a light laugh. Anyway it was purely accidental. It must have been Fate. How was *I* to know that he was standing behind me? I haven't got eyes in the back of my head have I? He should have moved . . .

I mean—if a bloke stands behind you deliberately looking away at the other end of the course—I mean, if he just STANDS there, what CAN one do ?.... And now he's coming to tea ! Good God !—And his wife too !—Holy Moses !.... Not that pestilential kid, too ?.... Lonely ?—He ought to be damn glad to be left alone when he's got parents like that. I wish they'd let ME alone..... What if it IS the maid's day off ? I suppose they COULDN'T have chosen another day ?.... Well, he could have told me.—He could have said it was the maid's day off, so they'd come another time. I didn't expect that ghastly kid ! You'd have thought he'd be happy left to himself in a great big house like that. There's plenty of furniture to break. Or they could have chained him up in the cellar or somewhere. He'd look GOOD chained in the cellar. He couldn't look better anywhere—unless it were chained in the Lion's Den at the Zoo.... Well,—what if I am unreasonable ?—Its enough to make anyone unreasonable, pushing himself in on us like that.... So he was SWEET ! So he CRIED ! Good God ! I expected he wanted the chance to play havoc with our crockery.—I suppose he wanted to trip over the mat and break the vase on the side table—why you leave it there I can't think. I should shift it if I were you. After all, it IS valuable..... What if they DID notice ? 'You could tell them it was being washed couldn't you ? Tell them its gone to the cleaners—or this is its day-off. Tell 'em it likes to have the same day off as the maid so it doesn't get knocked about by dirty little boys who are afraid to be alone in the house.—Alright, alright.—It stays there !—I won't say anything about it. I'll carry the kid past it and put the parlourmaid on guard.... We could say she was dusting it, couldn't we ?....Oh, alright. But if he touches a hair of its head—I mean a single pot flower, I'll floor him with the fire-irons. I'll brain him with the poker. AND I'll give Wilson something in exchange for his cheek—Good God ! Was that the bell ?—Here we go. I'll need a stiff drink when this is over. Don't forget. WHISKY !

HUL-LO !—How ARE you old man ? Leg any better ?—Come in and make yourself at home.... And Jimmy ? Oh, that's alright. Jimmy and I get on beautifully, don't we old

chap ? Mind the mat.... mind the mat Jimmy.... it's a bit awkw— Oh !.... No. It's quite alright Mrs. Wilson. It wasn't valuable at all. So long as the boy's alright—not cut himself or anything..... Feeling groggy is he ? Perhaps he ought to lie down on the sofa ?—No—really—no trouble at all..... The vase ?— Oh we can easily mend it. I'll just get the maid to sweep up the bits. No, not at all—only an old piece of junk my wife picked up and we liked it enough to put it out.... Oh no. We didn't like it THAT much.... Of course.... Feeling sick ?—Oh dear ! Jane !.... Show master Jimmy to the—it's too late ! Ah well— we'll soon clean it up.... Oh no.... Well—if you really think so.... Yes. perhaps it might be better to get him to bed.... Not at all. Accidents WILL happen you know.... Yes. Yes, I think he'll perhaps be alright if you get him to bed. I'm sorry, too.—You must come again sometime.... Yes, that's fine.... Next Tuesday ? Of course..... Your maid's day-off is it ? Well bring him along too. Hope the little chap will be better next time.... Nooooo ! Not a bit.—It was a very ordinary vase. Just junk.... Well, Do come.—I Do hope he'll be fit by then.... Cheerio old man.— Goodbye Mrs. Wilson.... Hope you'll soon be better Jimmy old man.... Don't forget.... Next Tuesday.... But we LOVE having you.... Bye bye.... Yes.... Cheerio.

....Your whisky, sir.

APOLOGY.

We regret that owing to an error a plate used in our last issue to illustrate the Theatre Group article was titled—A Scene from "The Ascent of F. 6." It was, in fact, of a scene from "Thunder Rock." We offer our apologies to Theatre Group.

