

The Gryphon



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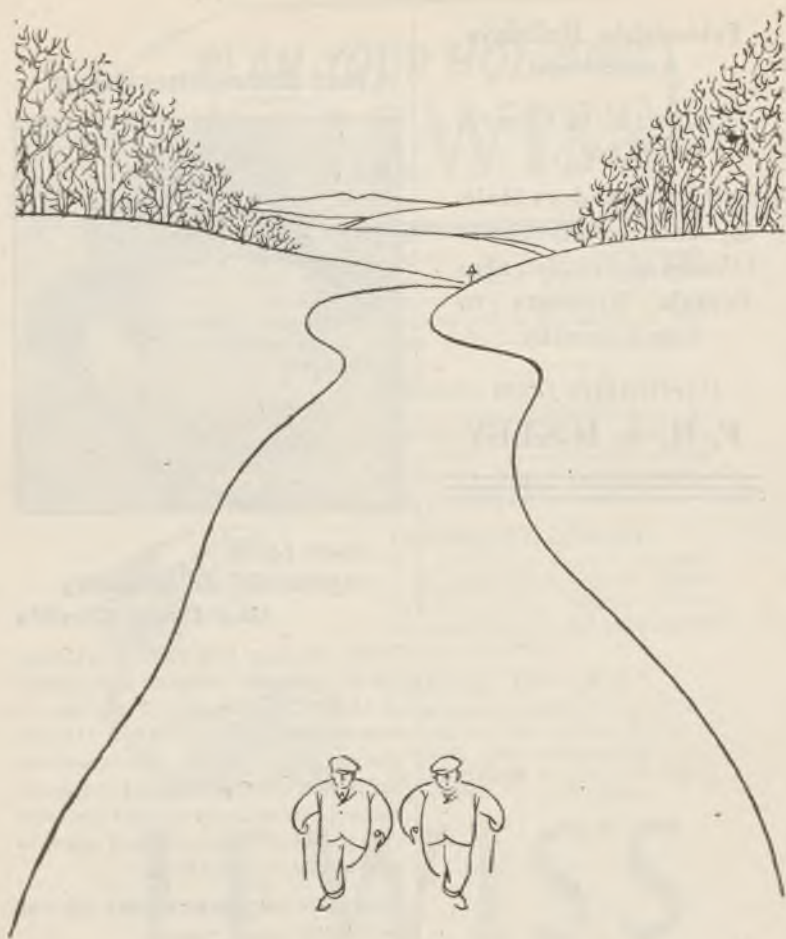
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The Gryphon

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EDITORIAL

WE ARE PUBLISHING IN THIS ISSUE the first article of general scientific interest that *The Gryphon* has received in many months. To those undergraduates or members of the staff in the Technological and Science Faculties who have been contemplating a step similar to Mr. England's, we hope that his action may lend courage and resolve. We feel that *The Gryphon* should be exactly what the second line of the contents page says it is: the Leeds University journal. It is not just a literary review, although it must, of course, fulfil that function too. And we say "undergraduates and members of staff" advisedly, for we think that the most important consideration is not *who* says a thing, but simply *what* is said.

Our chief regret is that this new element in the make-up of *The Gryphon* could not have been introduced during the editorial lifetime of Nick Hodges, whose declared policy and constant appeals to encourage such contributions and so to broaden *The Gryphon's* literary and artistic compass have done much to promote the results which we hope it will be our privilege to continue to offer. We should like to express our—and we feel also the University's—appreciation for what Mr. Hodges has done during his trick at *The Gryphon's* helm to maintain the standard of literary production, an editorial duty rarely easy and almost always thankless. For the work he has done and the standards he has upheld, we say—thanks!

What, then, do the new editors have to offer? We suggest that perhaps it is nothing very new, nothing that has not been proposed before. But we want you to know clearly what it is. We see *The Gryphon* as something like a mirror of the University. Our job is to hold up that mirror and, to the best of our ability, to keep its surface polished. Now and then we shall stand in front of it, too, but we neither can nor want to be the only reflections visible in it. What you see there will largely depend on you. If you want to see in it something besides lust and death and decay, you must help us put it there. If you want to see something besides the end of man, something of hope, something of faith, even, *you* must hope, *you* must believe. And you must write. It is easier to switch on the B.B.C. or to sit in the Tatler or to read *Picture Post*, than to sit down with a pencil or typewriter and sweat. The choice is yours, but the decision may count for more than you think.

The Gryphon will be what you, with the help we can give, are willing to produce. We offer you this: we offer you an image of yourselves.

J. England

ON THE POSSIBLE NATURE OF EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIFE

THE PROBLEM CAN BE APPROACHED in two ways:—
I (a) analytically; (b) comparatively.

(a) ANALYTICALLY. There are ninety-eight elements, or possibly one or two more. Some of them are radioactive. All beings must be formed from these, and the laws governing them (at least, the physiological and anatomical aspects of them), are the ordinary chemical and physical laws governing matter. As far as we know, beings can only become conscious, when their organisms are complex. Thus, from our fundamental knowledge of Chemistry, we see that carbon is very probably *always* involved, because of its ability to form long chains of atoms, and consequently the complex molecules that are necessary for life. Silicon could possibly be used as a substitute, but it seems improbable, under *any* circumstances, that the molecules it forms would be stable and large enough to form a basis for conscious or highly-developed life. Similarly, we know of other active elements, besides the carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorus, that are the main constituents of terrestrial life, *e.g.*, chlorine, and it seems possible that some low form of life, on a planet having an atmosphere of chlorine, could breathe chlorine in place of our oxygen. But it does not seem very probable that a *complex* life-form could breathe chlorine—from our knowledge of the Chemistry of chlorine. Another point is that oxygen is fairly certain to exist wherever in the Universe chlorine exists, and emerging life-forms are likely to choose oxygen *preferentially* as their medium of breathing. Thus, it seems likely that the materials of life are, fairly universally, the C, H, O, N, S, P, of terrestrial life. It seems quite possible that *some* life-forms need not breathe at all; they could obtain all the necessary substances for body-building and energy-production simply from food which is eaten, or sucked from the soil, or waters of a sea, in the case of plant-life. But it does not seem likely that any life-form could survive without *food*, which is needed (a) for growth, and (b) to supply energy. It is inconceivable, for several reasons, that an animal or plant can exist which does not grow at all, from the first moment of its birth, to its death. The "food" of alien life, of course, may be very different from the kinds known on Earth, but if it is required for growth, and the being is, (as was assumed to be likely), composed of C, H, O, N, S, P, the food will quite probably consist of plants, and (or) animals—the best sources of the required elements.

It would be a *very* complex organism that synthesised its body-materials from the naturally occurring elements or minerals, of a planet. There is, however, a further possibility that does not seem to have been considered previously by anyone—the possibility that an organism could live upon *pure* energy (in its various forms, heat, light, electricity, sound, etc.), not involving the chemical energy of foods and inhaled gases. It could perhaps, in some way, utilise the heat and light of a planet's-interior, or of suns and celestial objects—the temperature difference between objects in light and shadow—the energy of lightning—the constant supply of energy given by radioactive substances, etc. It could be “charged” and “discharged” like an accumulator, of electricity, from the various natural sources—it could contain radioactive or electricity-producing substances *within* itself, or live “parasitically” upon natural sources.

(b) COMPARATIVELY. We know of many different kinds of life on Earth, not only amongst existing life, but also the kinds long-since extinct. We know of fishes, reptiles, birds, insects, bipeds, quadrupeds—the many different kinds of plant-life, etc. From our knowledge of these, we can “extrapolate,” as it were, and predict the nature of alien life. With a sufficiently active imagination, we can imagine creatures that do not *walk* like terrestrial animals, but propel themselves by *rotating* like a wheel, e.g., on three or more rotating legs, or by even more fantastic methods. The comparative method is most frequently employed by Science-Fiction story writers, in picturing alien creatures; we read mainly of humanoid, biped creatures, of intelligence approximating to that of Man, but also, occasionally, of octopus-like, beetle-like, caterpillar-like, etc., creatures of similar intelligence. We read of planets themselves, that are alive, and of immaterial beings consisting of pure mind. Some ideas are fantastic, some not. It is conceivable that some forms of extra-terrestrial life might have fewer, or even *more* than five senses, and the idea of a highly-developed telepathic sense is sometimes used in Science-Fiction. I think it is quite possible that some forms of extra-terrestrial life *will* have telepathic powers to a high degree—this includes both higher *and* lower animals. I do not think the evidence for PK and ESP is very strong, at the present time, but if the latter *do* exist, it is quite probable that some beings possess them to a greater extent than human-beings.

THE FLOWERS OF DISCONTENT

—or, Leaves from my Commonplace Book.

Dedicated to the ever-angelic memory of that divinest of Ronalds, to that dearest of private jokers and my own spiritual father in Heaven, the one and only—heavenly, heavenly (oh!)—Firbank.



Poem. I take pleasure in entitling “Poem” something which, apparently, is prose. It is my only protection against the poet-bishops of our blatantly broadcast age (and they are many), who, in utterly weary self-hafflements and artfully-arranged, masochistic self-murders, award the title “Poem” to anything which apparently is *not* prose. But only apparently.



Jeune Homme Caressant sa Chimère . . . The only luxury possible to a poor man is to let his hair grow long.

In the same way, we who think we are so starved of physical satisfactions forget the intense physical pleasure that lies in speech. How all the body works towards it! And so I feel a poem is not written until it is read aloud, when it becomes at least two things—a poem, and an opportunity for enjoying pure physical sensation.

One two three four five six seven eight nine ten eleven.



An army marches on its sexual organs.



A Letter to the Painter, Francis Bacon. Francis, dear friend, I write to you in faroff, fairy Monte Carlo, where I imagine your blanched, pussy face with its pale-violet hair and tiny mouth leaning green-lit over the brass rails of the tables, and silently screaming *rien ne va plus*.

But in *this* letter I wanted to tell you once more how right I think you are to put the personages of your pictures sometimes in glass cases. (Oh! those *musées de province*, with their graveyards of *vitrines*, that seem always to have been dusted *only the day before!*) Because it puts us in a glass case too. There is that merciful “communion in separation” which comes also from the presence of that brass rail painted in the foreground of Graham Sutherland’s “Crucifixion.” It is the ever-fresh joke about the Zoo. We are all behind bars. But our eyes, alas, stop at nothing.

