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EDITORIAL

RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN CELEBRATED the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. The event has been marked with much of the disinterestedness for which mankind is famed : while one part of us has been quite prepared to attempt a real understanding of the significance of this historical fact, another part (and by far the greater), though aware of the facts, has shown no inclination of a desire to understand. There is the story of the two young women who were wandering through one of England's larger chain-stores when they came to the counter where Christmas cards were on sale. Some of the cards depicted the Infant Christ, the Virgin Mary, Joseph, the three astrologers, the shepherds. On seeing these, one young woman turned to the other and said: " Christ ! They're even dragging religion into it now ! " Such a spirit, we feel, is all too prevalent in our time. Though it is not the place here to say whether the doctrine of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in the New Testament is the doctrine upon which our modern society should be built, we must remark that though we call ourselves a Christian nation, we have not yet built a Christian Society. The reason, for the most part, why this has not been done is illustrated in the extreme example we have recounted above. But one thing is apparent at least. The Christian Church and its vast influence (now bad, now good) upon the affairs of humanity came to be established because there was a unity of

purpose amongst the early Christians. Persecution did not deter them; they had faith enough to die for that in which they believed. And until there is some unity of purpose amongst the individual members of that institution we call *humankind*, and between the representatives of the various nations, a consolidating principle other than that of *grab*, there will never be that state of peace for which all sane people hope. If we preach of "the brotherhood of man" we shall be possibly sneered at, but our reply would be to ask of those who sneer a better phrase. The answer cannot be "hydrogen bomb."

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G. T. Heard
MOONSHINE



WHEN I ARRIVED AT MY home station from the Continent it was dark. The train pulled its long head of carriages out into the deep gulley and became a noise in the sky. Braxlow is a small station, not far from the town compared with some stations I know, but far enough to make the walk between seem like a plunge between two banks of light. I was the only one to get off the train. A porter strolled out of the shadows, took my ticket and seemed to merge into some dark recess behind the Waiting Room. The gas wheezed and the wind came fresh from the fields behind the station, whorling a moonlit cloud across the moon. Braxlow was home, an organic familiarity even about the railway station, which had surely never been built for the mere purpose of transport like all the other stations, but was somehow simply there, without origin or purpose, one of the things that were part of home and one's first experience of the world, like the big elm tree outside the gate whose top I could hear pitching in the breeze. After all the rushing cities, the great unfamiliar countries, and gaudy, busy crowds of foreign people, this was like an arrival in the twilight centre at the middle of a noonday gale.

I walked out of the station and could see the lights of the town just over the crest of the rise, muffled traffic noises, a distant clock chiming, served to insulate the softness of the countryside which kept its own scents and movement under its own innocent gloom.

After I had walked a hundred yards or so, to the midway point where all walking seemed to take one further both from the light in front and the light behind, I became aware that a man was approaching from the opposite direction. At least he was moving towards the station; the hedgerows were dark and he was a little more than a faintly outlined form. "Wonder what he wants at the station," I thought, "the last train's gone."

"Goodnight," I said as he came nearer.

"It may be good," he said. "It may be."

Such an odd reply, uttered in a somnolent, meditative tone as of a man walking along with his eyes on his feet struck me as out of place. Somehow the conventional phrase I had spoken seemed rather foolish, something awkward and temporary, as if the goodness of the night was a thing not just to be mentioned in passing and dismissed with another footstep.

I stopped, inquisitive. "Pleasant night for a stroll," I said. He stood still and looked up with a slow motion of the head, as if he were tired already of a conversation which had scarcely begun. Again I was impelled to feel what an overwhelmingly inadequate phrase I had said, neither hiding nor conveying, just an excuse to converse in that midway darkness.

"Movement is admittedly something better," he said, stressing the "some." Better than what? I thought.

"One could almost say better than only swaying at the top like an elm," he said, almost continuing his speech inside my half-formed question. A rat or hedgehog rustled in the ditch. The idea of an elm walking seemed almost credible for half a minute. How its great limbs would sway as it moved!

"The wind is very keen tonight, wiser than it was before," he said deliberately. What nonsense was this that he was saying? He spoke almost as if he was acting a triviality: and yet "wiser than it was," how could he speak of the dumb evening wind like that?

As if he was humouring my thoughts out of duty he continued: "keen winds are never confused." He dwelt on

the last word. Could it be that he sensed my discomfiture? For a moment I looked up and saw a corybantic vapour veil the moon and make more shadows on the fields. As if it mattered, in any case, my being confused in a trivial conversation over nothing, I thought. Strange kind of conversation this. All assumption. He assumed he knows what I am thinking, I assume he cannot because he has never seen me or known me. But what kind of people assumed that the wind was wise?

"Perhaps," he said in a blasé tone, "you may now understand wholly from motion of mind and body that confusion comes mainly from movement of mind or body. You have not understood your journey yet." How did he know I had been on a journey? Of course, my cases. Did he mean this journey? I understood it as well as most people who arrived at a destination, stayed, and returned intact. What is there to understand about journeying that is so necessary, besides the obvious familiarity with man-made rules and man-made means? I began to ask him: "What is there to——"

He interrupted, "You are very confused. The significance is always there, and even though you are at the midway point you still cannot understand going and been."

This was rather sweeping, I thought. "Who are you?" I asked him. A trace of superciliousness showed in his voice, but it was almost hidden by a preponderant tone of sadness and tolerance.

"I am no who or you outside your questionings. I am here always at the end of journeys for then questions give me life." The conversation was getting boring I thought. Very bad manners to be so enigmatical. Like a letter that one can never find a file for, enigmas usually get tucked away in the miscellaneous. Besides, as he himself said, all I had to do to demolish him completely was to stop asking questions. If I was confused there was no point in getting more so. He had to be placed in some mental file where no further questions were needed. All those great cities and crowds of people, one did not really know why they were there like organised hives, and supposing one did know, would that knowledge make them

cease to exist like, as far as I was concerned, he would when I stopped questioning him?

Of one thing I was quite certain. It would not do for everybody to go about in this kind of omniscience, giving his kind of answers. Of course the world did seem odd at times, like when the fields became silver or the trees' outlines seemed luminous, but one knew that it would soon pass like a hangover or a nightmare or a fit of laughter. It would be put into relation to what was usual.

He again interrupted my train of thought. "You will find that walking itself is a usual means of motion. Strangeness does not exist when you tread earth and not the wind. You should beware the wind and not try to fly too soon in case you tempt its fury. I am telling you this knowing that you will not see why you have been told and will probably avoid confusion by hiding from the wind. Your stone cities are built to keep the wind away. Some hour when hours are inessential the suburbs of the city will reach to Aldebaran and you will never again need to stop and talk midway because going and been will be the same, and you will understand the arcanum of this cloud's passage across the moon." The path was darkened fitfully. He seemed to merge into the hedge and I seemed to sense his presence not by visual means but by a tactile prehension of happening.

Previously he had been friendly, if superior, but now his voice had become louder and commanding. For a moment I saw his eyes glint uncannily as the light flecked along the road, and I saw he was staring into the sky beyond the station, as if he was watching something which possessed hypnotic fascination. Suddenly he started to move towards me and a tongue-cleaving terror shuddered through my veins, but he passed, or perhaps still, simply moving along the road. As he went the wind rummaged the dust of the ditch and whirled it into the air as I watched, making it indistinguishable from the night-drunk clouds. He never seemed to go or vanish, but I was aware of some cessation, some alteration in the night as imperceptible and yet as huge as the earth turning. It may have been some distant train rumbling, or the wind playing

tricks in the elms, but it was as if the fields and the sky had joined to facilitate a spaceless egression.

The breeze was eerie, and I shuddered, and with a conscious effort began almost independently of will or volition to walk towards the lights of the town. The noises became more and more distinct, the lights brighter, the solidity of the buildings more reassuring and the night less primeval. The midway point had been passed and the order of the town imposed itself upon the night. Looking back at the station, all I could see above its roofs was a trail of silver smoke that billowed apparently from some engine—until I noticed idly that the smoke was not being blown wildly down the gully but seemed to be ascending, a skein of silver gauze moving like a net in the cloud foam. For a moment the moon was cold and domineering: the pagan fields were pale with its stare and the shadowy, overbranching elms were hostile. It was a relief to reach a sputtering gas-lamp in the street, and see the litter of 'bus tickets blown down the pavement and along the gutter. Things were familiar again. Another journey was over.

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*Roderic Knight***MOOR**

Thought, tapping white like a blind man's stick,
Along streets of stars,
With Iago-cunning twists the fiend's words
So the black Moor must die.

So the black Moor must wreak his lie
Upon the white and pilfered limbs.
Dare he release her cloistered truth
To deny his fire ?

Anne Levey

THE LOSS OF LOVE

The loss of love came quietly
On a calm day ;
Not with venom subtlety
But in a quiet way.

There was no great disaster ;
Only a feeling that death
Must be this, and after
One would wake to happiness.

A recurring hope that sleep
Would lead back to the past,
To love again, and overleap
The day that proved the last.

The loss of love is not all—
If the heart has faith to hold
That chance may still let fall
A miraculous birth of new from old.

Derek Esp

THE CHRISTIAN UNION

THE CHRISTIAN UNION IS ONE OF that group of societies which can be labelled as of general interest or universal irritation. To be a communist, a socialist, a nihilist, an aggressive atheist, an evangelical Christian, or a member of any branch of the Christian church with a definite or discoverable viewpoint, is to be marked out as a target for discussion, criticism, or liquidation. The Communist is not a political chameleon and will not change his colour to avoid onslaught. Similarly, the Christian need not hide his light beneath the bushel. Those people who form a society with an aggressive programme are viewed, for the most part, with a biased judgment one way or another, by the general. We label the Conservative, as the saviour of the national economy or as destroyers of it, according to our political taste. Political and religious societies are necessarily bound to meet with conflict, for all have their opponents.

By some, the Christian Union and the other Christian societies are regarded as being rather impractical, out of date and a trifle *pie* in its activities. The mention of prayer meetings and Bible Studies may invoke a reaction similar to that invoked in Samuel Butler by the "Simeonites" at Cambridge and described in *The Way of all Flesh*. Some may remember the Christian Union rather as the society which held a mission in the University last year. At this series of meetings, aimed at presenting the claims of Christ to the University population, many controversial issues arose. It was stated that faith in God is not a delusion, that man's greatest problem was sin, that the only way to God was through Christ, who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life." This, we said, was the only solution to human need and the human dilemma, and this, furthermore, was not philosophical speculation or tentative

suggestion. Voices were raised in protest—with what authority was all this conjectured?