A. Griffiths

". . . . . THIS NIGHT-PIECE"

THEATRE GROUP attempted last term an interprepation of John Webster's " The White Devil," and if the production was, perhaps. not so successful as earlier ones, we must remember the special dangers which attend any production of a revenge play. The Group, with all its experience, might well have hesitated before attempting a play which, however much it titillates the modern appetite for violence, presents difficulties sufficient to make one ingenuous gentleman of the local press suggest that *burlesque* was the only way of dealing with it. There is a danger that certain old plays (like early films) may cause a modern audience. out of touch with the supporting framework of thought and dramatic conventions, either acute embarrassment or sheer philistine rejoicing. " The White Devil " narrowly escapes either fate, doing so by the potency of its imagery, where the images of lush, rank corruption are counterpointed with those of hard brilliance, producing an effect of sensuous and mental darkness shot with the gleam of diamonds underground and plangent with Webster's intense consciousness of death and its individual impacts.

Mr. John Boorman's production, recovering after an almost disastrous first-night which was little more than a dress-rehearsal, was an interesting, if at times funereally slow, interpretation of this dark play. His own Monticelso was a well-drawn portrait of a Renaissance Cardinal for whom the world had a reality transcending that of heaven and family honour a higher demand than conscience. Two stronglycontrasted Flamineos took part in the production. Mr. Creedy's was a somewhat gentle creature whose villainy was the product of circumstance rather than intellect, whose self-examination was less rigorous than placatory and whose cynicism was tainted by whimsy. Concentration upon the Harlequin elements in the role produced an irresponsibility surely remote from Webster's conception of the character. Mr. Metcalfe's Flamineo had zest and intelligence, savoured his villainy upon a subtle palate

and emphasised the bawdry with infinite relish. He was that rarity, the introvert who is also a man of action. Watching him, one saw how well Webster had realised the Renaissance ideal of the Perfect Man, "The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword. . . . and the mould of form," who is at once intensely self-regarding and decisive in action. But Flamineo's perfection is perverted, over-ripe and has isolated him from society, upon which he vents his egomania in brutal commonplaces to his companions (his bawdry reflects his fear that sex may violate his self-sufficiency) and in high pitched poetry to himself as he contemplates that strange fruit, his emotion.

Francisco is that stock figure, the Avenger, taken over from an alien tradition and perhaps never completely assimilated to the English taste, which prefers its monomaniacs less clear-cut. Mr. Morley's Francisco pursued his revenge with a relentless though wooden melancholy. Brachiano, played by Frederick May, seemed at times a little embarrassed by his passion and had a curiously immobile expression. But his death-scene was more impressive than one had expected, and redeemed his somewhat prim love-making.

Vittoria (Miss Wendy Rayner), upon whom so much depends, was too slight a figure for such goings-on, and in the trial-scene faced her tormentors with an air of injured reproof, as of a nice but flighty young woman confronting the local Bench. Miss Jacqueline Heywood played Cornelia with strength, passion and a finely conceived sense of tragedy which found full outlet in the wake scene, resonant with Shakespearean echoes. Lodovico is a small-scale Flamineo, lacking his subtlety and his sense of self-contemplating evil, save in his last short outburst of self-congratulatory pride. Mr. Rogers caught only flashes of his spite and anger. From the host of minor characters we remember Camillo's prosy stupidity, Isabella's masochistic self-sacrifice, Giovanni's freshness and the Welshman who had somehow strayed into an Italian courtroom fresh from the Vale of Towy.

Costumes and set adequately evoked sixteenth century Italy, if the acting at times did not, and the audience, even if somewhat bewildered by the general holocaust of the last scene, enjoyed the opulence of colour and lighting.