And so whenever I see a face before me, I am assailed by vertigo. Why have all those meaningless features been brought together, in a fixed order that threatens to fly apart at any minute? I think, why is that nose not in that man’s forehead, and why does he not have a large eye, with lashes working like fingers, where his chin is? Why is that adolescent not covered with arched eyebrows, thick and black and

meeting over the bridges of invisible noses? Why should that poor woman's teeth be where they are, and not in her own throat? And that girl be-bopping with me in a low ballroom—why are her breasts in the calves of her legs?

Life is terrible, terrible, terrible! It is like walking down Pea Street and finding no peas. I can never forgive Nature for being what She is. Take this example—

The other day I was slicing a new loaf with my knife-finger, and I found a hard-boiled egg at the centre. When I opened the hard-boiled egg, a little blue mouse struggled out of the warm, damp yolk, and walked with difficulty away. How can Nature be so cruel? Or was it an example of my own spontaneous magic? I suppose only you, Francis, can tell me why one of my beautiful hands turned into a book whose pages were unnumbered feathers. My enemies tell me, watching me from the dark doorways of Coburg Street, that it is a pre-natal memory of a Picasso *Liseuse*. Ha!

Eliot getting involved in that woman's teeth is a very convincing piece of literary self-hallucination; but I'm sure such a fundamentally respectable man, always trailing safely in the rear of what was once *any* avant-garde "movement," would never have let himself really experience such an individual sensation. No, it is a mere un-American *blague*, like his "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," a *killingly* funny book which would never have been noticed, or even published, if it had been written by anyone else. But then I loathe funny books, and I've never dared read *Pickwick*, for I'm sure it would corpse me.

But oh! those people in bars, business executives who seem to swallow me *wholesale* in the shark's maws of their cheapening eyes, and then, finding me unsaleable, regurgitate me in a look of uncontrollable suspicion! My fellow creatures! Oh, why was I born with a different face? As Blake our brother in some jewelled heaven of his own once wrote: and he knew what he was talking about. He talked through his beard, but to some effect.

It is those people, *the others*, with whom one feels a glass case to be desirable. For if, in our fervent imaginations, we did not put that screen around them, they would never survive the magical powers of that only weapon we possess, our gentle, unspoken hatred, spoken inwardly like the incantation of a very private poem.

Then, we, too, would be murderers. And that would never do, for we should never be found out.



A Dull Dream. Last night I dreamed I had the usual three nipples, but they all seemed slightly out of place.



Magic. Fortunately, I am sometimes able to turn the leaden point of this pencil to indiarubber, and it rubs out my words before I write them.

Oh! Oh! that long, long, pale, money-laden hand with the rich green fingernails and loose, scented rings, that waves to me sometimes out of the half-opened drawer in the massive old oak dresser, that emerges from a crystal vase, holding a bunch of *immortelles* by their blood-dripping stems; or that now and then, at noon, beckons from between the closed curtains of my tapered room! *Oh!* That hand! It always looks as if it ought to have five fingers, but it never does! *Oh!*

Oh! then those four disembodied hands, wearing their bracelets of carved nutmegs and filigree silver links and an occasional loose diamond that goes *toc-toc* against the wrist-bone! *Oh!* How they rattle off their *Mozart Sonatas for Four Hands!* How they dash up and down after scales and Czerny and "The Robin's Return." *Oh!* that arpeggio—as practised and fluent as an old nun crossing herself. "Her Very First Waltz"! "The Maiden's Prayer!" "In a Monastery Garden!" "The Sleigh Ride," by Theo Bonheur, with special bells attached to the thumbs! Entrancing! *Oh!*

Oh! I must tell you, my grand piano is large and white, with very yellow keys. I lay my wreath of lilies and odontoglossoms on it every day. *Adieu! Oh!*



All the Fun of the Fair. I have laced my high-heeled boots up to my wading thighs, and stride through the vicarage garden-fête cracking my long, thrilling whip, injuring a number of people rather badly. Fortunately, they are so stupid they all think I am "just part of the show." Which of course I am.



A Marie Laurencin. (The picture speaks). Laid under a pink, pink parasol in the piled-up garden of a country summer, my slim, boyish body, all naked to the village sun, is brown as honey, my hair pale-golden as the spire of a gentleman-farmer's private chapel, my nipples delicately rouged, like dog-roses, and my ink-stained eyes murmurous as dark anemones.

Under the pink, pink, pink parasol of the country sky.



This Day. There was a distant clap of thunder out of a clear and sunny sky. No lightning. You could hear the whole village pause in the hot afternoon and listen, just as two men hoeing in a vast field will stop a moment as the daily train goes by, and tell each other, leaning on their hoes: "It's three o'clock."

But this thunder told no hour, no minute. It held both centuries and seconds, but it told no time.

Unless, as we perhaps all secretly thought, it was the crack of doom.



Peusée philosopho-lyrique. At evening, a small tree casts a great shadow over this ancestral house. Maybe the night itself is the

shadow of one leaf of one tree whose roots are very securely held in what we imagine must be infinity.



Quasi-valse : Rarely have I seen anything *quite* so sinister as this pretty young milkmaid with her three-legged stool, and wearing a black patch over her *left* eye.



Goethe in Glamorganshire. This great black dog that lollops round the kitchen-garden with its long wet tongue dangling like a piece of scarlet flannel . . . *whose* can it be? In a tiny village like this, the slightest event is sufficient to occupy *hours* of the most delicious speculation.

But this dog! There it goes again, with its mad-looking grin, its alarming sideways canter, and eyes that are all blood!

Now I know! I think I must be a very special sort of Faust, and this must be my very special poodle, come to warn me about something. Whatever *can* it be? I do hope and pray nothing violent, like that day when I was run over by a tractor, down in the bluebell woods.



Final Thoughts about Life. Genius is an infinite capacity for catching trains.

And (hypocrite lecturer)

The greatest joy in life is to do good by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.

JAMES RONALD
FIRBANK-KIRKUP

Charles Kingham

PIPES AND APPLE-PIE

DURING RECENT YEARS so many novels and stories have been written wherein the chief interest has lain in character, in dialogue, in psychological states, that so well-known a writer as Somerset Maugham has been moved to call for a greater respect to be paid to situation and plot. He feels that the latter, especially, has been too much neglected, and, in his own short stories in particular, has tried to remedy this defect. This is not to say that he disregards characterisation altogether, or that he pays no regard to the often erratic motivations prompting humanity. Indeed, his own novels prove the reverse; and though in his short stories almost all the attention is centred on plot rather than on psychology, the characters being fixed at the outset, this is a virtue rather than a vice. It is an impossibility for character to be

developed properly in a short story; this is inherent in the form; by its very shortness, and the necessity for compression of action and concomitant dialogue, too much time cannot be devoted to following out mental processes. All Mr. Maugham does, and does with almost unflinching accuracy, is judge how a given character would proceed in certain given circumstances; he gives the conclusion of the process and omits the steps leading to it. His stories therefore are compact and economical. Too many of our younger writers to-day are diffuse, leisurely and loose in their short-story construction, so that their stories either become short psychological novels or tail off very disappointingly. The validity of Maugham's plea, so far as the short story is concerned, is so obvious that no further stress need be laid upon it.

When we come to relate this plea to the novel, however, its reason is less apparent. Is its maker seeking merely a better balance of mental and external action, of thoughts and events, or could it be that he contemplates a return to the Edwardian hey-day of the author as objective observer, arbitrarily delineating his characters and then pushing the action along? If the first, well and good; any work of art should have balance, and it is quite possible to make out a case that during the last twenty-five years or so too much attention has been paid to the thoughts and ideals of personages in novels and too little to their actions and the results thereof. But if he believes in the necessity of a certain retrogression in method, can we support him? Since Henry James, the practice of telling a story as seen through the eyes of the chief character has slowly become more widespread. All those novelists who to-day are best thought of by the critics use this method almost exclusively—they tell only so much as could be observed by their one or two protagonists, and comment only as those persons could have done. But popular demand for that kind of story is not large; Ivy Compton-Burnett and Henry Green are not best-sellers, whilst A. J. Cronin and J. B. Priestley are. The reading public seems to prefer the older form—perhaps it is simply that public opinion in books, as in everything else, is slow to change; but perhaps the older method has certain advantages, especially as practised by Mr. Priestley and to some extent by Mr. Maugham himself.

Of these advantages, probably the chief is pace. There can be no denying that introspection by the individual characters tends to slow down the action of a story, and it is of no use to say that in fact long thought must often precede action. It may be true, but most readers are not interested in other people's thought-processes, not even if the other people concerned are in a book—least of all, perhaps, then. They want narration of events—what happens to people grips their interest, not what the people think. The reasons for this preference may be that their ordinary lives are so very monotonous that they like to live a vicariously eventful existence, or that they simply cannot be bothered

to follow a train of thought, or both; or a good many other reasons, in which tabloid newspapers might figure largely. Whatever they are, they have cogency; hence the desire for a swift-moving story. Bound up with pace, in this Priestley ritual of the novel, is the question of surface attraction, of ease in presentation. There is a glitter, an engaging flashiness about the novels of Mr. Priestley which draws readers irresistibly. He skims the surface of his world with a carefree abandon, scattering conversational crystal drops on all sides. This is an effect very difficult of attainment in a psychological novel. Ivy Compton-Burnett's dialogues may be illuminating, but they do not sparkle—Priestley's do; if not with wit, at least with the effect of cheerfulness and reality. His characters speak as one imagines normal persons—one's friends perhaps—speaking; whereas with Henry Green, for instance, there is often an air of slight unreality surrounding his allusive conversations. That these unreal-sounding dialogues may be more effective and accurate in conveying thought and emotion is irrelevant; they say more, but they sound odd, and are therefore frequently avoided.

There are times, of course, when J. B. Priestley forgoes the real for the deliberately unreal, or rather forsakes the life-size for the deliberately larger than life. Dickens did the same; yet one meets characters very like those unreal ones quite frequently. It is this faculty of picking on the visibly odd, rather than on the outwardly normal and inwardly warped, that many of our younger novelists lack. Priestley might be called the Dickens of our day—he has the same social conscience, though perhaps not the same opportunities to display it; he tends towards the occasional purple patch in his writing; and his novels are just about as far from real life as those of Dickens—that is, just on the verge of the credible, and made so by the author's skill. Best of all, like Dickens, he surrounds all his major characters and most of his minor ones with a rich atmospheric crust, like the apple is surrounded in the pie. Crust and apple go together, and, after the cooking, the apples taste sour without the crust.