The aim and purpose of the movement is to bring Christians together in fellowship, and to present the claims of Christianity—not on the authority of the speakers, nor on the authority of I.V.F. (the inter-Varsity Fellowship) and the international movements with which it is linked, not even on the authority of convincing argument—but on the authority of the Bible. But the Bible is unpopular because of what it teaches. Moreover its authority is disputed within even the Church. How can this possibly be a valid authority? The experience of people who have responded to its message and challenge, and the fact that it stands disputed, but not disproved, show that what the Bible declares is still up to date, and practical. The activities of the Christian Union Bible Studies, prayer meetings, fellowships, and the larger meeting in the University Union could be eulogised or criticised at any length, but what really matters to the Christian Union, and every member of the University, is that there is being demonstrated the message of the Bible and the necessity of it, practically applied, in the lives of Christians everywhere. For those who want to know more about the Christian faith or who wish to examine it honestly, our meetings deal with the Gospel as it applies to the individual.

Our biggest problem is ourselves. Christians are often criticised for either thinking themselves better than all other people or for not living lives as “moral” as those of other people. The fact is that both those who have accepted God’s remedy and those who have not are in need of His help: for the Christian is by no means free from those facets of human nature—pride, hypocrisy, and the rest.

I hope this letter will have revealed one thing, at least, about the Christian Union—the Gospel is more important than we are. Because of the message the Child brought us on Christmas Day things are beginning to happen everywhere. The carol singers are still counting the money you gave them, but people are changing. There are those who are finding that the message of Christmas is not dead.

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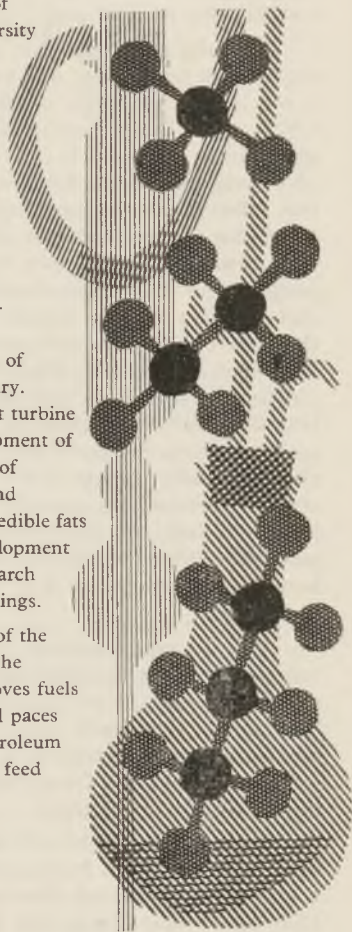
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HEAD OF A MAN

by

BERNARD BROWN

Roderic Knight
FROM SHANNON TO INISHFAY
FOR ANNE.



Tomorrow he would rebel.

Slow wove the river among the reeds and the small boats and the pylons of the decaying jetty. The sun caught and flared on the white of the boathouse wall and the cupola of the new Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul. How easy to believe the sun was God, God on the western hills of Inishfay, flaring to extinction. Jonathan picked his way surely among the sharp stones of the river bed, clambered into a boat grounded near the bank. An ugly creature, like a rat, thrust from the reeds and ran along the bank. Jonathan plunged his hands into the cool shallows for a pebble and flung it, missing wildly. So easy, and tomorrow he *would* rebel. But it was only a thought. Rebel against what? The dusty walk to mass and the tawdry statues in the church? The boat tilted with his annoyance, irritating the water into circles that expanded and broke across the river. But to rebel, as Michael had rebelled that funeral day in Inishfay, to decide and to act, and afterwards, perhaps, to talk to some uncertain, breathless child as he had been talked to by Michael. Lately he had thought often of Inishfay, of Aunt Cath and Michael, and the rosary gathering its weeds on the lake-bed. And thinking brought them close to him, so that now in the evening he could lean over and touch them, disturb their mirrored reflections in the water as the river brought them down from the lake in its wide, expansive current. And with a boy's secretive pride he treasured these evenings when the mountains were released and came again to the river,

It was late summer, cloudily dry and cold, and the letter came at breakfast telling of his uncle's death and of the burial that was to take place the next day. Going away, if only up the valley to Inishfay, was an excitement, and his Uncle Sean was nothing, just a beard at Christmas, a beard that shook and afterwards resided with too much to eat and drink in a deep chair by the hearth. Throughout the journey he was absorbed in memories of the autumn pears that tangled the back wall by the path, and last spring's hints that his cousin had outgrown the small gun with which he shot wood-pigeons in the long evenings. But inside the cottage he was uncomfortable, clumsy in best clothes never worn enough to fit his body, unnaturally quiet with an assumed adult solemnity. Michael was not there and his other cousin, the little girl, cried piously into the fire. He was aware of his aunt, her face ravaged with unshed tears, of other indistinguishable relatives heavily dressed in black, dubious and saying nothing, conscientiously. Distantly he could hear his aunt's reproaches. The funeral procession was about to begin and Michael had not returned. It seemed as if nothing would ever begin, the silence was thin and hostile. There was an outburst of talking and the boy grew restive like someone watching and listening to a play in an unknown language. Then the procession began, the dumb, slow walk to the Chapel. It was cold as the earth kneeling and standing against the raw, brown wood of the pews. His aunt wept at last and the men coughed quietly into their hands. Jonathan listened to the unknown, familiar words, the Latin phrases that formed chill patterns in his mind. *Sempiternam requiem* . . . *sempiternam requiem*—he counted the syllables on his fingers entangling the bright beads . . . *the full beatitude of the light eternal*—they were in the light again, walking quickly along the road to the cottage, only his mother and him keeping step with his aunt. The others, with the little girl, had vanished, like his uncle, into the earth. They found the front door open and a blind pulled from the window allowing light to fall strangely into the shrouded room. His aunt screamed and in the stillness it was as if his heart had stopped beating. The rosary had gone from the arms of the Virgin's statue over the hearth. His aunt read a scribbled letter folded on the table.



“ He says he’s gone. Now his father’s dead there’s no need to go on pretending. He’s gone, he says, to bury the evils of the past in the deepest water in Ireland.”

Jonathan’s mother was by his aunt, helping her into a chair. Her wailing frightened him who longed to be free.

“ He’s gone, and what’s to become of us? What’s to become of us in the black nights and us without the beads to tell our troubles to the Holy Mother? ”

His mother led him outside. He was to go to the lake, find Michael, and tell him to come back. He was to say Michael’s mother was ill, dying, anything.

He was free. The path was steep, down through the band of trees to the lake. His hard boots tumbled the loose

stones bouncing into the long grass. He was free, but with a child's desperate anxiety to justify trust. He was through the trees and again in the light, full on the lake, and a spare, loose figure standing or kneeling on an inlet. Michael. He tried to call through his heaving breath, but no sound came. He approached more slowly, and when near tried again to call, but his voice failed on the name in a weak whisper. He walked towards the boy now standing a little way from the shore, fearing to attract his attention. They stood, it seemed, for minutes like figures petrified in a charade. Then he noticed Michael was motioning him to come closer. And Jonathan listened to his cousin talking of the land they lived in, and the words seemed beautiful and true. Jonathan felt himself absorbed and expressed by the voice of Michael, a voice warm and close to him, full as water running over the earth. Not remote like his mother's voice or Aunt Cath's or the priest's. He forgot the mourning and the funeral, and his mother's message and the rosary, until suddenly Michael stopped speaking and, wrenching back his arm, threw the beads far into the lake. And Jonathan felt himself beginning to cry, to cry bitterly and silently, until Michael, with an arm on his shoulder, told him they must go home, they must go home for it was all right now.

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Angelo Beolco

Ruzzante Returns
From the Wars

Translated by

ANGELA INGOLD

The Gryphon

1955

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Italian Society.*

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RUZZANTE

RUZZANTE IS ONE OF THE major creations of the drama and the great forerunner of the masks of the *Commedia dell' arte*. (He cannot be regarded as their begetter, for the Comedy of Masks was improvised, whereas that of Beolco, whilst clearly embracing and even inventing so much of the business that was to become an integral part of the *Commedia dell' arte*, is a written Comedy). A robust and free-speaking figure of the Paduan countryside (Beolco's plays are written for the most part in Old Paduān), he appears in a variety of situations, enabling his author, who played the rôle himself and came in consequence to be known as Ruzzante, to exploit a rich vein of ironic comedy. He is the essential peasant—greedy, sensual, awkward, stupid, boastful, obscene, cowardly and warmly human. The clod-hopping yokel has, of course, been regarded as a proper subject for the ridicule of cits and wits ever since Aristophanes; but Beolco transmutes him into something of profound universal and timeless significance. He is the potent symbol of the rough elemental spirit of the country, the spirit of earth.

He is, too, a statement of revolt, an unambiguous denunciation of the plautolatry of the creaking humanistic comedy, for although Beolco's own early plays are fashioned to the cut of classical models, it is with the wholly original *Anconitana*, *Reduce* (*Ruzzante Returns from the Wars*) and *Bilora* (a one-act masterpiece of realistic tragedy which anticipated Verga in its austere perfection) that his genius first truly manifests itself. With the advent of Ruzzante a gust of fresh air blows through the frousty cardboard world of aulic Italian comedy.

Angelo Beolco (1502-1542), the natural son of a wealthy North Italian gentleman, was a dilettante of the theatre. Half his year was spent in managing the family affairs, the rest in writing and performing plays for the entertainment of his friends. It is a naturalistic drama that he gives us, a transcript of life in all its vehement naked authenticity; it is a drama deeply and fiercely concerned with human motive and human experience, and afire with the simple poetry of living. The dialogue is deliberately colloquial, yet never banal, for there is an exhilarating delight in the power of language vividly to re-evoke the least as well as the greatest passions of men and women. It is *in fine* an actor's drama, and it reveals Beolco as a master of his craft and as the creator and informed practitioner of a living theatre.

This is the first of Beolco's plays ever to be translated into English and Angela Ingold has, I think, caught admirably the thrusting vigour, the lively sense of character and the subtle conflicts of passion which make the original so precious and consequential a miniature.