POWER STATION AT TAMPERE

Fred Singleton

FINLAND

IF I HAD BEEN ASKED last year to say what I knew about Finland, I doubt if I could have given more than a few sentences on the subject. I had heard about the "land of a thousand lakes," and had a vague impression that Finland had been on the wrong side during the war. If pressed, I might have remembered something about the winter war against Russia in 1939-40, and that a composer called Sibelius lived there. This would have been the sum total of my knowledge. I think most English people would find themselves in a similar position. Finland is just another of the "far away countries about which we know little." By contrast I found the Finns keenly interested in Britain. English literature and language are becoming popular subjects for study in Finnish schools and Universities. The welcome which we British students had on our visit to Finland this year left us in no doubt as to the friendly disposition of the Finnish people towards us. We were front page news in the local papers wherever we went. We were shown round factories and mills, invited to people's homes, challenged to football matches with local teams and even invited to weddings and christening parties!

I spent several weeks on a farm in Southern Finland, and afterwards visited Tampere, Pori and Helsinki. So many impressions crowd in about this wonderful holiday that I hardly know where to begin. Perhaps it would be well to start with the "sauna." As cricket to the English, so is the "sauna" to the Finns. Wherever there are Finnish speaking people—in Estonia, in Russia, in Sweden or in America—there will be saunas. Nowhere else will you find them. The idea of French saunas, or English saunas would be as incongruous to a Finn as cricket matches in Red Square to an Englishman. What is a sauna? It is the ritual which takes place when a Finn takes a bath. Every house in the country has a little wooden shack amongst the outbuildings. Inside is a series of wooden shelves, mounting like steps to a height of about ten feet. In another

corner of the room is a hearth on which is placed a container holding large stones. The stones are heated by the fire and then water is thrown on them until the room fills with steam. The bathers sit on the shelves and cook. Birch wood switches are provided with which they lash themselves into a lather of sweat. Then each one dives out into the fresh air and, according to season, either rolls in the snow or swims in the lake, before returning for a second cooking. Alexis Kivi, the great Finnish novelist, describes in his " Seven Brothers " the destruction of a sauna by fire. The brothers regard this as a major tragedy comparable to the loss of a parent or a dear friend. The sauna was always a good subject of conversation for us when other topics failed—far better than the weather in England. If one of our hosts warmed to the subject we were sure to hear all about Savo saunas and modern saunas, communal saunas and private, one-man affairs. Their relative merits would be compared, and the listener's opinion canvassed. Since the war Finland has had a serious refugee problem. 400,000 people were displaced as a result of the two wars, and most of these were farmers from Karelia. As a result, there has been a scheme to clear forest land to provide new farms elsewhere in Finland. Clearing forest is not an easy task, especially when the work is done mainly with hand tools. In addition all farmers must help with produce and materials for their less fortunate brothers. Finnish agriculture is not highly mechanised. The farm on which I worked was prosperous by Finnish standards, and quite large, but it had no tractor, and no binding machine. The fields were divided into small strips by open drainage channels—another factor which makes the use of machinery difficult. So, in addition to eating and sleeping and having saunas, they work hard. What about entertainment ? In many parts of the countryside we saw raised platforms in the fields, covered by a low roof supported on poles. These were open-air dance floors. That at Koria was on a rocky bluff overlooking the Kymi River, and at night it provided a remarkable scene. The fireworks released from the river bank shot up over the river, illuminating the two picturesque bridges, and the dark pines which clothed the slopes leading down to the swiftly flowing water. In the back-

ground was the brightly lit dance floor from which came the music of the jenka, and the sounds of the dancers.

There was also a cinema in the village, but this was patronised largely by the soldiers from the nearby barracks. My host used to say that there were three kinds of films shown there—good foreign films, bad foreign films and Finnish films. Sports were much more popular. The well known Finnish athletic prowess in International Games is built upon the sound foundations of vigorous local activity at a lower level. In every contest between the foreign students and the Finns, the visitors were hopelessly outclassed. Practice at pole vaulting, high jump and long jump were regular diversions to fill in the spare hour between dinner and dusk.