Robustness and vitality are characteristics of Mr. Priestley's writing—the difference between his characters and those of Henry Green is the difference between Laertes and Hamlet. And I feel that most readers, in their novels, would sooner meet the former than the latter character—the swashbuckler rather than the introvert. It makes a better story; a fact which John Buchan noted and made use of. People like their heroes to be strong, physically as well as mentally; or if not strong, at least solid. But there is too frequently an ethereal quality about Mr. Green's characters which, in spite of their indulgence in the human weaknesses of sex and drink, tends to repel rather than fascinate. Their feet are not on the ground because their heads are too far in the clouds, and their sin is without savour. Mr. Priestley's characters are often more virtuous than they might be expected to be, but at least

they enjoy life. It is a strange thing, in connection with this question of the physical and mental strength of heroes and novels, that Mr. Rafael Sabatini's novels almost all contain one single type of hero. Indeed, I cannot at the moment remember one where the hero is not a tall, lean, cultured man of the world of perhaps forty, tolerant, occasionally cynical, always ready with either tongue or sword, and inevitably loving a pure and virtuous young woman and being reclaimed by her from near-vicious courses. Yet Sabatini's books sold steadily and well. True, he had usually the advantage of a historical setting, but nevertheless the unreality of his heroes, and their similarity to each other, is dismaying.

It seems, then, that the general reader wants pace, sparkle, robustness, and is not so much concerned with development of character as with development of plot and action. Whether the public is right in its estimate of what is best in the novel is debatable, but it might in any case be possible to strike a balance between the two extremes of Miss Compton-Burnett and Mr. Priestley. Both are masters of the language (we must not forget that Priestley* can, when he chooses, write prose as clean and accurate as the purist could wish) but they use it for different purposes. Somerset Maugham probably had this balance in mind when he called for more attention to plot. P. H. Newby, in "A Journey to the Interior," and "The Young May Moon," seems to have tried, with considerable success, to achieve it—it might make the average reader more responsive to individual psychology in the novel if more writers tried the pipe instead of the cigarette, or Mr. Priestley's apple-pie instead of Mr. Green's soufflé.

Stanley Ellis

MENACE

THE TICKER TAPES in the Press Rooms were churning forth their usual yards of news, but the papers were on the nearest street corners and news editors were taking a well deserved rest from their labours. Quite suddenly through the office of the "News" a peal of mad laughter rang. At the tape stood a junior office boy, with a well-known fantastic turn of mind. His shout stopped the few people still working and when they read what he saw his laughter became theirs. The Statue of Liberty in New York harbour was coming to life, said the tape. Such a fantastic Gothic idea coming from the usually trusted tape caused speculation as to who was "playing silly bees" in the junior's words.

The furore died and folk drifted back to their desks but a frantic telephone call from Lord Shepley, the owner, galvanised all into action—THE NEWS WAS TRUE.

Swiftly the tale formed itself in the minds of the frantic newsmen, loth to accept such stupidity, but as the messages came in they had to believe; in the atomic age which believed in mesons and neutrons but disbelieved in ghosts and the supernatural, though they could see neither, the supernatural was asserting itself. The entrances to the great statue had amazingly sealed up overnight and the connection of the feet with the base had been severed, the facial expression had altered and the eyes were moving. This was the total effect so far, but New York was in a panic; Liberty was alive in their own city. Recently built atomic shelters were crowded with people certain that the monster would walk about the city knocking down buildings and trampling men underfoot. Another and bolder section of the population lined the waterfront to watch the slight movements of the huge figure.

Acc reporters, still laughing at the credulousness of their own superiors, set out on wild flights across the Atlantic to sift the truth of the matter, and when they arrived their messages swelled the number of those transmitted to England and the world giving the great and puzzling news. A party of Marines set up batteries on the New York waterfront with guns trained on Liberty to shatter the huge mass in case of hostile movement, but the gigantic woman slowly turned her head, cast a sorrowful look full of meaning behind her and plunged ahead into the Atlantic. To all it appeared that Liberty had left the States; she was off to some new home.

The massive figure ploughed across the Ocean and long before the startled reporters could reach their own capital the monstrous woman was reported in the Thames Estuary. A normally sleepy War Office had made an effort though; guns were trained on the beast as she drew near to the land, and although no shots were fired, observation planes buzzed overhead reporting the movements of this strange invader. However, she did not come to the shore, for as soon as she drew near to the land Liberty could see the strength ranged against her, and she retired to the sea. With a new day the monster was reported to have landed on the Continent of Europe at some isolated and undefended spot, and though the people of the country turned out to greet this new invader with curious and friendly greeting they were ordered by their Governments to remain indoors, and to take shelter from the horror which was to strike at them. Everywhere armies were mobilised frantically, quicker than ever before, to meet this strange menace. The lone, huge, robed statue now imbued with the spirit of Galatea, strode on, visiting in turn the countries of Western Europe. But everywhere the welcome was the same: this terrible thing seeking exile from America was shunned and dreaded by all for the damage she might do.

United with the other nations of the world as never before, the "Iron Curtain" countries prepared to resist entry by this demon. Quietly, and without doing any material damage to property, Liberty appeared with sudden rapidity within a few miles of Moscow. But the

efficiency of the Soviets did not fail them now, and the American statue was greeted with her first actual gunfire from the thoroughly frightened yet bold soldiery. She appeared to suffer no harm, but the expression on her face was one of greater sadness than ever before.

Followed at a distance by her attendant horde of buzzing aircraft carrying the reporters of fifty countries and warplanes equipped with atomic weapons supplied by all countries, Liberty, still appearing to carry on a search for something which no-one could explain, visited the countries of the world. East and West were all alike; the people were warned by their discerning Governments of the danger which would most certainly arise if she were welcomed or shown any friendly sign, and the armies were mobilised and drawn up beside her path. Her pilgrimage seemed pointless to the watchers, for she seemed to avoid damaging even those most hostile to her. However, this obvious dissimulation deceived none of the statesmen and professional warriors, and she was treated everywhere with hostility, suspicion, and the threat of complete destruction. The world tired of its wonder soon, and from the front pages the wanderings of the exile were relegated to short reports in odd corners of the papers.

The wanderings lasted three weeks, but one morning the front pages of the great dailies were filled with the last puzzled mention of the grey terror; secretly and in the night the monstrous creation had returned to its base in the harbour of New York. There stood the cold figure, with expressionless face, offering nothing to the world, looking at the Atlantic, but strangely holding no longer the great blazing torch which had been the harbour beacon. Where in its travels the torch had been dropped was never discovered.

Gerald Robinson

MADRIGAL

From foam flecked seeth of birth
 emerge
 the skin blind child
 blind
 launched on a wet scream
 swan-down the shining stream
 down dreams of swans
 preen
 with brazen beaks their bleeding breasts
 of stained swan down
 through willow hands of willow
 willow dark
 leaving only dreams
 of drifting swan down

Robin Skelton

DISCOVERY

The stones were round where he picked them,
 and the shells sharp-edged,
 the tide a slip of lace far out across the sands,
 golden as youth in the summer by the cote d'azur,
 and hard as the thighs of a "young girls" running,
 dancing, and laughing in sunlight before their shadows.

The time was noon when he picked them,
 and the sky clear,
 the mountain a purple mystery across the meadows,
 vague as the words before sleep in the arms of lovers,
 and calm as the eyes of young boys waking,
 silent and empty to sunlight upon their faces,

the future cool as a pigeon's egg and smooth,
 the time to come as graceful as the turn
 of gull down sand dunes, and the morning rounded
 in its promise as a pigeon's egg.

Where he found them the pools were deep
 and the rock
 crimson and green with weed, and silvered by snails,
 and veined with ochre, and round ;
 and the pools were dark,
 where the wide lipped wounds of anemones
 silently ached,
 and the hesitant claw of the hermit
 wrinkled the sand,
 and the small unknowing minnows moved like notes
 of music through the wires of drifting tendrils :

and as he stooped before the world of waters,
 hollowed in rock, as close curved in the palm
 of noonday as the penny of a child
 gazing with fearful awe at the Future's Entrance
 and the tall doorman with the sand moustache
 and eyes of sky in thunder,
 suddenly
 the shapes came into focus and he saw them,
 defined in their several ways by the stillness,
 for the first time,
 and above the round stones where he picked them
 the sun was highest,
 and all his years smooth and deep as pools.

W. A. Hodges

TRIPTYCH

- I. This, out of all time, should have been our horoscope
with the wind a brown blade, and the long stone under us
older than earthquakes and the wetness of dead leaves,
and the slope's hard mystery
the harsh-drawn coupling of breath with breath,
the incessant stretch and thrust
of long-boned thigh's integument.
What could we do which was not must
but for fear,
not of each other, or death,
the querulous gibing of the skeletal conscience,
or soft, dry tread of ghosts across our pavements,
but of the time which lay beyond time—
the following minute
in which the stars might change, or our new meteor
burn out across the orbits of our midnight.
- II. This, out of time, the mind's recurring decimal
which now makes time for me, the laboured measure
of minds obsessed with brilliance, hating all the ends
which brilliance serves, knowing the love which leaps
in all the caverned vortices of blood,
and from the sudden eyes' electric splendours,
momentarily transforming them with purifying blindness,
blades out its lightnings, searing the retina's purple,
melting, at the heart's conditional centre
the icy splinter of the dialectic.
- III. No magic in that which we could grasp
with anxious hands—the ebbing sands
which fingers spill in patterns for clairvoyance
across the deserts of imagination,
seeing, beyond thought, at the thought's cessation,
words, having once grown great, grow impotent,
their old echoes, fading, no longer relevant,
whispering in dusty galleries of context.
This, out of all time, should have been our horoscope,
with the brown wind, and the long stone under us,
that in the coupling of breath with breath
my kiss upon your mouth should breed eternities,
and gravid time grow deeper for our mystery.

Ralph Soderberg

THE APPRENTICE JESTER

"IT'S NOT TOUGH, KID," said Knipes. "If things start dragging, I'll give you a boff with the bladder. Happy Boy loves that—he's a sucker for schmalz."