FREDERICK MAY.



ANGELO BEOLCO, *il Ruzzante*
1502 - 1542

THE CHARACTERS*.

RUZZANTE,† *a peasant.*

MENATO, *his friend.*

GNUA, *wife to Ruzzante.*

The scene is a street or one of the smaller squares in Venice, looking on to a canal.

The time : *ca.* 1520.

* Not mentioned in the printed cast-list is Gnuia's lover, who in Scene 2 gives Ruzzante a thrashing.

† Beolco usually signed himself *Ruzante*; modern practice, however, is to use the form *Ruzzante*.

SCENE 1

RUZZANTE, alone.

RUZZANTE: Well, here I am at last.... In Venice! The place I've longed to get to, more than any bony-flanked, half-starved old mare longs to get in among the fresh green grass! Now for a rest And a chance to build up my strength.... And to enjoy my Gnuia! She's living here now. To Hell with war and battlefields and soldiers! They won't catch me on a battlefield again! I shan't be hearing any more of those drum-rolls I've been listening to! No more trumpets! No more calls to arms! And no more being afraid....! 'Cause when I heard them sounding that call to arms, I used to feel just like a trapped thrush in the hunter's hand! No more muskets going off bang! No more artillery blasting away! They won't come my way again.... Not unless they get me in the backside! No more need for me to worry about arrows flying about....And getting myself out of harm's way! At last I can go and have a good sleep, and have a square meal that'll do my belly good! God's my life! There were times when you almost didn't have the right to relieve your guts in comfort! Ah, glory be to St. Mark! Here I am, safe and sound! Damn it all, I made good time getting here! I really believe I must have done more than sixty miles a day.... 'Cause in three days I've got from Cremona to here! Bah! The road isn't as long as they say! They say it's forty miles from Cremona to Brescia. Huh, not a bit of it! It's hardly eighteen.... And then they say it's thirty from Brescia to Peschiera.... Thirty? Huh! The Devil it is! More like sixteen! And from Peschiera to here.... How far would that be? I've done it in a day.... It's true that I walked all through the night.... In fact the falcon's not yet born that's flown as far as I've walked! And by my Faith, my legs are giving me Hell!.... Though I'm not what you'd call really tired. Ah me, fear spurred me on, and desire guided my steps! And I hope to God it's my shoes that have borne the burden of it all! Let's have a look at them.... There, what did

I tell you? Pox bite my guts!.... It looks as if I've lost the sole off of one of them, doesn't it? This is what *I've* got out of the war! God's my life, I couldn't have walked further, not if I'd had the enemy right at my backside! Yes, it's a fat lot I've got out of it! Still.... Perhaps I'm somewhere that I can pinch another pair.... Which is how I got these.... I lifted them off a bumpkin on the battlefield. To tell you the truth, it's not a bad place for a good bit of knocking-off.... Isn't a battlefield.... If it wasn't that you were scared stiff all the time! A pox on property! Here I am, safe and sound.... And I can hardly believe it! Suppose I'm only dreaming it all? That really would be a bit off! 'Course I'm not dreaming! Didn't I get on board that ship at Fusina? Aren't I me any more? God's my life I am! And aren't I dedicated to the Holy Virgin as a good little foot-slogging soldier?.... I'll release myself from my vow.... But suppose I'm not really me.... Suppose I was killed in battle.... And now I'm a spook! Oh, that'd be a good one! No! Damn it all, spooks don't *eat*! I'm *me*! *Myself*! I'm *alive*! Now if I only knew where to find my Gnuia.... Or my good neighbour Menato.... Who I know has come to live in Venice too. Pox on it! My wife'll be terrified of me now! I must shew her what a devil of a brave fellow I've become.... Anyhow I *am* a brave fellow.... Didn't I manage to tear myself away from the very teeth of those dogs? Menato'll ask me all about the fighting.... And, pox take me, I'll be able to pitch him some fine tales!.... I really and truly believe that's him now! Yes, it really and truly *is*! Hey, good neighbour Menato! It is you, Menato? It's me.... Ruzzante!.... Your good friend Ruzzante!

MENATO: What, is it you, good neighbour Ruzzante? Whoever would have recognised you? You look so done up and skinny, why you'd think you were a fried skeleton! I'd never have recognised you, neighbour.... But you're welcome!

RUZZANTE: So I look in a bad way, do I? Well, if you'd been where I've been, good neighbour....

MENATO: Have you come straight from the battlefield?

Have you been ill? Or *in prison*? You look awful.... Absolutely awful, good neighbour Ruzzante.... You've got a nasty look about you.... A treacherous, hanging look.... Sorry to say it, good neighbour, but I've seen a good hundred fellows strung up that didn't look half so villainous as you do! Mind you, good neighbour Ruzzante, I'm not saying that you.... You do realise that, don't you?.... I'm not saying that *you* look like a rogue and a scoundrel.... You do take my meaning, don't you?.... I'm.... What I'm saying is that you look unkempt and ragged.... And properly done up. God's my life, you must have had a narrow escape from those dogs!

RUZZANTE: Good neighbour Menato.... Those cuirasses.... It's those steel cuirasses that make you look so villainous.... And the heavier they are the more they strip the flesh off you.... And, what's more, you can't drink when you've a mind to.... And the eating's worse.... Ah me! If you'd only been where *I've* been....
(*He says these last words in a very affected manner*).

MENATO: Pox on your fancy speaking, good friend Ruzzante! Hoo! Have you been learning that la-di-da Florentine stuff those Brisighelli spout?

RUZZANTE: Well, good neighbour, when you get about the world a bit, you do pick these things up.... And remember.... I spent some time with the Brisighelli from Urbino.... And talked with them just like that. And if I was to talk French to you.... You wouldn't understand a word. But Fear'd teach you to speak it in a day! Huh, they're a high and mighty lot of bastards! They say to you: "Villan cuchin.... pallyard.... par la song Dew.... I'll cut your throat out for you! *And* eat it!"

MENATO: Pox eat *them*, say I! I understand that bit about cutting out your throat and eating it, Ruzzante, but I don't understand the other words. Tell me what they mean, good neighbour!

RUZZANTE: Willingly.... "Villan" means "Bumpkin".... See?.... "Cuchin" means "Cuckold".... "Pallyard"

means "House made of straw".... "Par la song Dew"
means "For the Love of God."

MENATO: They lie in their throats.... Those are fighting words, and they cost dear with us.

RUZZANTE: Huh! I wish their officers were all strung-up.... Like this....!

MENATO: Hey! Ruzzante! The cloak you've got on is longer than your leather jerkin.

RUZZANTE: I pinched it from a bumpkin over there.... I was feeling the cold. Pox on them for a sly, miserly lot of yokels.... For a couple of brass farthings they'd cheerfully watch you freeze to death!

MENATO: Do you know what, Ruzzante? I really think you believe that since you've become a soldier you've stopped being a villein yourself!

RUZZANTE: No, good neighbour Menato, what I mean is.... Don't you see?.... What I mean to say is that they don't receive you in the same friendly way that us Paduans do.... Villeins for them are folk who get up to villainy.... Not folk who live in the country.

MENATO: God's my life, Ruzzante! What's this smell that's coming from you?

RUZZANTE: What smell? Huh! The smell of hay's not a stink to turn your nose up at! I've been sleeping on hay.... in a tent.... For the last four months.... And I can tell you, that bed didn't trouble me in the slightest.

MENATO: Hold on a minute, Ruzzante, what's this here? It looks like an insect to me.... Without any wings....

RUZZANTE: Pooh! A louse? Why, in camp the very bread-crumbs.... If you don't brush them off you.... Grow a head and legs and turn into lice! And the wine!.... You've hardly drunk it when it ferments your blood.... 'Cause it's always out to do you harm!.... And it can't always do it to you just when it wants to.... It makes bile inside you.... And throws out nasty scabs.... Scurvy.... A mangy itch.... And nice crusty sores all over your body.

MENATO: I can see that you've got your full share of them, good neighbour Ruzzante.... You're covered with them! So I suppose you weren't able to lay your hands on so much plunder as you thought you would.... Eh?

RUZZANTE: No.... I didn't get a thing.... Neither into my hands nor into my kit-bag! And damn me if I didn't come near to eating my weapons!

MENATO: God's my life! *What* did you say? Did you get so ravenous that you ate iron?

RUZZANTE: Good neighbour Menato, if you'd been where I've been you'd have learned to eat iron too! *And* any old clothes that came your way! I sold mine at the inn.... So's I could get something to eat.... I had'n't any money....

MENATO: But didn't you manage to lay your hands on something when you took some of the enemy prisoner?

RUZZANTE: Good God, Menato!.... I never intended to *harm* anybody!.... What d'you want me to take prisoners for? What good would they have done me? What *I* did.... What *I* did.... Was to try and capture a cow or a mare.... But I never had any luck!

MENATO: By my life, good neighbour Ruzzante, for a brave soldier you've got a mean look about you! Nobody'd ever believe you'd been to war! Why, I thought I'd see you with a scarred face.... With only one leg.... Or perhaps only one arm.... And blind in one eye.... Ah, well! 'Nough said! You've been lucky! But I must say you don't look much of a hell-raking soldier.

RUZZANTE: You don't just need a scarred face.... Or a limb or so missing.... To be one devil of a brave soldier! Do you really mean to say that you think that I.... *Me? Ruzzante?*.... That *I'd* be scared of four of them even.... If they were after me.... Just 'cause they had scars all over their faces? 'Course not!.... Couldn't I break their legs for them?.... I shouldn't be able to move for terror, anyway!.... And they'd be the first to get the itch from me.... The itch to run away!

MENATO : Ruzzante, I've got a shrewd idea that you don't want to go back to war. Am I right? Have I guessed right?

RUZZANTE : Good neighbour Menato, what shall I say?.... If the pay was good to start with.... And if they paid us regularly every month, instead of stretching the months out till they last best part of six apiece.... I might consider going back.

MENATO : You were so keen when you went away.... And you've come back so different.

RUZZANTE : Ah, neighbour, if you'd been where I've been!

MENATO : You must have been scared stiff! Did you get your belly-full? Did you?

RUZZANTE : No.... All I'd like to say is that rustling up the old rub-a-dub is bloody hard work!