Folk culture really lives in Finland. Country dances and folk songs are not the preserve of an " arty " minority, artificially reviving something which has long since died amongst the ordinary people. I used to visit a family in the married quarters of the barracks. After supper the Sergeant Major and his wife, with their ten children ranging from young toddlers to married men and women, would sit around the table singing some of those moving folk songs which provide the inspiration for so much of the music of Sibelius. At the festivals and concerts which we visited a popular item of the programme was always the folk dancing and singing, with the Finnish girls in their colourful provincial costumes.

In the towns life is more " Westernised," and the folk traditions are consequently weaker. Most of the inhabitants of Helsinki live in large stone blocks of flats, equipped with double windows, central heating, and various other devices to keep out the severe winter cold. Many of the people own small wooden villas on the islands which dot the Finnish Gulf, and the wives and families frequently spend the whole of the summer on these islands, whilst the husbands continue working in the towns, and only visit their families at week-ends.

Helsinki is the home of the University. There are over 10,000 students, divided into " Student Nations " according to the district of Finland from which they come. Each " Nation " has its Student House, which corresponds in its functions to the British Student Unions. Students form a distinct com-

munity to a far greater extent than in Britain. All wear a white peaked cap as a sign that they have passed the entrance exam. for the University. On May 1st, past students are allowed to wear their caps, and they join with the students at present studying in the annual student day celebrations.

Political life in the Universities is less active than in most other countries. Before the war there was a section who supported the extreme right, and chauvinist claims for the incorporation of large areas in Russia formed a part of their programme. Attacks on Swedish students were also common. The Swedish speaking minority forms a distinct community in Finland, and was an obvious target for attack by extreme nationalist groups. To-day the party which fostered these claims is illegal, and has been thoroughly discredited. The war record of the Swedish minority has left it beyond doubt that their first loyalty is to Finland, and relations between them and the rest of the community are much better. The other political parties maintain student groups, but their membership is small.

From what I saw of politics outside the University, I had the impression that their meetings were much more orderly than in Britain. I attended a large rally of the Social Democratic party at which Väinö Tanner spoke. Tanner was Foreign Minister at the time of the declaration of war on Russia in 1941, and is regarded in Moscow as public enemy number one of Finland. He has recently been released from jail, after detention on war guilt charges. I was surprised that his attacks on the Communists met with no opposition from the floor, especially as the Communists are much stronger than in this country. When I asked about this I was told that it was unheard of for a member of another party to attend a rival meeting and heckle the speaker. The audience listened with great attention, and seldom applauded during the speeches.

There is a social Democratic Government in power to-day. It is the second Government since Finland achieved her independence to be composed exclusively of members of one party. The Finnish constitution is such that it it very difficult

for one party to achieve an absolute majority at the polls, and coalitions have been the rule. Until last summer there was a Communist–Social Democrat coalition, but the defeat of the Communists at the last elections has led to their exclusion from the present Government. The fight has been transferred to the industrial field. Whilst I was in Finland this year, the S.A.K. (Finnish T.U.C.) was split after the expulsion of the Communist-led unions among the timber workers. The aim of the Communist unions seems to be to cause the maximum embarrassment to the Government by starting strikes in the industries working for reparations. The Government suppressed the Kemi strikes this summer with " big stick " methods more reminiscent of the U.S.A. Police and troops were used in the early stages, and two strikers were shot.

Finland has always been in a precarious position between East and West, and particularly so to-day. In the past she has been subject to domination by Sweden and Russia. Her recent history suggests that she has been a pawn in a game of power politics conducted by the world powers. In 1939 she was invaded by Russia, because her bases would form strategic pivots in the inevitable clash between Hitlerite Germany and Russia. In 1940 she was compelled to lease the bases required by Russia, but soon after came under the domination of Germany. By November, 1940, German troops were passing through Finland en route for Norway, and the Nazis were building barracks at Rovaniemi on the Arctic Circle. In June, 1940, she joined Germany in the second war on Russia. This time, and the Finns never hesitate to remind you of this, she changed sides before it was too late, and helped to expel the Nazis in 1944. As a result of this she escaped more lightly from the war than she would otherwise have done, and the Russians have not been unreasonable in their demands. Nevertheless she has suffered terribly. Over a tenth of her people were homeless after the war, and she was burdened with a heavy reparations debt. She lost Karelia and Petsamo. I think Tanner was sincere when he said : " Finland has twice been beaten by Russia. She acknowledges her defeat, and will work to honour her obligations under the peace treaties. She is determined not to be drawn into another war."