Appin heard this reference to the King with some dismay. His previous sixteen years of life had passed on a farm, where Uncle Knipes was only a gem-encrusted legend, and where the King was the object of deep bucolic reverence fostered by the many well-meant but imperfectly staged ceremonies on national holidays, and by the invocations of the village schoolmaster, whose whole life was a struggle to maintain established authority at a properly elevated level. Three days ago had exploded the news that he, Appin, would return to the court with his uncle and become his apprentice. Uncle Knipes had dressed with sober distinction on his short visit to Hoop Ap Gup, and his manner was ambassadorial. Appin's idea of his job was that it combined sport and wit in a way proper to the entertainment of a great king. He had often heard that the jester was the wisest and truest man at court. Appin knew the perils of kingship, the flattery and pride which go hand in hand to distract the mighty from their duties. The jester's privileged position should be used to touch home for the public good. Uncle Knipes' air supported this view in every respect; he gave the jester's personality a tone in which philosophy and diplomacy blended with nice precision.

At the moment, the philosopher-diplomat sat peering into a flagon of strong ale with an expression of fixed melancholy on what could be seen of his face. An outrageously large pair of lavender pantaloons came half-way down his skinny shanks, below which hung his bare feet, painted blue except for one big toe which glowed crimson. Over his inadequate superstructure wrinkled a tight-fitting yellow jersey, full of holes and patches in various violent shades. A wild red burlap wig gave him the look of a man peering out of a thick bush, and painted spectacles, artificial green moustache, and several blacked-out teeth completed the destruction of his dignity.

Appin himself was clad simply in short dogskin breeches and a visor which resembled a drunken bulldog. Around his neck was a large collar from which a rope trailed to the hand of Uncle Knipes. He sat in goose-flesh and doubt, wondering in what subtle way these costumes were to entertain the august monarch. The sounds from the Great Hall on the

other side of the door to the room in which they waited were also puzzling to the ingenious youth. A roar of violent anger had broken out and a series of crashes shook the solid oak door visibly.

Suddenly it burst open, and the two jugglers who had just gone in careened through it, wildeyed and gathering speed. Behind them a rain of dogs, big and little, poured, barking and foaming, urged on by fruity howling from the Hall. The jugglers disappeared, and silence gradually fell. The hush was broken only by an audible gurgling, followed by a sovereign belch. Several toadying burps echoed respectfully.

"Knipes!" roared the voice which had been producing the fruity howls.

The head of a beady-eyed page of thirteen, with the face of a man of sixty, appeared at the door.

"Psst!" this utensil said. "Get it rolling!"

Knipes bounded through the door, blowing a toy hunting horn and waving a toy spear at a toy pig pushed on the end of a long handle. Appin, immobilised with consternation, suddenly found himself jerked from his bench and dragged choking behind his uncle. He was supposed to have been frolicking ahead of Knipes, yelping, and harassing the pig. Instead he bounced horizontally along the floor with the unhappy conviction that he was being hanged.

King Murval was convulsed with raucous mirth at the sight.

"You've a hang-dog look about you, boy," he gasped.

Appin was fighting to undo his collar and breathe, but found time to wonder at this considerate humour. Knipes was still pulling at him to prolong the buffoonery, and he became convinced that his uncle's last apprentice had perished in the line of duty. His tongue protuded to his knees, he felt, and his eyes bulged like the village idiot's. Knipes and the rest of the court were epileptic with joy at the King's wit.

"Ah, Majesty," choked the jester, "I've brought you another loyal hind to dog your footsteps. He asks only a place in the Royal kennels and an occasional bone, and the exalted privilege of licking Your Majesty's boots. He is one of idiot twins—his brother was too intelligent to jest in Your Majesty's presence. He is my apprentice—I hope to teach him sense enough to appreciate Your Majesty's humour. He is already, you see, pop-eyed with delight."

"Pop-identical twinstruction, eh, Knipes?" burred Murval.

The court erupted again while Appin continued to struggle. His efforts to escape were not helped by a series of clouts Knipes was administering with the bladder. Murval was in high spirits.

Appin's first look at him, once he had escaped the noose, was not reassuring. The King's toad-like body supported a fabulous collection

of royal robes with a sloppy lack of distinction which made him resemble Appin's idea of the royal laundry bag. Atop the glittering finery sat the head of a pig; a glistening pate bore a huge crown which only the elephantine royal ears prevented from descending onto the royal shoulders. His unshaven jowls quaked and wobbled with porcine delight. He lounged in a litter of crystal goblets and decanters, half-consumed fowl and a miscellany of pork-chops.

Beside him sat Queen Gladys. Her vacuous face showed the remains of a coarse beauty, which life with Murval had overcast with sullen lines and straggling blond hairs. Her dress, richly brocaded with goats and greenery, revealed a considerable portion of the royal domain. Appin noticed that her eyes were measuring his youthful figure with a calculation that would have done credit to the Royal Surveyor. He blushed. She slowly picked up a pork-chop and fixed carnivorous teeth in it, while an abstract slyness came into her unblinking gaze.

Meanwhile, the King's merriment had relaxed into an expansive discourse.

"... and my ancestors, King Arthur, St. John the Divine, Pope Leo X and Socrates, didn't mean a thing—had to fight my way to the throne by meself. No respect for blood or family—had to take power like a dog fighting bears, slashing and tearing..."

Appin knew that the King would be lucky if he could trace his ancestry back to his father, and he thought this a good opportunity to offer that independent wit for which Kings often stand need, welcome, in fact, to give them the salutary sensibility which the rest of the court cannot afford to provide. Uncle Knipes had told him to keep his yap shut, but he had a vision of how pleased his relative would be at his success. He would show the King that Appin could serve him well. He cleared his throat, bounded up to the throne, and with a bold air, spoke.

"It appears that Your Majesty's Burke is worse than his bite."

The King's face hardened. The court gasped. Hundreds of sodden and cynical eyes transfixed the luckless apprentice. Appin was puzzled; he hadn't thought it was that good. To liven up the shocked silence, which he attributed to the novelty of his first speech, he pulled the bladder from Knipes' nerveless hands and began to beat him smartly with it. Knipes' face was white; the King's, Appin unhappily noted, was a rich royal purple. After several unsuccessful croakings, Murval managed a sort of snarling roar.

"Look, wise boy, when I want your opinion about my ancestors I'll send down to the dungeon and get it, written in what's left of your blood!!"

This preceded a flow of abuse which Appin, country boy that he was, could only vaguely relate to reality. For that matter, he could not

convince himself that this whole episode was connected in any way with himself, his ideas, or his past life. It was only dreadfully clear that it involved the future. He received the impression that he was, after a bath in boiling oil, to furnish a hot supper for the King's more faithful dogs. He was aware that a few words of flattery, given in explanation of and apology for his loyal candour, were called for urgently, but the youth's powers of invention were unfortunately limited by sincerity.

"Majesty—M-M-Majesty—" Knipes was stammering, "the boy meant no harm by his remark—he didn't even know you had a father—I mean—"

At this helpful intercession Appin's delusions concerning his uncle's diplomacy joined his other ideals. He began to feel that he ought to spend the next sixteen years, which promised to be full of opportunity for analysis, unlearning all that he had learned in the first sixteen. Murval was beckoning to his guards—exhorting them to remove the apprentice jester to the stinking depths of Hell—urgently prescribing a number of lurid remedies for the incurable blight of his presence—imprecating the niggling amount of time which must elapse before the boy could arrive on the rack—when suddenly the impact of an immense chicken leg on his shoulder distracted him. This wand was in the hand of Queen Gladys; with Murval muffled for the instant, the Hall quieted.

"Honey Bun," drawled the Queen in an insinuating voice, "Don't get worked up. Remember your position. This poor little man only meant to tell you how much he admires your courage. Look at him, he's trembling all over his little body, the dear. You fricasseed the last one in goose grease; now show how magnanimous you can be, and the whole country will applaud your mercy."

Murval was helpless under the logical spell of his Queen.

"Yeah—I guess you're right, baby. A little good publicity don't hurt; besides, the jerk's a jerk, any jerk can see that. He's yours."

The court set up a great cry of jubilation at this signal generosity, and Knipes began to sing, in a quavering voice, a little improvised song about "Murval the Marvel of Mercy," while dancing an ecstatic minuet with the toy pig. Then he pushed Appin through the door and into the little room, while the voice of the sovereign was heard mumbling coy protests that "it wasn't nothing—any great and good king could of done the same."

Knipes first kicked Appin, then drained his flagon with trembling hands and collapsed into his chair, and broke into a quavering harangue.

"I told you to shut up, you little rat. If the Queen hadn't spoken up we were both in a fair way to fry. Your father always was a little dim, but if I'd known he'd turned out a brainless pudding like you I'd've arranged to have him deported. What a dope I was to go to Hoop Ap Cup in the first place . . ."

Appin sat dully on his bench as Uncle Knipes rambled hysterically on. He felt muddy inside ; his brain put out little groping hands to fumble for some concrete, stable fact in a whirling world. He had had his chance, and had failed, and the Hoop Ap Gup Secondary Ancient School would rejoice, and he was lucky to be alive, and things weren't what he had thought, not anywhere like, and—

At the door appeared the wizened attendant who had beckoned them to the slaughter before. He had news for Appin.

"Pick 'em up, Abelard. The Queen wants to see you in her chambers."

Knipes looked up at this with a gleam in his badly-focusing eyes.

"Now get this, you lump. With your luck, you'll be a Duke inside five-six months, especially if the Queen really goes for you. You're on the inside track—but for Gozsake keep your mouth shut and your eyes open!"

Appin had a premonition that he would keep his eyes shut, but he could not deny his fate. He had become part of the court, and he had much to learn that he didn't hunger for ; he wished he were back ploughing on the farm ; he wished he had been a worse scholar and had failed the H.A.G. Secondary Ancient School exams. and had been put to work. Where his mind had formerly been full of nothing more than hope and deviltry, it now swarmed with dour premonition and regret for an innocence that although not yet lost was obviously soon to go. Slowly he got to his feet and walked over to Uncle Knipes.

"Uncle Knipes," he said mournfully, "here's your bladder."

The jester ignored him.

Appin took the drunken bulldog from his head and put on his shirt. Then he followed the page-boy into the castle, down the long cold gloomy passages, through the low archways, into the shadows and Life.