MENATO : What d'you mean, "rustling up the rub-a-dub"? Eh, Ruzzante? Sounds like Double-Dutch to me!

RUZZANTE : Oh, that's the way they talk in the army.... "Rub-a-dub" means "grub".... You know, *victuals*. And "Passing the ford" means "Gifts from the Lord".... That's to say, have a great triumph over your enemy.

MENATO : Strumpety-dumpety! I'd have thought you meant the wash-tub when you talked about rub-a-dub! And as for crossing the ford! Why, I'd have thought that was what you did through water when there wasn't a bridge. Ah, you're the one who understands these things, Ruzzante! And have you ever taken part in a skirmish? Eh, Ruzzante?

RUZZANTE : Huh! No, never been in a single one! Not 'cause I was scared, mark you.... Or 'cause I was off sick.... Or just dodging trouble.... No, 'cause our men let their line get broken.... Or, at least, the ones in front did.... I was at the rear.... I was a corporal, you know, in charge of a squad.... So I *had* to be at the back.... They sloped off pretty fast.... So it wasn't any use me doing different.... For all my courage. And then, I ask you, good neighbour Menato... One against all that lot.... What chance would I have had? I started to run as fast as my legs'd

carry me. I was wearing my sword.... That beauty I shewed you.... But I threw it away.... Though it was worth three crowns.

MENATO: But why the Devil did you run away?

RUZZANTE: Ah, Menato, if you'd been in my shoes....! Let me tell you.... It was no occasion for slow-witted bastards or stupid larking around! I threw away my sword when I couldn't run any more.... I slipped in among the enemy.... And 'cause they don't use the same sort of arms as we do I got rid of my sword.... So that they shouldn't recognise me.... And 'cause too.... You must realise, good neighbour.... You don't strike a disarmed man.. An unarmed man, if you take my meaning, makes you feel sorry for him.... Brings out the pity in you.

MENATO: Of course I take your meaning. But what did you do about the cross on your shield?

RUZZANTE: Well, my friend.... My cross was red on one side and white on the other.... So I turned it round. Sink me! As I said before.... It was no time for slow-witted bastards.... And though I say it myself as shouldn't, I'm a pretty shrewd chap, really.... I turned it back again when our lot counter-attacked. And ever after that.... Well, what do you think? Yes, every time our chaps got to grips.... I sloped off pretty smartly. So, you see....

MENATO: If I get your meaning.... You were always wondering which way to run.

RUZZANTE: That's it.... Not so much 'cause I wanted to run *away*.... As 'cause I wanted to keep my skin in one piece, you see. As I've told you already one man on his own can't do a thing against a whole horde of 'em like that!

MENATO: Tell me the truth, Ruzzante.... When you got mixed up in one of those skirmishes.... Didn't you find yourself deep down inside you saying to yourself, "I wish I was safe at home now!" Tell me! Just between ourselves.... You can speak freely to me.

RUZZANTE: Ah, my friend, if you'd been where I've been, you'd have wished just that a thousand times over! What do

you think it's like, being over there in those foreign parts? You don't know a soul.... You don't know where to go.... And all you've got to look at are hordes of men all yelling: "Kill 'em! Kill 'em! Give 'em hell!" Cannon-balls, bullets, arrows.... They all come whistling through the air.... You turn round and there's one of your comrades lying dead.... Killed!.... And somebody at your elbow busy trying to kill *you*! You try to make a dash for it.... And there you are.... Right in the middle of the enemy!.. And you never realise that, by turning tail, you stand every chance of getting a bullet in your back! I can tell you, it takes a lot of courage to run for it! How many times do you think I pretended to be dead?.... Letting a whole squadron of cavalry pass over me! I wouldn't have budged.... Not even if they'd piled Mount Venda on top of me! What I'm telling you is nothing less than the simple truth.... And that's why I say that a man who's able to look after his skin like that is nothing more or less than a hero!

MENATO: But, damn it all, Ruzzante! Couldn't you so much as slip inside a hollow willow-tree.... Or climb up an oak.... Or get behind a hedge.... When you wanted to....? Well, you know.

RUZZANTE: God's my life! No, Menato! The truth of the matter is.... It wasn't that I never felt the need to.... Or that I wouldn't have done it there.... But I just didn't feel it was safe to stop! I'd sooner run ten miles than stay put when I'm in danger! If you'd been in my place, Menato, there'd have been more than one occasion when you'd have wished you'd got wings! Just think of it.... One day we got into a skirmish and, just as I was making off, one of our chaps, who was sloping off on a horse, caught me on the foot with the horse's hoof, and pulled my shoe off. D'you think I stopped to put it on again? Not on your life! I was in too much of a hurry! And I ended up that happy little adventure by tearing open the sole of my foot, 'cause we ran over a lot of rough stony ground in some God-forsaken part of the country. But I wouldn't even have stopped to pick up an eye if I'd happened to lose one! So don't talk to me,

good neighbour Menato, about hiding or tucking myself away into a hole.... Talk about running away.... Running till you've got no more breath left in you! Besides.... Don't you get imagining that if you want to.... Do anything.... while you're on the run, you can afford to waste time by stopping to do it! Sink me, no! No, what happens in that sort of case is that your body's moving so fast you end up by fouling your breeches. What about Prince Antenor, him who fought so bravely at Troy? Didn't he chuck himself into the river so as to get away? Even though he saw other chaps drowning. And he ran all the way to Padua to get into hiding. No, you have to keep on running, just so long as there's any breath left in your body! I tell you.... It's not worth your while being a hero! And you know *I'm* not afraid of anyone.... Not even of four together.... But when an army gets routed.... Why, Roland himself'd slope off!

MENATO: I don't say he wouldn't.... But when you went off to war you told me all about the fine things you were going to do and say.... All about the capturing and plundering.... What am I to say now?

RUZZANTE: Bah! Poof! I was just downright unlucky! But, after all, I did get to know the world a bit.

MENATO: Did you travel far, Ruzzante? Tell me about where you went.

RUZZANTE: Don't ask me if I travelled far!.... I got as far as Ghieradadda, where the battle took place that so many of our chaps lost their lives in. Oh, good neighbour Menato, you could see nothing but piles and piles of dead bones and the sky above!

MENATO: Pox on it, you did go a long way! What language do they speak in that country? Can you understand them? Are they men of flesh and blood, just like you and me? Are they? Are they like us?

RUZZANTE: Yes, they're flesh and blood like us.... And they speak the same language as we do.... But they talk very badly.... Just like those louts who hawk seeds round the

villages. Still, they get christened in church.... And they make bread the same way as we do.... Why, they even get married! To tell you the honest truth, though.... All these soldiers and wars have sent love packing, with a kick in the backside!

MENATO: What kind of land is it? Is it good farming land?

RUZZANTE: Like what it is here.... You get willows, poplars, vines, fruit-trees growing there....

MENATO: Can you buy land cheap there? I mean people like us.... Who might like to go and live there, you know.

RUZZANTE: Not a word more, good neighbour.... I know what you mean. No, you wouldn't be any better off there than you are here. Stick to Padua.... And don't take any notice of the fine tales you hear. Now there's something I've been meaning to ask you for some time now, but you've kept on getting me talking about other things.... But now I *am* going to ask it.... Have you got any news of my wife?

MENATO: Well, Ruzzante.... She's got proper high and mighty! Blast her, she won't even condescend to pass the time of day now! When you went off she took up with that God-forsaken riff-raff in the Cardinal's stables down in Padua.... Then when *they* left she came over here to Venice.... And now she's living with God knows who.... As fine a bunch of ruffians, pimps and back-alley braggarts as you could wish to meet! Shall I go on, Ruzzante? I used to....er.... *visit* her myself, you know. My God, she's an overhearing insolent bitch now! She won't know *you* now.... Especially as your clothes are all in rags!

RUZZANTE: You're wrong there, good neighbour! As soon as she claps eyes on me, she'll fling her arms around my neck! You'll see!

MENATO: I don't think she will!

RUZZANTE: D'you know where she lives? Let's go and find her! Come on!

MENATO: But look here, Ruzzante.... We've got to watch out what we do.... They're a vicious lot!

RUZZANTE: Pooh! So what? Tell me.... Do you know anybody tougher than me? Huh! If they're a lot of awkward so-and-sos.... So am I! And, what's more, I can't wait to get my hands on them....! *And her!* When I start laying about me with this pike.... You'll soon see that I've been through the wars all right!.... This is how I'll hit 'em! A couple of hearty jabs with the end.... Like this, good neighbour!.... And then a proper bashing! What d'you think of me now, Menato? Haven't I become a tough character? Once I get to grips it's to Hell with family, to Hell with friendship! I get in such a temper that I just don't know t'other from which any longer! And d'you know what?.... I've got quite a soft spot for you, as you know.... But, if it came to a fight, I'd give you as good a walloping as I'd give them!.... I'd be so mad! See?

MENATO: Pox on it, Ruzzante! If a fight started it wouldn't be safe to come near you!

RUZZANTE: Huh! I should just damn' well say it wouldn't! So you'd just have to get out of the way. Now, come on.... Let's get going! Don't be afraid!

MENATO: But I tell you, Ruzzante.... It's a.... Well! It doesn't need much of a knock to kill a man!

RUZZANTE: Huh! Pooh! Now what would you have done if you'd been in my place, that time I had three thousand of 'em on to me, all at once? Come on! Don't be scared! Besides, can't you see, I've got this pike!

MENATO: Why, look!.... There she is, Ruzzante!.... Coming along now.... Over there! Oh, it's her all right! No doubt about it!

RUZZANTE: Yes, it's her all right! Now just you watch and see if she doesn't jump into my arms! Hey, you there! Hoi! Yes, you there! "Who do I think I'm talking to?.. " Come on now, my lusty bedfellow! Can't you see?.... It's *me!* Back at last!

GNUMA: Ruzzante? Is it really you? Huh! So you're still alive then? Ugh! What a sight you are! Scruffy, filthy!.... *And* you've got a nasty hanging look about you! And I suppose it's true you haven't got anything after all this?

RUZZANTE: Isn't it enough for you that I've brought my carcase back home?

GNUA: Your bloody carcase! That'll make me fat! I thought you'd at least have brought me back a dress or something!

RUZZANTE: But isn't it better for me to have come back as I have.... With all my arms and legs in their proper places?

GNUA: I'd much rather you'd brought me something useful! However.... I must be off. There's someone waiting for me.