REVIEWS

"An Introduction to Botany," by J. H. Priestley and Lorna I. Scott—21/-. *Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.*, 6 & 7, Clifford St., London, W.1.

THIS EXCELLENT BOOK in its well-produced, completely revised and up-to-date second edition is very much more than a mere text-book for University and sixth-form grammar school students, though its publishers limit themselves to this modest claim on its behalf. Botany is one of those technical subjects with a terminology and language of its own, so formidable, at times, as to daunt all but those earnest students whose business it is to apply themselves to it. Nevertheless, in this book the authors have achieved a most happy balancing of a clear and lucid style with the necessary technical content, and the result is a work capable of being used not merely as a text-book by Botany students as such but as a useful reference book for those interested laymen who wish to know more of the life, growth, reproduction, physiological structure, respiration, and metabolism of plants, particularly of flowering plants, than is usually to be found in the more general works available on Botany. As the authors point out in their Preface, the material which is presented has, in the main, formed the basis of the first year course in Botany at the University of Leeds, and the book should prove of particular interest to those members of the University intimately acquainted with the work both of Professor Priestley, (whose sad death on the 31st October, 1944, robbed the University and the Botanical world alike of one of their most distinguished figures), and of Lorna I. Scott.

There are several notable features to the book. It is generously and very well illustrated, by Lorna Scott and Marjorie E. Malins, also of the Leeds University Botanical Department, in collaboration, and the illustrations themselves, consisting of drawings, line diagrams and photographic plates are extremely well reproduced. Much new material has been added to the section dealing with plant respiration to introduce

recent advances in the knowledge of oxidase systems, with some modifications with regard to transpiration, water absorption, and the conception of auxins, and the technique of presentation throughout is admirable, introducing wherever possible a method of exposition which allows the student to build up a three-dimensional picture of the construction of plant tissues in a way not possible by the use of sections alone.

If there is one point to be regretted it is that the publishers did not find it possible to include an index of the illustrations, excellent reference material in themselves, as well as the full alphabetical index which appears at the back of the book. But perhaps this is too much to expect in these days of high production costs.

The book is strongly bound in linen with an attractive dust-cover and generally speaking Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., are to be congratulated on a well printed production of high quality which represents an extremely good guinea's worth.

N.H.

"Science Russian Course," by Dr. MAXIMILIAN FOURMAN. *The University Tutorial Press, Ltd.*, 10/6.

UNLESS RUSSIA IS DEFEATED and devastated in another war it may become increasingly important for scientists to be able to read Russian. It is unlikely that all Russian science will commit Lysenkoic suicide and even in biology potential heretics may evade liquidation by devoting themselves to factual studies, leaving bourgeois scientists to perform the dangerous interpretations. For these, and many other reasons, Russian, as a language that research workers ought to know, in spite of the handicap of its barbaric alphabet, may ultimately oust even German from its proud position of being the second world language of Science. The University Tutorial Press, Ltd., seem to have realised this potential demand and have now published a "Science Russian Course," which provides all the essentials for beginners. The author,

Dr. Maximilian Fourman, has admirably managed to pack a summary of the grammar into 44 pages which, however, he over-optimistically estimates " a student of average ability for languages should be able to acquire....in a fortnight at the most." (!) The remaining 230 pages contain extracts from Russian text-books and scientific journals on physics, chemistry mathematics, botany, zoology, physiology and medicine with a vocabulary of about 3,500 words intended to cover them. In my opinion, a few specimen translations would have improved the value of the book but the extracts seem fairly easy to read so that this may not be vital. The book is technically well-produced, the printing is clear and there do not seem to be any important misprints.

The book is to be highly recommended and is well worth its price of 10s. 6d.

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