W. A. Hodges

DOORWAY

AN OPENING DOOR and the remembered instant shrinks all space into a single singing wire strung out where thoughts and winds cannot travel, still thin overtones across the compressions and rarefactions of remembered experience. Why men make poems and the significance of snow is here known only to the wordless child whose fingers freeze in a whiteness more white than the veils of his winter's breath floating out across the white winds of the world. An opening door . . .

. . . and the remembered scent of chrysanthemums harsh-hung in rooms and all the apples smelling in the cupboards and books and books and canvas and old paintings leaning dusty against the wainscotting and the footfall tentative muffles stirs motes fallen from forgotten sunshafts seen through cracks in rotting shutters and the light . . .

... dances on the ceiling where the trembling surface in the teacup straw coloured catches and reflects dances on the whitewash clean rings reflections ripples from the bottoms of streams caddis worms and long leeches waterworms over clean clean gravel and the grit through the clear water presses sharp into the feet and the ripples are rings reflecting from the surface in the cup straw coloured on the white ceiling and the hay . . .

... outside smelling with strawberries and cream and comb honey and spring onions eaten together in the evenings in vicarage gardens. Red cassock and starched ruff and the lace and the candles in the choir stalls guttering tallis oh lord make speed to . . .

... and the Doctor tall and bowed like Samuel Johnson with the long swinging arm swish swish down the aisle swish swish and the secret passages behind the panelling to the royal box and the ghost of catherine catherine catherine crying in the long gallery where the writing on the wall is in latin and the horn room where adam and eve are in a tapestry doing youknowwhat standing up with nothing on and all the walls are hung with antlers and tapestries but only this one with anything in it to show anybody and the opening door is a burst of amen and the candles guttering in the choir stalls are like faces and the cherubim in the cupolas up there in the roof move and grin and change their faces as the candles . . .

... go out and the night rushes in at you like a wild ghost catherine catherine catherine out of the passages through the opening door the door to the royal box is locked you can look through the keyhole or through the crack but the door is locked except on sundays and all the service and anthem books in the cupboards walmisley in d walmisley in f my soul doth magnify like a fugue and the dark man singing the tenor lead in cantoris decani and why doesn't he play Bach more often after service . . .

... and the face in the photograph over the piano winks wickedly why now when hes dead and the gasfire glows from broken fireclays the face over the piano winks down terror over the piano lid and the mouse behind the wall scratches scratches while the wind sings across the wires where the motheaten felts no longer stir to fingertouch and the touch of a foot no longer stirs resonances sounding thick in the box of a white-walled room and the dead face in the photograph winks down terror where the fingers fumble keys and pencils in the corner where the loneliness wrote automatic messages in the room where no woman ever came but only faint scent mixing slowly with the smell of the apples in the cupboard and the chrysanthemums and the picture winked down terror dead long dead and the opening door . . .

... and the remembered instant shrinks all space into a single singing wire where no woman comes but only faint scent mixing slowly with the apples and the sharp smell of chrysanthemums harsh-hung in rooms.

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

The memorial exhibition of the late Edward Wadsworth's work, now on view at the Tate Gallery, has surprised many people by its great diversity. Wadsworth, with a reputation already established, was a member of Paul Nash's Unit One, a group of artists brought together in 1933. In Nash's own words, they combined to make "a hard defence, a compact wall against the tide behind which development can proceed and experiment continue." At the time of his death Wadsworth was an Associate of the Royal Academy.

In a statement of his aesthetic (*Unit One*, edited by Herbert Read, pub. Cassell) he wrote: "One of the chronic diseases of our time is dilettantism and one of its results is that daubed scatology which passes as 'modern art.' Undisciplined and impatient young students—all too anxious to gallop before they can crawl—are running all over the town." Discipline and patience are to be found everywhere in the clean lucid shapes and compositions of Wadsworth, in pictures like the one reproduced here as much as in those of his purely abstract period. His love of lucid shape and functional colour was at the root of his interest in machines, nautical objects and precision instruments. In these he found a disciplined lyricism, a lyricism in tune with his own vein of pictorial poetry.

This painting, from the collection at Temple Newsam House, with its exciting pattern of shapes, the quick intricacies of ironwork and lettering contrasted with the firmer, slower rhythms of architecture, and its carefully organised scheme of colour, is a particularly fine example of a characteristic phase of Wadsworth's work.

EDWARD WADSWORTH
RUE DE LA REYNARDE, MARSEILLES



Trismegistus Shandy

A CHAPTER OF WHISKERS

MY FATHER GAVE TO THE WORLD a book, which he entitled "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent."—but which was as he owned, nothing but a tale of a cock and a bull. Now I make no doubt but that he would have succeeded in his design—which was to set down the story of his life—though I am a Turk if I can tell how he should think that this would ever be read by man—or woman either, albeit to tell truth 'tis a book that concerns itself often with something much sought after by women.—I say, he would have succeeded in his design, had he not too often been led astray from it by telling of tales, by delivering of improving sermons, and the like.

That this was a fault in my father as an author, I cannot deny,—but that it proved vastly entertaining no one else will deny, save only the critics, whom I hereby dismiss with all the curses of *Ernulfus* upon 'em.—O! I did not see you there, Sir.—I was but writing against criticks—No, Sir, I did not know that you were.—An't please your reverence, I will expunge the matter completely, and take a fresh sheet, and sharpen a new quill, and begin again.—A good-day to you, Sir—Your Worship's most obedient humble servant.—A plague upon your back, to interrupt a man and put him about so! My father digressed naturally—he had a way—but what it was in his nature that caused it I know not—our little physio-Hippocrates could tell us, an he would,—but no matter.—He had a way, I say, of forgetting his subject and returning to it much later. It was hereditary in the Shandy family, he said—but this I take leave to doubt, since 'tis plain that I have it not.—My grandfather Walter had it, but my great-uncle Toby had it not—though 'tis true *he* spoke so little, and that little but rarely, that he could not have digressed if he would.

None the less, my father in making this book had a plan, a great design;—and I have often heard him say that it was a pity that he never told his story beyond the first few months of his life, because the world lost through that mischance the telling of how he conceived that same design:—no authour after, he would say, would ever have written by any other rule.—But since because he was living his life much faster than he was writing about it, and because it would have taken him—by his own calculations, for he was learned in mathematicks—until at least the year nineteen hundred and seventy-seven to reach the time of his conceiving his plan—and what would not have happened to the world by then can scarce be apprehended—and he had resolved to write chronologically of his life—Stay! I perceive I am going too far about to reach my end.—'Tis a cursed bad fault in writing.

One part of my father's plan was to write, in his book, a chapter on whiskers. This he promised; but could not bring himself to perform choosing rather to relate a *fragment* which avoided bawdry but barely; this was condemned with one voice by the criticks.—I protest, Sir, I am glad to see you again.—I say, this was justly condemned by the criticks,—and since my father's honour as an authour was impugned, I am determined to supply what he omitted, as follows :

UPON WHISKERS.

'Tis a strange thing;—and I cannot think how it has come about;—but I have forgot what I was to say. My grandfather—I have in my library a mighty fine picture of him, painted by *Sir Joshua* himself—now there is a painter! Where else shall we find his like?—My grandfather could have worn, had he pleased, the most excellent whiskers imaginable; but he had a scorn of them surpassed only by his scorn of the name *Tristram*. Of the system of names, my father told in his book;—and though he in his youth scoffed at my grandfather's system, yet as he grew older he came to see in his declining fortunes the result of being cursed with such a name as *Tristram*.—Indeed he declined in fortunes;—else, Sir, would either he or I have been an authour?—I give you my word, 'tis a most vile trade.—To be at the mercy of those gentlemen who are too ready to give no credit where credit is due, and to seek indecency where none is;—I mean criticks;—and in truth they are so numerous in these days that a man must be for ever looking up to see whether one be not peering over his shoulder as he writes.—Your servant, Sir!—I have bespattered your lace with ink? I am profoundly sorry for it, Sir!

So, then, my father began in his later years to conform to my grandfather's systems of names and noses; and finding me to promise a large nose, determined to give me also a magnificent name. So I was called Trismegistus—but neither nose nor name has ever bettered my condition one whit. Had it been a jest of my father's—but no, 'twould have been too bitter a jest in him, and he was ever of a sanguine disposition:—and as Tacitus hath it “*facetiae asperae, quando nimium ex vero traxere, acrem sui memoriam relinquunt,*” that is, “biting jests which savour overmuch of truth leave behind them a bitter memory;”—he would not have wished his memory in dishonour with me;—nor is it, and I am sure my father did all for the best. Besides, Profumus hath it in his “*Treatise in dispraise of Plesantry*” that no jest is ever properly comprehended save by the perpetrator; and that he who laughs at his own wit is thereby saving others the labour.

I have remembered.—I must say of whiskers, that they suit very ill with the wearing of wigs:—which is a habit, to my mind, not becoming in itself. I had rather see a visage bewhiskered than surrounded by a

head of false, white, powdered curls, which must be taken off for ease;—and take the D—I know what time in preparing, what with curling and brushing, powdering and combing! A pox on all wigs, say I;—and I throw mine on the table! let who will pick it up, I care not. By the splendour of God! if I may borrow an oath from a better man without a “by your leave, Sir,”—though I should be hard put to it to ask leave of William the Conqueror, whose oath it was,—unless I were indeed Trismegistus and could summon spirits,—by the splendour of God! I say that—I must not heat myself over so small a matter as a wig.

It has often seemed to me, that there is an affinity between conspiracies and whiskers. The French plot, and are proud of their whiskers; the Italians plot more, and grow great beards:—Signor Niccolo Machiavelli, that arch-prince and high priest of conspiracies, who writ so well of plots and plotters, himself had a beard fine enough to swear by;—but I cannot call to mind that he ever speaks of the necessity for whiskers in plotters. 'Tis very odd—I think he must have forgot. In his days only Churchmen had no beards, yet they were the deepest in intrigue of all of 'em.—I see I have proved myself wrong, but no matter:—I can construct another theory, and knock it down again myself:—nothing gives me more pleasure. For every ten systems of philosophy, morals, politicks, ethicks, mathematicks, logick (or what you will) that I build, I scarce let one stand.—If I did not myself destroy them, there would be others who would do so.