RUZZANTE: My God, you're in a hurry to get away again! Anyone'd think you had a cannon at your backside! Wait a bit!

GNUA: What for? What's the use of me hanging about here if you've got nothing for me? Let me go!

RUZZANTE: So it's be damned to all the love I've ever had for you, is it? You want to go off and hide yourself!.... And here's me..... Come back from the wars to see you!

GNUA: Well, you've seen me now, haven't you? To tell you the truth.... I don't want you to muck things up for me.... Now that I've found someone who keeps me in comfort and treats me well.... It's certainly not every day that you strike such good luck.

RUZZANTE: Huh! So he treats you well, does he? Well.... So did I! You know very well that I've never treated you badly! And he can't love you as much as I love you!

GNUA: Ruzzante.... Do you know who loves me most? The one that shews it most!

RUZZANTE: That's right.... And haven't I?

GNUA: What good to me now is something you've done in the past and can't do now? It's *now* I need things! Now! Don't you realise that I have to eat every day? If one meal a year was enough to keep me alive, then you could talk! But I have to eat every single day.... So you've got to shew how much you love me *now*.... Because it's now that I need it!

RUZZANTE: Pooh! But you've got to allow for there being differences between one man and another. Now I.... As you know.... Am a *good* man and a very able one!

GNUA: Oh, here's a fine how-d'ye-do! There's a difference, too, between being well off and being badly off! Listen to me, Ruzzante! If I saw that you could keep me, I'd take you quick enough. Oh, I'd love you then, you see. But when I think of how poor you are, I can't stand the sight of you. It's not that I wish you any ill.... It's just that I hate the wretched state you're in. I'd very much like you to be rich.... Then we'd both be in clover.

RUZZANTE: Well, if I *am* poor, at least I'm faithful!

GNUA: What use is your faithfulness to me, if you can't give me some practical proof of it? What have you got to give me? A few lice, I suppose?

RUZZANTE: But you know well enough that if I had anything I'd give it to you.... Like I've always done! Do you want me to go thieving and get myself hung? Is that what you want me to do?

GNUA: And do you want me to live on *air*? And keep on hoping that you'll fish up something?.... Till I peg out from hunger? You're a fine sort of husband, aren't you? Is that what you want?

RUZZANTE: Hell and damnation! But I've still got one way of making you.... I feel faint! Haven't you got any pity for me?

GNUA: And what about me? I've got a wholesome fear of dying of starvation. You don't think of that! Haven't you got any conscience at all? I want something more out of life than selling leeks and radishes! How in Heaven's name am I to live?

RUZZANTE: But if you leave me I shall die of love for you! I *am* dying, I tell you!.... I'm passing out!

GNUA: And I tell you that because of what you've done my love's all gone! Only to think how you've managed to bring back exactly nothing!.... Instead of what you should've done:

RUZZANTE: God's my life! Huh! You're worried to death about what you haven't got! I'm all right.... I've got all that's necessary!

GNUA: Yes, you've got a big heart and.... You're a bit shaky on your legs.... No, I can't see anything I want!

RUZZANTE: But I've only just got here!

GNUA: But it's four months since you went away!

RUZZANTE: It's also four months since I last *Troubled* you.

GNUA: But you're certainly giving me enough trouble now....

When I see you looking such a beggar.... And what's more I've been troubled all the time you've been away, because I had a very shrewd idea that this was how you'd turn up!

RUZZANTE: But it was just my bad luck!

GNUA: Then you can take your punishment! You don't want me to take it for you, do you? Or do you think perhaps that that'd be the decent, honest, wifely thing to do, eh? Eh, sweetheart? Huh! I certainly don't think so!

RUZZANTE: But it's not my fault!

GNUA: Oh, no! It's *mine*, isn't it, Ruzzante? The man who's afraid to run a few risks'll never get fat! I don't believe you made the slightest effort to get anything.... Otherwise you'd have something to shew for it! So help me God! I'll wager you've never so much as set eyes on a battlefield! You spent all the time in some hospital, I'll be bound! Can't you see what a wretched villainous hangdog look you've got?

MENATO: There you are, Ruzzante.... Isn't that just what I said? You should have got your face all cut about.... Slashed to ribbons! That would've been much better, wouldn't it? Then she'd have thought you'd been a proper brave soldier.

GNUA: Listen, good neighbour Menato, I'd rather have had him lose an arm or a leg.... Or have got one of his eyes gouged out.... Or his nose sliced off.... So that then people'd think that he'd been a brave fellow, and that he'd got them either because he'd been after the plunder....

Or because his love had spurred him on.... See? It's not the plunder I'm interested in, if you get my meaning, good neighbour Menato.... There's nothing I need.... No.... It's because it looks as though I don't matter a damn to him.... And because people'll think he behaved like a lily-livered coward. He promised me he'd come back loaded with plunder or die in the attempt.... And instead he's come back looking like this! Not, you know, Menato, that I'd wish him to have got hurt.... But he might at least look as if he'd been in a battle!

MENATO: I know what you mean, good neighbour Gnuia.... And, by God, you couldn't be more right! And I've told him so myself, too! What you'd like is for him to have some kind of mark to shew he'd been in the fighting.... And so as it'd look as if he'd been well up front.... And in the thick of it.... Say a scratch, at least!

GNUA: Yes.... So that when he shewed it to me he could say: "I got this for your sake."

RUZZANTE: Blast all plunder! And blast the man who first thought of it!

GNUA: And blast all lazy good-for-nothings and traitors! And blast whoever it was that made them! What was it you promised me?

RUZZANTE: I tell you.... I was just unlucky!

GNUA: You never spoke a truer word! And as for me.... Well, now that I'm comfortably off.... And *not* unlucky.... I'm going to stay that way.... And not get tangled up in your troubles. You mind your own business, and I'll mind mine. Damn! There's my man now! Let me go!

RUZZANTE: Blast your man! I'm the only man you've got!

GNUA: Let me go, you miserable, lazy, good-for-nothing cur! You thieving, vagabonding, lousy....!

RUZZANTE: *You come with me!* I tell you, you bitch, you won't make me....! Now, don't make me lose my temper! You don't know me as I am now! I'm not going to let you lead me by the nose any more.... Like you used to do!

MENATO: You'd better be going before he kills you!

GNUA: Huh! Let him go and kill lice! That's more in his line, the thieving rogue!

SCENE 2

The bravo who is Gnu's protector arrives at this moment. He gives Ruzzante a thorough good hiding.*

When he has gone off again, Ruzzante gets up and says

RUZZANTE: I say, Menato, have they gone? Anybody about still? Have a good look round!

MENATO: No, Ruzzante, he's gone.... And she's gone with him. Nobody here now.

RUZZANTE: But what about the others? Have they all gone, too?

MENATO: What others? I only saw one!

RUZZANTE: There must be something wrong with your eyes then! There were about a hundred of 'em.... All beating me up!

MENATO: Bloody Hell, there wasn't, Ruzzante!

RUZZANTE: Bloody Hell, there was, Menato! D'you think you know more about it than I do myself? That *would* be a fine joke! So you think I might be piling it on a bit, eh? *One against a hundred....* That's what it was.... *See!* You might at least have given me a bit of help, Menato, or joined in somehow!

MENATO: Not likely! Did you want me to shove myself in among you.... When you'd just told me that you were a real hot-headed fighter? And that once you got started I had to get out of the way.... Or else you'd've given me a bashing too? 'Cause you get so worked up you don't even recognise your friends and relations!

RUZZANTE: I certainly did say that.... But all the same.... When you saw me all by myself against so many You should have helped me! Who do you think I am? Roland?

* It is clear from the term employed in the original stage-direction that Ruzzante's pike is turned to effective and painful service against him.

MENATO : But honest, Ruzzante, there was only one of 'em . . .

Honest there was ! And I thought you were letting him have a good go at you so as to get him tired . . . And then, when he'd worn himself out, you'd jump on him and get your own back ! See what I mean, Ruzzante ? And then I thought the idea was that when you'd got him tired, and given him a proper bashing, he wouldn't be in a fit state to go off with your Gnuu . . . Or, I thought, you might have some other idea in mind. You should've told me !

RUZZANTE : No, Menato . . . I didn't think of that ! I didn't budge 'cause I was pretending to be dead . . . Just like I used to on the battlefield . . . So that they'd go away . . . See ? It's the best thing to do when you're on your own against so many.

MENATO : But honest, Ruzzante, honest . . . *There only was one of 'em !* Why didn't you use your pike ?

RUZZANTE : You can say what you like . . . But I know what I'm saying . . . *And I know what happened !* I'm used to it, I can tell you ! *It was a hundred of 'em on to one !* And if you think I'm exaggerating you're talking out of the back of your neck !

MENATO : But, Ruzzante, he was all by himself ! I swear it to you ! On my oath !

RUZZANTE : Well if he was on his own there's some sort of trickery somewhere ! Some witchcraft or God knows what ! *She* did it ! That's what . . . She's a witch ! What do *you* think ? And hasn't she bewitched me too into thinking her the most beautiful woman in the world ? When I know all the time that she's not . . . And that there're plenty better than her . . . There you are . . . And now she's made me see a hundred men instead of one ! So help me God, didn't I seem to see a whole forest of weapons whirling about ready to hit me ? There was one moment when I saw so many sharp ends coming for me that I thought I was going to be sliced into thin air ! And did I say my prayers ! *Did I !* Phewew ! Pox gripe her guts ! I'd like to burn her alive ! That's what I'd like to do ! Damn it all, Menato, why didn't you tell me there was only one of 'em ? Bloody Hell, you should've told me !

MENATO: Bloody Hell yourself!.... I thought you saw him! He was near enough to you!

RUZZANTE: But I tell you.... I saw more than a hundred of 'em! Oh, well! What d'you think of me, Menato? Me.... Who took a bashing like that and didn't bat an eyelid. Am I.... Or am I not.... A fine brave tough fellow?

MENATO: *Bashing* did you say, Ruzzante? Damn me, it'd've killed a horse!.... Never mind you! All I could see was a bit of sky and wallop-wallop-wallop-wallop! Isn't it painful, Ruzzante? I don't know how you're still alive to tell the tale.... Honest I don't!

RUZZANTE: Oh, I'm used to it, good neighbour! I've grown a thick skin.... I don't feel a thing now.... But what *does* hurt me is to know what you've just told me.... That there was only one of 'em! If I'd known that.... Well, I was thinking up the best trick I've ever cooked up in my whole life! I'd have tied him and her together.... And then.... With the pair of 'em tied up like that.... I'd have bunged 'em into the canal! See? Hey, it'd've been bloody funny! Oh, Bloody Hell! You should've told me! By God, we'd've got a good laugh! Mind you, I'm not saying I'd've gone so far as to give him a wallop.... For love of her I wouldn't've done that.... I shouldn't like to cause her pain.... 'Cause I still love her.... If you see what I mean? But it'd've been bloody funny! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!

MENATO: Sink me!.... The way you're splitting your sides laughing.... Anyone'd think there was a huge joke somewhere! Or else that you'd just come from seeing a funny play.... Or else that you'd just been getting drunk at a wedding!

RUZZANTE: Bloody Hell, Menato!.... What does it matter? What do I care? It'd've been killingly funny if I'd've tied 'em together.... Still perhaps then you'd've told me not to put on any more comedies.*

* We think that this is by way of *envoy*. It sounds like a gentle hint for applause and for shouts of *More!*

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WORDS

NOT MANY PEOPLE REALISE THAT words have shapes in exactly the same way that pots and pans have shapes. Ordinary words, those we use most of the time, have quite commonplace shapes. They look, all of them, rather like jellyfish at low tide, or melting ice-cream. My first drawing is of an ordinary word; in fact I heard it five times on the tram coming up from town, and I was able to make a quick sketch of it before it got off at Cookridge Street baths.

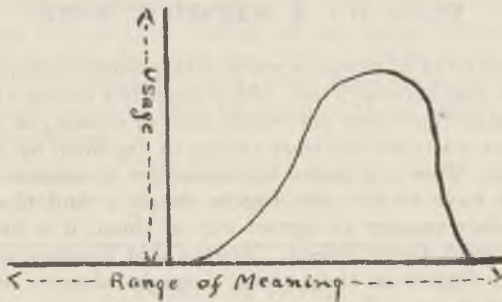


FIGURE I: AN ORDINARY WORD.

You will see that it is a fairly tall word, nicely proportioned and altogether solid-looking. Words like this are popular because people know roughly where the words are, but yet, if they wish, they can overlap the curly bit at the bottom with other words,

The words that the scientists use are of a different shape. They are thin and spiky, and they stand bolt upright. You can see them from a long way off, and, as a consequence, you know exactly where the words are. Figure II is a drawing of the word *hypochlorite*, a typical scientific word.

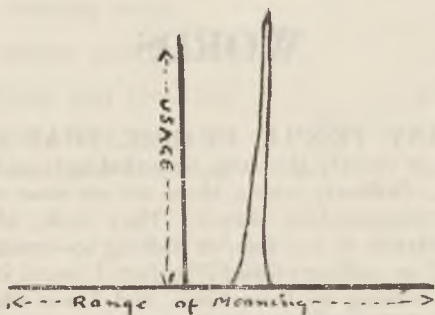


FIGURE II : A SCIENTIFIC WORD.

By virtue of its shape, a word of this nature has a tendency to sink in, and become fixed. Many scientists devote their lives to digging in their own pet words and, of course, at the same time, other scientists are busy trying to dig them up and push them over. This is a sound situation, for it ensures that the words we have to-day are dug in deeply; and that if any scientist does manage to uproot any of them, it is because he is a very good digger indeed. Newton and Einstein were both very good diggers in their time. I might observe in passing that Newton pressed his words down with a steady push, whilst Einstein hammered his down with a series of little taps.

The words used by mathematicians are really thin, in fact some of them are mere straight lines. The strange thing about a collection of mathematical words is that if you stand over the top of them and look down you cannot see that they are there at all. This confuses many people.

The philosophers and theologians have many words which are obese. Figure III is a drawing of the word *truth*.

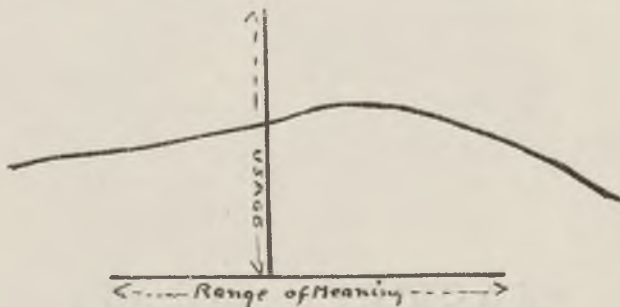


FIGURE III: THE WORD "TRUTH."

This word is definitely flabby. You will observe that although it appears to cover a lot of ground, it never actually comes down to earth, no matter how far you look. Words like this are very popular with Bishops because they know that twenty or thirty of them can sit on the same word at the same time without any of them falling off the ends. These words are not dug in very far, and they tend to slide about if you give them a hard enough knock. But however hard you hit them, you will never be able to overturn them. Many people find this frustrating.

If you climb up over a set of religious words and then look down, they seem to be everywhere.

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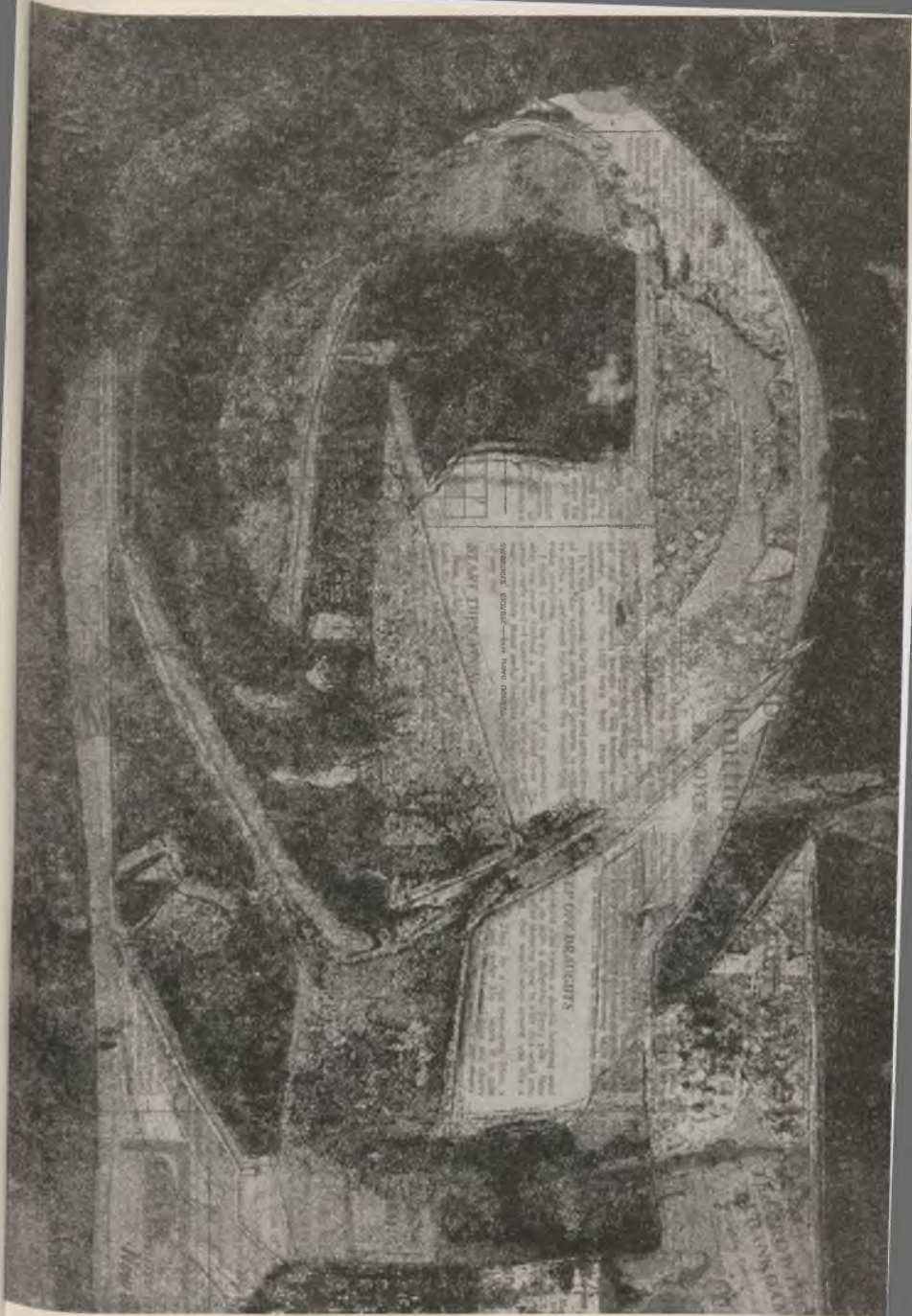


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THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE

The following are three short articles as to the purpose of existence upon this planet. In our next issue we hope to publish further views upon this subject. In doing so we hope to preserve a cross-section of thought amongst students of the University upon the greatest of all problems that confront mankind.

The title of this two-part symposium may be taken by some as being pretentious and far beyond the capabilities of the undergraduate. For has not this subject baffled thinkers of all ages?

We are prepared to concede nothing, even if, in publishing, we are damned.

“**A** SAINT IN A REAL STATE NEVER does anything, a martyr does something, but a really good saint does nothing and so I wanted to have *Four Saints* that did nothing and I wrote *Four Saints in Three Acts* and they did nothing and that was everything. Generally speaking anybody is more interesting doing nothing than doing anything.”

Thus Miss Gertrude Stein, writing of her play *Four Saints in Three Acts*. Though Miss Stein's attitude is doubtless an extreme one, the spirit of the passage I quote is widespread in intellectual circles. There is, in contemporary Western culture, a mist of despair, personal fantasy and perversion that has frequently been contrasted with the positive mood of the middle

Nineteenth century. *Student* circles are, quite naturally, much influenced by this dismal spirit of its age, and there is a marked tendency to adopt one of a variety of religious faiths, to turn to cynicism, or even an unfortunate intellectual irresponsibility. Many, consciously, or unconsciously, find their only purpose in becoming "cultured persons." The intellectual environment which produces such an attitude is a product of society, and its lack of power to inspire any sense of purpose is a reflection of the present state of this society.