I have much more to say on this matter of whiskers, could I but think on it:—but I have already spent the money my publisher gave me in advance for this, on a dinner,—where some of us got mighty drunk, but unlike the learned Doctor's friend, were not sorry for it;—and that same publisher is waiting;—and I see three criticks in a corner with their heads (and wigged ones too!) together whispering;—my woes crowd thick upon me, I must off! I hope I have shown you that a Shandy of this generation has no hobby-horse to ride. “Crescit interea Roma Albae ruinis”—meanwhile Rome grew from the ruins of Alba, says Livy; and at least from the ruins of my theory I have saved my guineas—and I hope my credit with my publisher. Your very humble servant, Gentlemen.

Turner Odell

THE WALL

HE APPROACHED AND STOOD looking up at the wall in front of him. Above his head, it rose as far as he could see, and it stretched away on either side until at the horizon it met the rim of the earth. Evening was coming on swiftly, and shadows were deepening perceptibly every moment. Grey clouds rolled and tumbled together confusedly in the sky.

He looked around, and perceiving through the thickening gloom that he was alone on a vast and empty plain, he shouted. But the sound was lost as soon as it left his lips, as if he were shouting into a vacuum a few inches away from his mouth. There was no satisfying resonance to give him courage to call again, so he was still.

Turning to the wall, he came closer and examined its substance. It appeared to be of stone, cold and impenetrably hard. He struck it with his hand, and its thickness seemed to absorb the noise of the slap so that he had not even the comfort of feeling his power to hit anything. His palm stung with the force of the blow, and it was, indeed, as if the wall had struck him.

He had somehow known it would be like this, and so it was with a certain feeling of satisfaction that he withdrew from his belt the hammer and chisel with which he had supplied himself, and set to work. From that instant he lost completely the sense of passing time. If he had thought about it, he would not have been able to remember just when he had begun his task : each second stretched into eternity, and whole centuries passed in the flash of a spark struck from the stone by his chisel.

He did not know how long he had been labouring when he stopped and rested for the first time. Twilight had deepened considerably, and darkness was pressing round him as he bent nearer to examine his progress. Overhead the clouds still tumbled and shook themselves furiously. Distant thunder rolled dully. In a sudden brilliant flash of lightning he looked quickly at the spot where he had been hammering and saw that the stone bore not the slightest sign of having been even scratched. The tiny sound of his cry of anguish was swallowed up by the ensuing thunderclap.

He recovered his hammer and chisel and began again, but this time with a tug of fear at his heart. Now he was working in complete darkness, and the noise of his chiseling echoed back at him, as if from a great

distance. He felt that his hands were working at the other end of an immeasurably long tunnel, through which the sound of each blow echoed back only long after the hammer had struck the chisel's head. And then the rain began, soaking and cold, but making no sound as it fell.

All at once he thought he heard a movement, a sound, distant yet near : a whisper in his own head or an echo from a measureless distance of space. Putting his ear to the wall, he heard the voices of people and then the laughter of children. They were strange voices, and they were speaking in a language that was familiar to him, yet one that he did not understand.

He became enraged, for he could not bear the thought that he had been trying to cut his way through the wall for longer than he could remember, and that yet there were children already on the other side. A second flash of lightning came, and he saw the surface of the stone as smooth as before. When the second thunderclap followed, his fury was compressed by a surge of fear.

He dropped the hammer and the chisel, and, throwing himself at the wall, began to claw at the rock and beat against it with his fists. The stone tore the nails from his fingers and ripped the skin on his flailing hands. Tears ran down his body to mingle with the blood and the rain on his battered arms, and the fullness of his throat choked his breathing. Exhaustion slowly wore away the fear and the anger, and at last he could do no more.

He sank back and stood for a moment, not thinking, not willing, in the rain and the darkness and the void. Then he put out his arms, stepped forward, and he walked through the wall.

As he moved forward he fell, and when he opened his eyes he was lying on the ground. Dew sparkled on the grass around, and he felt on his back the warmth of the morning sun. When he glanced behind over his shoulder he could see no sign of a wall anywhere. He saw that his hands were healed, and then the children were there, helping him to his feet. When they spoke he recognised their tongue as the music that before had always lurked half-heard just beyond his conscious mind.

For an instant he was puzzled : could they have been waiting there for him ? And then he knew his wonder had just begun.

D. A. Furniss

**WHERE TO LOOK FOR MONKS,
CANONS AND FRIARS**

(Or a Guide to Monasteries in Yorkshire).

MOST OF US AT ONE TIME or another have visited a famous abbey, but few, I suppose, have tried to follow the arguments of the guide upon such problems as the site of the Warming House or the course of the Main Drain. What most of us do is to try to construct in our minds a picture of the place as it was when the monks were there. This is not so simple as it seems, because if we wish to form an accurate picture we have to be certain of the period we want to see. Monasteries were constantly changing shape.

Many ruins incorporate structures from each of the six centuries between the Norman Conquest and the time of the Dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII. Most monasteries had at least one calamity: several had many. Often the tower or spire collapsed or sometimes even whole buildings. Especially in the early days was too much reliance placed on the "will of God" and too little on good, firm foundations. Often, too, fire destroyed large portions of the church. The Ministry of Works' description of Gisborough Priory gives an instance of the latter calamity. It tells how a plumber and his two mates, whilst tin soldering holes in the lead roof, set fire to the beams and so caused the destruction of the whole building. The need for repairs and the ever present desire to build "to the greater glory of God" brought about constant changes in the structures of monasteries.

One of the most interesting aspects of Mediaeval Monasticism is the place it occupies in the social history of the country. In the latter part of the Dark Ages the Church owned about a third of the land. In consequence, many of the population were either serfs or tenants on Monastic lands. Abbots and Priors had thus a similar status to Feudal Lords. A study of these Monasteries is therefore a large part of the study of the English people at that time. This is particularly true of monastic documents which contain, amongst other things, numerous records of dealings with the laity. A further advantage which goes with a knowledge of monasticism is the ability to see both sides of the argument which still rages between Protestant and Catholic, about the Dissolution. The problem has a contemporary interest in that during the Roman Catholic revival in this country during the last hundred years

a number of monasteries have been founded. At least one, Sayon Abbey in Devon, claims direct and unbroken descent from the fifteenth century; others, including Buckfast, are on the sites of mediaeval foundations.

What we call an Abbey may or may not be entitled to that name. Depending upon the Order to which it belonged a Monastery was ruled by a Prior or an Abbot. Whilst an Abbot was higher in rank than a Prior, it did not necessarily follow that the former ruled over a larger establishment than the latter. Most Orders had Abbots in charge of their larger houses, or Abbeys, and Priors in charge of their smaller houses, or Priors. Some Orders consisted entirely of Abbeys and others mainly of Priors. Nuns and Canonesses usually occupied Priors under a Prioress.

There were three main Orders of monks and nuns, Benedictine, Cluniac and Cistercian. These were modelled on the community founded by St. Benedict at Monte Cassino in the fifth century. This monastery became well known when it was partly destroyed during the Allied advance in Italy in the last war. The three Orders represented successive attempts to arrive upon a satisfactory religious life. They were all characterised by a softening of their rigorous customs and observances as time passed. The Cistercians were probably the most successful and certainly the strictest of the three; we owe to them the beginnings of the wool trade in Yorkshire and the origins of iron foundry work such as at Kirkstall Forge.

Three Orders of canons and canonesses were common: Augustinian, Premonstratensian and Gilbertine. Their way of life was a modification of St. Benedict's rule based on the suggestions of various authorities. They tended to take on tasks involving more contact with the laity than did monks, often acting as the "staff" or collegiate body of large churches and cathedrals. Some Orders were hardly distinguishable from those of monks.

Friars appeared in England nearly two centuries after the monks and canons. They built their houses in towns, unlike most of the monks and canons who preferred varying degrees of seclusion. Though under the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, they mixed with the community. They often wandered about the country preaching and they relied on alms for support. At the time when monks and canons were becoming lax the friars impressed people by their austerity. Franciscan, Dominican and Austin Friars were the most common.

One benefit of the Dissolution is that hundreds of buildings, though left to fall into ruin, have passed down to us as examples of unmodified Mediaeval architecture. If they had remained occupied their structures would have been repaired and improved beyond recognition, as has been the case with certain secular churches. This applies even more to

the domestic or conventional buildings. The Dissolution, which took place between 1537 and 1540, came when English architecture was at its peak. Shortly after this the English style, having developed, over a period of five hundred years, from Norman, through Early English and Perpendicular to Tudor, began to yield to foreign influence; so that monastic remains, in particular, show examples of the best of English style in architecture. St. John's Church, Briggate, is unique in that though it was built a hundred years after the Dissolution, it was architecturally a development of Tudor style without foreign influence.

Monasteries were usually built to a conventional plan. The church formed the north side of the cloisters and the conventional buildings were placed round the other three sides. A storehouse with a dormitory above usually formed the western range and the Refectory with kitchens the southern. The eastern range gave access to the Chapter House, which was a sort of Court Room and Lecture Theatre, and to the Day Room, Library and Warming House. Over the top of these there was a dormitory. The Abbots' quarters, the Infirmary, and the Guest House were sited as convenient.

A short list of Monasteries of interest.

BENEDICTINE MONKS.

Selby Abbey is a fine example of an intact monastic church, though part of it is modern. Much more inaccessible are the ruins of Whitby Abbey, which are remarkable both for their site and their architecture. There is a good through 'bus service from Leeds to Whitby, and the journey over the moors is an attraction in itself. Nearer at hand are the fragmentary remains of St. Mary's, York.

CLUNIAC MONKS.

Only one Cluniac house of interest remains in Yorkshire, at Monk Bretton, near Barnsley. This Priory, though surrounded by pit heads and railways is well cared for by the Ministry of Works. Until recently it was a farm, and pigs were kept in the Chapter House.

CARTHUSIAN OR CHARTERHOUSE MONKS.

These were perhaps the strictest of all monks and they lived, each in his own cell, round a large courtyard. Consequently their buildings do not correspond to those of other orders. Mount Grace Priory, near Northallerton, is the only Charterhouse left in England which shows the peculiar ground plan of this order.

CISTERCIAN MONKS.

Yorkshire has the remains of seven Cistercian Abbeys and several Priors. Their survival, such as it is, is largely due to the preference

of this order for desolate situations. Some say that this explains the preference of the Cistercians for Yorkshire. The comparative intactness of Kirkstall Abbey, five miles from the centre of Leeds, borders on the miraculous. Jervaulx, near Middleham, and Byland, near Ampleforth, are both in beautiful settings; but Rievaulx, near Helmesley, and Fountains, near Ripon, are outstanding in all respects.