Despite poetry readings in pubs, the Arts in Britain are still very much the product of the upper middle class. This being so, it is not surprising that they exhibit such a degree of despair and indecisions, for the middle classes are bound, economically and intellectually, to a social system which is in profound crisis. In the middle Nineteenth century, when "private enterprise" as we are taught to call it, was expanding the force of production at an unprecedented rate, when technical problems, which had seemed insoluble, were giving way before the advance of science, progress seemed inevitable, and Kipling truly reflected the mood of the time. With the turn of the century, however, the conflicts within society, which had been hidden from all but the discerning, came into the open—two World Wars, a Revolution and economic collapse destroyed the basis of the old optimism. The present cult of disillusion is the product of a class that cannot solve its problems, it cannot find any way out of the economic difficulties that threaten ruin, nor can it stomach a radical solution which would destroy its privilege and upset its long-accustomed and cherished way of life. To say this is not, of course, to say that a poet as Mr. Eliot writes in the full consciousness of the impotence of his social class, but nevertheless this impotence is the unrecognised source of the attitude to life expressed in his work.

Philosophy, too, bears the signs of despair. The philosophy of Science has shown an alarming tendency in recent years to the grossest obscurantism—a tendency, fortunately, not followed by many scientists. Pure Idealism, with its logical shortcomings, is not in favour, but more rational constructions, such as Logical Positivism—which denies any real meaning to moral

judgments—are in great vogue. Ever since it emerged from popular myth, Philosophy has been developed—indeed, could have only developed—in a class society, which was until recently the only form of society which could maintain sufficient people with sufficient leisure to create and develop Philosophy and sophisticated culture. Necessarily, the leisured class is the dominant economic class, a fact which has important consequences. Philosophy is conventionally thought of as a disinterested search for truth, whereas, in reality, Philosophers are so conditioned by the society in which they live—and in particular by their class-position in society—that their conclusions inevitably tend to support its continued existence, particularly in those fields of philosophy which touch on the nature and purpose of society. This is especially true in Ethics, where values have been set up to suit the requirements of a very great variety of very different societies. The upper-class nature of Philosophy ensures, too, that it remains separated from the lives of ordinary, unsophisticated people. Moral philosophy has largely remained aloof to real conflicts of the world and has been primarily contemplative and abstract. Moreover, there has been an excessive emphasis on discussion of individual virtue, at the expense of the consideration of broader social morality. The great bulk of ordinary people have, then, lived unaware of the ponderings of the philosophers; they have fought and died for clan or family unaware that some philosophers have declared self-interest the only motive, and they have struggled to fulfil their elementary needs and desires unaware of the theologians who declared that mankind without a God would be devoid of purpose.

A great deal of ethical controversy appears irrelevant when we ask what the majority of human beings want... An ethic founded firmly on the needs and desires of mankind provides us at once with purpose, with no need to appeal to the supernatural. Purpose for the individual ceases to be a problem for abstract (and frequently morbid) reflection, and becomes conceivable only in terms of the expressed aims of mankind. Purposes seen as part of the process of living within society, not as an element inside the individual, but as arising in the

social conflict between aspiration and frustration. The heights to which mankind can aspire is determined by the social and intellectual level of his society; Plato could not conceive of a universal democracy. But in the conflict between the frustration by an obsolete society of the aspirations of the new rising forces within it, society is itself changed, and the possibility of new and higher aspirations arise. Purpose is not static but dynamic, growing and changing with the growth and change of society, and in turn helping the process of change. It is not surprising, then, that a class whose existence depends upon the continued maintenance of society as it is, should produce an ideology which does not recognise such a view of purpose as part of a social process. Purpose, for them, must be conceived principally in terms of the isolated individual, which leads to a search for a purpose outside the individual and higher than mankind. In the present state of society, to recognise purpose as a social phenomenon implies a degree of criticism of our society that, as yet, few intellectuals are willing to make.

JOHN GREENSHAW.

I.

SOMETIMES EVERYTHING AROUND US seems foolish and futile. One wonders if it is worth while contributing anything at all to our fellow beings, even if one is able to. All the world appears unreal. One remembers that "the unreal never is, the real never ceases to be," and yet one is inclined to dismiss all creation as unreal as it is transitory. Existence seems purposeless.

Pride, ambition and qualities like these, however, make one do one's best to get a place in the world-picture. To the

fashionable intellectual these are real. Things like God are anachronisms ; the concept of an infinite supreme Being a huge hoax perpetrated in early times by high priests to exploit gullible multitudes. He deems that it is unfortunate that in the modern, scientific and material world people still believe in such hocus-pocus.

Nevertheless, quite a few millions of people do believe in a God, one way or another, and attribute some kind of Divine Purpose to Nature's pattern. I am one such. To these, it should be confessed, life without a God would be quite purposeless.

II.

"Denial of God we have known ; denial of truth we have not known. God is truth," says Gandhi. Truth is indeed God, something perfect, ancient and everlasting. The whole universe rests on this eternal truth, and works according to its plan.

Thus, to some extent, life on this earth is predestined, as, for example, all who are born are someday going to die, and though what one does during the period between these two events appears to be entirely voluntary, there seems to be some purpose in that one was born.

The Universe can be likened to a huge jigsaw puzzle where all the pieces perform essential functions, only this jigsaw changes, and goes on changing endlessly. This ever-changing face of the Universe is called *Maya* by the Hindu. He sees no permanence in this world, and therefore calls the Universe an illusion, but being of Divine origin it seems very like reality. To him only God exists. "Everything in Himself and Himself in everything ; His purpose inscrutable."

III.

"The pot is always boiling and always full of liquid. The contents do not alter when something is put in or something taken out. It is on top of a mountain, surrounded by concentric rings of mountain ridges diverging like ripples to eternity. A droplet of liquid is thrown off by the pot and falls somewhere in one of the valleys. Thou, oh mortal, art it.

Weapons cleave not nor fire burneth, nor the wind drieth; unmanifest, unthinkable, immutable, thou art ancient, everlasting and permanent.

As a man casting off worn-out garments taketh new ones, even so, thou cast off worn-out bodies and enter those that are new. Or, like some traveller who, going a long distance, changes his horse at intervening stops, until he arrives at the place he was destined for, even so you change countless bodies to come back to your own final rest."

This is the language of the Upanishads. The analogy is simple. Here is a monistic doctrine, based on an indestructible soul and a cycle of births.

God is the Pot of Liquid and the droplet the soul. The soul is perfect when it leaves the source; it has an instinctive desire to return, but, from the very moment it is born, it is bound to the earth by various voluntary and involuntary acts and becomes tarnished. Now the law of *Karma* has to work itself out until all the various actions of the soul nullify one another and the sum total becomes zero, when it can once again return to its rightful place. This takes a series of births and deaths as represented by the mountain ridges. To rid oneself of the "world-illusion" is not easy and can be done only by realising that one is oneself part and parcel of the primordial spirit, as everything around one is. This can be accomplished in many ways; the way of the *Gita* is simple, and so one is inclined to suggest: "Strive towards that freedom from the pairs of opposites; perform action according to Divine guidance so that all the opposites merge, the soul intermingles with the Divine and *Moshka*, or supreme bliss, has been attained."

RAGHU.

TO MANY ENGLISHMEN, I suppose, a Catholic is a pitiable, priest-ridden creature, bedevilled with a strong sense of guilt and prevented by an over-nice conscience from indulging in many of the pleasantest things of life. This view of what the purpose of life is, is likely to be a dreary, moral one.

First, let me say some of the things I think the purpose of life is not. It is not success or the acquisition of money or responsibility or power. It is not happiness. Nor is it primarily doing good to one's neighbour, being unselfish, helping others or seeking to make the world a better place to live in. These latter may be, in fact I hope to show them to be, results of what I think the purpose of life is ; but they are only results and secondary.

I think the purpose of life is to love, obey and serve God. It may seem strange to see this last word so simply used. The Person to Whom we give it as His name, is not, to-day, considered very interesting. Nevertheless this article is supposed to show what I believe. I am not trying to prove anything. To me God is the Person Who has created the whole universe and all things in it. He has no need of it, yet He made it from the overflowing of His love. Once this fact, of God's existence and His love for each human being is realised, then worldly success, pleasure and the other things I mentioned seem less important. I know also that God's ultimate purpose for us all is that we should be happy with Him in eternity.

Were I to close here I can see the result : "Opium for the people ! Fobbing them off in their just complaints about this life with rosy promises of a life to come." One must admit that beside a vision of a blessed eternity the evils of this world must seem small. But is this life forgotten in God's plan ?

If He made us, if it was God Who died for us on Calvary nearly two thousand years ago, if He loves each one of us, then certain things follow. He is responsible for our natures. And if our nature makes us seek to live together in a community of mutual benefit, that is His purpose in making us as we are. For us all God sacrificed His Son, such was His love. And because of that love, and only because of that love must

we love one another. The "Brotherhood of Man" only has reality under God, Who is the Father of all. And that is why the second commandment is like to the first: "Love your neighbour as yourself." The mistake which Communists, humanists and even some Christians make is to forget the first commandment, which is "Love God."

Who loves God? "He who keeps my commandments," God answered. And of those commandments three refer to the duties owed to God and seven to those owed our fellows. All that is good in Communism can be reduced to "Thou shalt not steal."

It is these commandments, which, if we are to love God, we must keep, which are the main stumbling block of many. And yet what are they but the rules devised by the Maker for the use of the things He has made. Nothing in itself is bad, it is the way we use it. As C. S. Lewis has one of the devils to say: "He (God) has filled His world full of pleasures. There are things for humans to do all day long without His minding in the least. . . . Everything has to be *twisted* before it's any use to us. We fight under cruel disadvantages. Nothing is naturally on our side." And elsewhere: "I know we have won many a soul through pleasure. All the same it is His invention, not ours. He made the pleasures: all our research so far has not enabled us to produce one. All we can do is to encourage the humans to take the pleasures which our Enemy (God) has produced, at times, or in ways, or in degrees, which He has forbidden."

For this faith, which is in me, there is no credit to me. Still less may I frown on those who do not share it, for it is a gift. Why it was given to me and not to them I do not know. All I know is that the peace it brings is worth more than all the riches and the wisdom of the world.

JAMES P. MACFARLANE,

George Campbell

**WE BY THE HOLY TOUCH
OF LIPS**

We by the holy touch of lips
defeat the hour's inconstancy
and in the waning terms of night
postpone the dawn's cold jealousy.