CANONS.

Secular Canons served the Minsters of Beverley, Ripon and York, and these buildings are entirely intact, though occasionally in "splints."

Augustinian Canons had houses at Bridlington (now the Parish Church), Gisborough, and Kirkham, near Malton. Their best known house, Bolton Priory, more usually but wrongly called Bolton Abbey, is amongst the showpieces of the county, though it is hardly to be compared with Fountains or Rievaulx. The use of the word Abbey in connection with Bolton Priory is interesting because it appears that it dates back to the time when the monastery was in use.

Premonstratensian Canons had Abbeys at Easby, in Swaledale, and Egglestone, near Barnard Castle. Both are in lovely settings and are looked after by the Ministry of Works.

FRIARS.

Friaries were to be found in most towns in Yorkshire before the Dissolution. The only remnant of any size is the Greyfriars Tower of the Franciscan Friary at Richmond.

The object in giving this list is to show that in every corner of the county there is some monastic remain worth seeing. At all the places cared for by the Ministry of Works the custodian will be found most helpful. Those readers who find or will put themselves within striking distance of one may discover, if they have not done so already, that, indeed, there is a fascination about these "Abbey-stones."

W. A. Hodges

THREE OPERAS

AND A 17th CENTURY COMEDY

"THE SHEPHERDS OF THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS"

—*Ralph Vaughan Williams.*

Selections from "THE FAERY QUEEN"—*Henry Purcell.*

"BASTIEN AND BASTIENNE"—*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.*

Music Society Production (in association with Theatre Group)—Riley-Smith Theatre, 29th January to 1st February, 1951.

IN THESE THREE PRODUCTIONS, Music Society were a little less fortunate than they were last year. "Dido and Æneas" set a standard of excellence high enough to be remarkable in an amateur production, partly because of a greater availability of good, and trained voices, and seen in this light, the venture represented by this year's productions was a very courageous one indeed. Generally speaking, the singing was not good. Chorus work was ragged in many places. Principal characters often seemed to lack confidence, and to give rather less than the best which their actual voice quality seemed to suggest that they had to give. There was evidence, too, of a certain lack of grip in the general technique of production. The orchestra, however, was distinguished for a rather higher degree of smoothness and competence than is usual in a group of its kind, and James C. Brown is to be congratulated upon the skill and musicianship with which he used his group of instrumentalists, under their leader, Walter Jorysz, to smooth out the occasional roughnesses in the stage performance.

THE FIRST OPERA, "The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains," by Vaughan Williams, was a much more difficult undertaking than could be judged from the simplicity of its staging. In the first place, the lack of any really *dramatic* qualities in the music seemed to suggest that the work was not really suitable, by its own nature, for *operatic* presentation. The allegorical nature of its story, and the mystical character of the music called for a type of vocal interpretation which, perhaps, only thoroughly-trained oratorio singers can give. Nevertheless the individual singers obviously believed sincerely in what they were doing, and the result was a production of which even the very roughnesses had a poignant quality—that kind of poignancy and conviction which, in the world of spoken drama, is the peculiar characteristic of the morality play, and which transcends all

considerations of fundamental fitness for theatrical presentation as such. Even if regarded only from this point of view, this production must be considered not unsuccessful, and the noteworthy singing of Roy Bywood as the Young Shepherd, and of Allan Holliday as The Pilgrim, was supported by the other singers, Tom Pratt, Donald Brewster, Delia Walker and Pamela Mellor, with an unvarying sincerity which made any criticism of individual singing technique almost irrelevant.

THE SECOND PRODUCTION, which consisted of two scenes from Purcell's "The Faery Queen," began really well with a most skilfully handled little performance from Edward Allam as the drunken poet, and from Jean Pickett and Jean McDade as his two fairy tormentors. But the really clumsy lighting of the gauze before which they were compelled to perform, and through which the remainder of the fairy band were supposed to appear as vague, misty shapes, made one feel that surely even the omission of this effect altogether and the substitution of the blankly uncompromising opacity of a traverse curtain could hardly have done more to destroy the illusion which it was intended to create.

The raggedness of the chorus singing in this scene was very perceptible—perhaps due to the difficulty of conveying the conductor's signals to the singers standing behind the gauze curtain.

The solo-singing was slightly marred in some cases by extreme nervousness and the fact that this production had been dogged, from the very beginning, by a minor epidemic of colds and sore throats. Anne Coyte's performances as *Woman*, and *Night*, which she gave in the teeth of an attack of influenza, to which, most unfortunately, she succumbed completely on the final night, deserve special mention. Such weaknesses as did appear in her performances of her two very difficult arias were only such as may be eliminated by a somewhat longer stage experience and further training. In point of basic voice quality, she was, perhaps, the most notable for tone and power. All the women soloists in this scene, Jean McDade as the *Second Attendant*, Delia Walker as *Mystery*, and Margaret Walton as *Secrecy* (though the latter was hampered for the first three nights by a long and heavy veil, shortened on the final night), used their voices well, and gave satisfying performances. Of the two male soloists Allan Holliday, as *Sleep*, was outstanding. In the Vaughan Williams opera, for the most part, he had been singing from the upper part of his range. But as *Sleep* he had an opportunity to show how sensitively and well he could handle a *mezza voce* passage, and to display the full, rich quality of a voice more truly bass than had appeared from his performance in "The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains." The general criticism which I would make of this second scene of the "Faery Queen" is that it was too statically conceived by the producer. Some fluidity

of movement and changes of grouping were not merely eminently possible right up to the point where the soloists began to enter, but were, in fact, indicated by the very nature of the Opera itself, which has a strongly ballet-like feeling (as has Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," a free adaptation of part of which this opera is said to be).

A special word must be said for the memorable performances given by Jean Pickett and Pamela Mellor, who at a few hours' notice, learned and sang, in such a way as to earn considerable praise, the parts of *Woman* and *Night*, both left unfilled for the final performance by the unfortunate illness of Anne Coyte.

OF THE THIRD OPERA, Mozart's "Bastien and Bastienne," little can be said but to praise. The three characters of Bastien, Bastienne, and Dr. Fels were played admirably by Roy Bywood, Margeurite Thorpe and Paul Ford, respectively, with complete conviction, and the delicacy and charm of this most lighthearted little piece of opera buffa, the product of the boy Mozart, was completely maintained throughout. I felt that Dr. Fel's bit of stage business with the scroll and quill pen was perhaps a little overdone, and robbed Bastienne of some of the limelight which was more legitimately hers than his at that particular moment, since she happened just then to be singing a rather delightful little aria, but perhaps Paul Ford may be allowed to get away with this little bit of egotism in view of the comically humane role which he was engaged in playing. Incidentally, one had been led to understand that in the original libretto the peacemaker's role was not written for a fake wizard but for a comic shepherd, by name *Colas*. However this may be, there can be no doubt that Bastien and Bastienne were both well played and sung, and whatever Paul Ford may have lacked in vocal quality was more than amply compensated for by his handling of his comic role. Richard Courtney's set (after Watteau, we understand), was again in complete harmony with the feeling of the opera. He is to be congratulated upon his taste and competence as a scenic designer. His costume designs were sound but, with a notable exception or two (for instances, the *Sleep* costume for the "Faery Queen" and the *Night* costume which Anne Coyte wore in the same production), not particularly original or imaginative.

Altogether it is to be hoped that the tradition of co-operation between Music Society and Theatre Group, begun with "Dido and Æneas" and fittingly maintained by these productions, may be further maintained and strengthened until we can look forward to an annual operatic production with as much certainty as we now look forward to the Theatre Group Xmas Production. For the rest we congratulate Arthur Creedy, James C. Brown, and all concerned with the venture upon their not altogether undistinguished achievement.

“THE MAN IN GREEN BREECHES,”

TIRSO DE MOLINA.

Joint Theatre Group and Spanish Society Production.
Riley-Smith Theatre, February 6th to 12th.

In his introductory programme note to this production of his own translation of Tirso de Molina's brilliant piece of what many would call “intellectual farce” in these days of critical labels, but what he preferred to call simply “comedy,” John Boorman wrote—

... “in ‘The Man in Green Breeches’ we are never allowed to forget that we are in a theatre. The author was not concerned with a message, or even with reality, but with the creation of a perfect and artificial pattern of action, character, and situation. Instead of trying to disguise the conventions of the theatre he expands them until they embrace the whole architecture of the play.”

Clearly in these circumstances it was a play which would need very careful and competent production to succeed for a modern audience, and John Boorman showed his good sense in adopting as his production technique certain of the conventions familiar enough in the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre of a few years ago, but not often used in the English amateur theatre (which does not, normally, anyway, tempt Providence by trying to stage a play which would call for such a technique). And it must be said at the outset that he gave us an unexpected treat.

There were, of course, some of the usual little bits of questionable lighting. There were occasional really excellent groupings which, because of a lack of certainty in linking movements, did not quite fuse and dissolve into each other as they should, ideally, have done. There were distracting patches of coloured light on borders which intruded into the general situation from time to time. There were occasional penumbra effects which were perhaps too clumsy to have been intentional (although one never knows), upon the cyclorama. But for all these minor technical faults this was one of the best pieces of theatre which this critic has seen in the Riley-Smith.

From the beginning pace was really good. Cues were taken and given without fluffing. The action and dialogue raced along without flagging at almost the speed of an ITMA show, and there was hardly a single grouping which did not suggest careful planning and rehearsal.

The general standard of casting and acting was higher than usual, and there was some notable work from more than one of the cast. Jaqueline Heywood, as *Dona Juana de Solis*, gave a performance which was excellent in timing, gesture, movement, elocution and pace. Christopher Cobb, as *Quintana*, her attendant, was convincing for the most part, though he seemed unable to handle the gulling of *Don Martin*

de Guzman with quite the right touch, and his asides to the audience at this point just lacked that slight "flair" which would have carried complete conviction. But his pace, too, was excellent. Malcolm Rogers, as *Caramanchel*, struck me as a rather well-dressed beggar, and, as one who has spent the greater part of his life in, or near "The Smoke," I found his Cockney accent vaguely surprising, especially when he managed to slip in the odd regionalism—"Nay lad" *may* have been one, but I would not vouch for this—all the same, his performance was a memorable one, with occasional suggestions of "Bartholomew Fair" in its character-drawing.

James Stott, as *Don Pedro de Mendoza*, I felt, overdid his crusty mannerisms a little, but otherwise his performance, too, was convincing, and Anthony Armstrong's *Don Martin de Guzman* was well handled from beginning to end. The principal fault of Brian Lees, as *Don Juan de Toledo*, was, I felt, a tendency to gabble at times with the effect that some of his final consonants, taken on a rising tone, became smeared, and the words affected completely lost. Otherwise his performance was convincing and energetic. Both Margeurite Tate, as *Dona Ines*, and Jean Eckersley as *Dona Clara*, were thoroughly convincing for the most part, though both had their weak moments, Margeurite Tate in her tendency to lose words through over-elocution or faulty intonation, and Jean Eckersley through her rather weaker characterisation. But both handled their parts well enough to make these slight faults of no more than relative importance. Most of the minor characters were well-enough played to be able to enter the main stream of the action without setting up any unpleasant eddies on the surface. Of them, Ian Wilson, as *Aguilar* (he doubled *Don Antonio*), Robert Nielson as *Hernando* (he doubled *Fabio*), and David Johns, as a *Dwarf*, deserve special mention for the smoothness, ease, and accuracy of timing with which they carried out, each in his own way, the athletic manoeuvres required of them.

John Boorman showed evidence in this production of an increased experience which leads one to look forward to his future productions. It had an ease and confidence, a sureness of touch, and made an imaginative use of all the theatrical resources available. It seems legitimate to hope that very soon, with some attention given to those lighting and other details of which they have been rather careless in a number of recent productions, Theatre Group may again attain to that consistent standard of excellence which earned them the reputation which they have sometimes seemed, of late, in danger of losing.

Theatre Group, Spanish Society, John Boorman, and all associated with this production are to be congratulated upon an unusually good piece of work.

LEEDS UNIVERSITY POETRY 1950

Edited by W. A. Hodges, this anthology contains work by Robinetta Armfelt, Dennis Brown, Wilfred Childe, Richard Courtney, Mollie Herbert, W. A. Hodges, R. L. Holmes, James Kirkup, Derrick Metcalfe, Kenneth Muir, Ivor Porter, Gerald Robinson, Robin Skelton and Peter L. Wallbank. The Cover has been designed by Gerald Robinson and the book will be published shortly by The Lotus Press.

Of the previous book in this series* the reviewers wrote:—

“... this inexpensive, well produced booklet ... The standard is high, the material is colourful, intelligible and not too ambitious... a valuable small contribution to literature at a time when poetry is in the throes of a crisis of production.”—JOHN PUDNEY in *News Review*.

“A collection of poems sufficiently varied in technique and in sentiment to make the reading of the book a spirited exploration.”—

The Evening Dispatch.

“Professor Bonamy Dobree is justified in finding in these explorations of thought and sensibility, and in the variety of these experiments in language, an attestation of the vigour of poetic life.”—

The Times Literary Supplement.

“... objective and careful editing ... each poet makes his or her contribution to a valid whole ... a collection of consistently good standard.”—HOWARD SERGEANT in *The Yorkshire Observer*.

“this attractive booklet ... achieves a consistently high standard.”—
Poetry Ireland.

*(*Leeds University Poetry, 1949* : Edited by Robin Skelton with a preface by Bonamy Dobree. Lotus Press, 2/6 net).

Leeds University Poetry, 1950, will be on sale in the Union, price 3/-. It can also be obtained from the Union Office, or direct from the Publishers,

THE LOTUS PRESS

64, SUTTON ROAD

HULL

BOOK REVIEW

The Elements of Field Geology, by G. W. HIMUS, Ph.D., F.G.S.,
and G. S. SWEETING, D.I.C., F.G.S. The University Tutorial
Press Ltd. 268 pp., 12/6.

IT SEEMS TO BE THE FATE AND JUSTIFICATION for an extraordinary number of books published nowadays that they should "fulfil a long-felt want"; and while this condition is doubtless met by the volume under review, it would not be doing it full justice to regard it from this viewpoint alone. For with great skill has been compressed into a single volume material with implications sufficiently far reaching to interest all but the most advanced and specialised student of geology, while retaining a certain accessibility to any layman who wishes to learn the full significance of a fascinating pebble he might pick up on a Saturday afternoon. Perhaps the magnitude of the task the authors have set themselves will be realised when it is noted that although some five hundred fossils are classified, it has also been found possible to head certain chapters with relevant quotations from such august works as "The Hunting of the Snark."

From the beginning the emphasis is on the necessity for field work in the course of any training in geology, and, working on the assumption that an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory, the requirements for work in the field are listed on a severely practical basis that is quite refreshing. No longer does one have visions of the geologist struggling across Ingleborough under a load of theodolites, rock drills, seismograph and suitcase of reagents. Little more is required than an eye for the country, and of course the ever present hammer.

The first hundred pages are devoted to an exposition of the principles and mechanics of geological mapping, to enable the student to relate his observations to the more general structure of an area. The illustrations to this section have been taken from actual sketches made in the field in geological notebooks, and while a scribbled appearance makes for authenticity and serves to demonstrate the scope and limits of such sketches, one wonders whether the value of this course compensates for the consequent loss in clarity.

The most useful feature of this section is the worked example of the systematic processes employed in the construction of an actual geological map, and the section is completed by two "fold-out" maps in the back of the book, one of them printed in colour.

The remainder of the book consists of tables for the identification of rocks, minerals and fossils. Rocks are grouped as igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic, and the method of mineral analysis follows closely the system used by the chemist. The classification of fossils, however, has been placed on a rational, if arbitrary, basis which should make the book a worthy purchase for even the most advanced palaeontologist.

The quality of the production is adequate: the binding seems to be stout enough to withstand the jostling it will doubtless receive in many a geologist's haversack, for many a year to come. G.R.

Frank Granville Barker

MUSIC ON RECORD

IN THE DECEMBER REVIEW dissatisfaction was expressed over the recording of Haydn's *Symphony No. 93 in D*, by the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra under Cantelli. The new version of this work by Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is definitely superior, but the performance itself falls short of the standard expected from so fine a conductor. Surely no music surpasses that of Haydn in crispness and clarity, yet on this recording several sections of one of his most characteristic works appear sluggish and laboured. The first movement suffers sadly in this respect, whilst the *minuet* sounds as though it had been specially composed for Ravel's "Dead Infanta." The second movement, however, is beautifully handled, and the *finale* faithfully conveys the composer's sparkling gaiety (Col. LX 1361/3). Haydn fares more happily at the hands of the London Baroque Ensemble, which Karl Haas conducts in a perfectly balanced performance of the rarely heard *Divertimento in G*, scored for flute, two horns, string quartet and double bass. This excellent recording may well revive interest in other neglected works whose artistic merits are often, as in this case, superior to many popular concert items which have been played to a premature death (Parl. SW 8118/9).

Another recording of special interest is that of Bach's *Concerto in C for three Pianos*, sensitively played by Denis Matthews, Ronald Smith and Edwin Fischer, who also directs the Philharmonia Orchestra. This is not merely a work of great ingenuity; it has vigour, grace and a wealth of feeling. The only flaw in the performance is an occasional lack of balance between soloists and orchestra, which must be difficult to produce in a work of this nature. On the final side Edwin Fischer gives a masterly performance of the same composer's *Fantasia in C minor* (HMV DB 21180/2). Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor* can bear comparison with any of his later works, containing a first movement of immense power, one of the most highly developed slow movements he ever wrote for either symphony or concerto, and a *rondo* that still remains a model of musical structure. Backhaus approaches the work rather as a scholar than a virtuoso, so that his performance emphasises its formal qualities—without, however, seriously neglecting its emotional content. Though some listeners may find this interpretation a little restrained, it provides an interesting and valuable contrast to earlier versions. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, under Karl Bohm, has adapted itself zealously to the soloist's style (Decca AX 373/6).

It is difficult to understand why another version of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor* has been issued, when so many of Mozart's works in this form are not represented at all in the recorded repertoire. One's doubts as to whether this further journey into Rachmaninovian sentimentality was really necessary are obviously shared by M. Malcuzyński, whose earlier recordings have shown him to be a painstaking and sensitive interpreter of Chopin, but who just couldn't care less about this concerto. His playing of the quieter lyrical passages is casual in the extreme, whilst the bravura passages are hammered out with far more ferocity than accuracy. When it can be heard at all, the Philharmonia Orchestra seems to be in good form (Col. LX 1352/5 and LXS 1356). How pleasant it is at this point to turn to Mozart's *Violin Concerto in G*, an example of the most exquisite taste and craftsmanship. The amazing melodic invention of the first movement, the enchanting *adagio*, the spirited *finale* in classical French style—which is one to select for special praise? We are fortunate, too, in having Giaconda de Vito and Sir Thomas Beecham to interpret it just as one imagines the young Mozart would have desired. I would urge anyone who can beg, borrow or steal the sum of thirty shillings to spend it on this fine recording (HMV DB 2177/9).

The performance of excerpts from Tchaikovsky's music for the *Swan Lake Ballet* by the Hallé Orchestra and Sir John Barbirolli is so brilliant that one seems to be listening to this work for the first time. Tone, balance, and recording quality leave nothing to be desired (HMV DB 9549/50). The version of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, by Frank Phillips, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nicolai Malko, is equally satisfactory, though the charm of this musical fairy tale is now wearing a little thin (Decca AX 356/8). There is much to admire in Claudio Arrau's playing of the "*Moonlight*" *Sonata*, since this pianist always treats the music of Beethoven with reverent care. But should the first movement be taken quite so slowly? On the whole, this does not represent any appreciable improvement on earlier versions, of which there are so many (Col. LX 8772/3).

The best operatic records to be released during the past two months are the work of young singers. From the first act of *Boris Godunov* Boris Christoff has selected *Pimen's Monologue*, in which the old monk muses that his monumental history of Russia will soon be complete. Christoff's singing conveys to perfection the character of the studious chronicler, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, under Nicolai Malko, provides a suitably reflective accompaniment (HMV DA 1938). Paolo Silveri's rich, impressive voice is given full scope in *O Monumento*, from Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*, an aria in which a spy of the Inquisition exults over the power with which his office invests him (Col. LX 1359). The poor recording of Set Svanholm's performance of arias from *Die Walküre* is such a handicap to this distinguished tenor that no fair comment can be made (HMV DB 21176).

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