And we, who our own dust embrace
where seconds no renewal find,
have sought love's secret geometry,
denying terms by time defined;

but in the dog-eared book of days
our names have found their full extent,
the journal of the hasty years
makes clear our sad predicament.

And worried by the teeth of years
the bone and sinew of our love
bleeds slowly, as with nervous fear
mathematic round the sun we move.

REVIEWS

G. WILSON KNIGHT: LAUREATE OF PEACE

(Published by ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL. Price: 21s.).

“He was a kind of cosmic detective who walked into the foulest of thieves’ kitchens and accused men publicly of virtue.”

G. K. CHESTERTON ON ROBERT BROWNING.

THE LITERARY CRITICS OF THE later Twentieth Century can be distinguished from those of preceding periods principally by their conviction that literature cannot be evaluated *in vacuo*: that an individual cannot, for the purposes of assessment or interpretation abstract a piece of literature from his view of life, his mental, spiritual or ethical conceptions of what life is about. A particular critic will demand certain things from a novel, play or poem, and the extent of his approval will tend to be directly proportional to the extent to which the work in question satisfies those demands. The value of tradition, of concreteness, of specificity, of an organised set of principles, is widely acknowledged. Mr. Knight’s particular contribution has been the perfecting of the technique of spatial-interpretation, which reaches beyond, without ignoring these other issues, for the deepest and richest meanings in literature, and their *contemporary relevance*. What impresses immediately is Mr. Knight’s humility. The farther-reaching the implications of his theory become, the more modest relatively are the claims he makes for them. The discoverers of tradition and specificity tend to deny any real significance to those works which do not fulfil their requirements. At a crucial stage in the exposition of his space-time fusion theory of all art, in *Laureate of Peace* Mr. Knight writes: “I am not arguing that Pope’s peculiar excellence in this province proves him an abler poet than those who have achieved less in it.” This theme recurs

frequently, with the author's generous acknowledgements of all sources which have, in any way, aided his studies.

Laureate of Peace is, in no confined sense a study of Pope alone. It includes a new and vital exposition of the meaning of spatial interpretation, continually illuminating Pope's importance in relation to the great figures surrounding him, Shakespeare, Milton and Dryden on the one hand, Byron and the Romantics on the other. For the distinctive feature of Mr. Knight's method is its capacity for integrating and unifying, for drawing the important poets from each arbitrary *period* into living relationships with each other. Similarities, points of contact are emphasised throughout, without any slurring of individual genius. Mr. Knight writes: "Only in terms of this visionary positive can the satires receive a precise understanding." It is in these terms that Mr. Knight interprets all literature, and what appears at first aggressive and eccentric tolerance is revealed as a deep and creative sympathy.

That part of his book which is specifically committed to a study of Pope's poetry is a revised reprint of the essay *The Vital Flame* which appeared fifteen years ago in *The Burning Oracle*. Starting from *Windsor Forest*, which Mr. Knight claims is the root of Pope's life work, the essay interprets all the great poems, making of them a unified and dynamic achievement, grouped with those of Dante and Shakespeare, in that it reflects a unified and harmonious life-view; based not on the medieval synthesis which was Dante's inheritance, or Shakespeare's subtle interplay of conflicts, but which: "Builds its statement from a mass of pagan and Christian love permeated throughout by the poet's own psychological and religious sensibilities. . . . we may say that his poetic universe flowers from a soil of classical-Renaissance humanism."

Continually stressing the positive values Mr. Knight interprets *The Rape of the Lock* rightly as a product of love rather than scorn, its fun warm, sympathetic, even *cathartic*, but never derisive. Surely, however, he errs in regarding the vignette of Sir Plume as a realisation of personal dignity: rather it is an exquisite realisation of the unconscious ludicrousness of the social nitwit faced with a positive and challenging situation.

Another and later occasion for dispute may be Mr. Knight's claim for Pope that he is a more vital satirist than Dryden, that his vision of *Sporus* "holds a more intense poetic energy, a greater compression of passion, than does Dryden's *Zimri* : that glows, this is white-hot. Dryden draws a real man, but Pope distils, compresses and ejects through one person the living essence of a whole poisoned society." Bearing in mind their strikingly different techniques, I would say the reverse is true. Dryden, after puffing out his victims until, fullblown and helpless, they burst with ridicule, goes on to create from their remains, figures of human folly and stupidity possessing surely the archetypal significance Mr. Knight claims for those of Pope. Pope's satire is more pin-pointed, narrow with the limitations of the destroyer and, though no less minutely observant, permeated with a conscious, burning antagonism towards the individual.

However, in an essay of this size and scope these are quite minor considerations. One can only assent to the interpretation of the *Essay on Man*, which realises as a dynamic and central statement, a work hitherto regarded as the second-hand versification of a second-rate philosophy, or at best "as a pastiche of Bolingbrokeian metaphysics" : while comparatively recent evidence justifies Mr. Knight's claim that this reading of the *Essay* has come to stay.

Finally, I return for a moment to *Symbolic Eternities*, Mr. Knight's explanation of his own methods of approach. Twenty-five years ago Dr. Richards evolved a complex and highly organised system of principles with which to investigate the claims of literature, but has left very few examples of their practical application. *Laureate of Peace*, which incorporates simultaneously a lucid exposition of the theory of spatial interpretation and a full-scale example of its application in practice, is a book invaluable not only to the student of Pope but also to the student of the theory of criticism (here used in its most comprehensive sense). Briefly the theory is, to quote Mr. Knight : "All art may be defined as the attempt to fuse space "with 'time.' Music and literature exist primarily in time, as sequences ; sculpture, painting and architecture, in space.

But this is not the whole story. Each aims to transcend its limitations in space-time. Thus the temporal arts attain 'form' or 'structure,' and are rich with all those meanings which I have regularly defined as 'spatial,' while the spatial arts tend to suggest narrative, or at least to hold some vital significance that trembles on the brink of motion." This statement is expanded to comprehend all arts, grouping O'Shaughnessy unselfconsciously with Milton, Coleridge, Browning and Keats in a particular context, Francis Berry with T. S. Eliot in another, and goes on to include also the latest cinematic experimentation. These groupings may horrify. They needn't. Mr. Knight justifies them without ever claiming that the province within which they are relevant is the whole of literary investigation. It has been claimed, and justly claimed, that this chapter "may be said to constitute a significant advance in aesthetics." The first chapter, *Diction and Doctrine*, demonstrates admirably that Mr. Knight's grasp of less cosmic issues is no less firm and honest.

The peculiar quality of Mr. Knight's work is elusive, hard to characterise. His own remark on *Windsor Forest* will probably serve us best: "Feeling rather burrows into the underlying essence, catches the spirit and atmosphere, enjoys possession with freedom, and so moves on to the universal."

R.O.K.

C. J. STRANKS: DEAN HOOK.

A. R. Mowbray and Co. Ltd., pp. 119 (9/6).

A PEDESTRIAN BIOGRAPHY of interest to Leeds churchgoers and prospective clergymen. This book will never rival Boswell either for matter or style. That Dr. Hook of Leeds was a great man cannot be denied, but a more stimulating and better written biography would have done him more justice.

P.H.G.

R. O. Knight

ROUGH ARCADIA

Our protagonists buy their happiness by suffering

With acknowledgement to G. WILSON KNIGHT

OF RECENT YEARS THEATRE GROUP'S sporadic adventures into Shakespearian production have led to some disturbing discoveries. Foremost amongst these has been a singular disinclination within the Group to take Shakespeare as seriously as it is prepared to take Claudel, Pirandello, Ibsen and Shaw. The formula has previously seemed too easy : select one of the more rumbustious and preferably less popular comedies and exploit it as a jumping-off ground for undergraduate antics and personal mannerism. Not that the result has been bad theatre, more often the contrary has been true. But insofar as they were *Shakespearian* productions they were not so much bad as irrelevant. However, despite serious shortcomings, Derek Boughton's *As You Like It* showed clearly that it is possible to approach a Shakespearian comedy seriously without killing its appeal, that it is not necessary to be irresponsible in order to avoid being hard-of-Avon ridden. He endeavoured honestly to concentrate attention on Shakespeare without trading on audience sympathy with inapt frolic or extraneous exhibitionism. Probably this very honesty of approach exposed the severe limitations of the production. For a Shakespearian production a specific Shakespearian skill is needed, and the very fact that sensibility was not assaulted by spurious substitutes for it, made our awareness of its absence all the more acute. One's principal objection was in point of music. There was too much on the loudspeakers and too little in the play. The voices were unblended and untuned to the requirements of the verse. Only Kenneth Brown using the rich middle of his voice with complete ease, and Richard Colclough's succulent singing which began as a delight but wearied with constant repetition, provided any relief from the prevailing

discord. Clearly Mr. Boughton was trying to do with an inexperienced cast what past producers had fought shy of doing with an experienced one, and it is perhaps churlish to emphasise unduly the artistic failure of the production.

The opening scenes were unfortunate. There was general indecision and lack of unity. The grouping, particularly in the first Arden scene, was statically ugly. The noises backstage were calamitous, and the many side entrances and exits languished in scuffling ineptitude. During this period, Barry Lewis, as Orlando, made a brave attempt to infuse life and movement into the production with athletic gestures and a fervent, if rough, speaking of the verse. To his great credit, he almost succeeded. Later, however, when Adele Buckle, as Rosalind, had donned tights and sailed into the fray and with her scenes in the forest those between Corin and Touchstone and the limpid beauty of the silhouette, the play had gained immeasurably in strength and coherence, Mr. Lewis's performance fell into a corresponding decline, through slackness of approach and hesitant embarrassment over words and phrases.

Mr. Boughton's policy throughout was to avoid emphasising individual personality at the expense of a balanced interpretation. Having acknowledged this as wholly laudable is it paradoxical to complain of a lack of total personality? Perhaps everyone, with the exception of Mr. Lewis in the early scenes, was just a little too self-effacing. Alan Smith clowned intelligently, if never *very* funnily, but consistently failed to resolve his more spectacular gestures. Arthur Cockerill, who played on too low a register, suggested expressionless physical fatigue rather than the bland, mocking melancholy of Jacques. Anthony Burton and John Johansenberg as the Dukes Senior and Usurper respectively, lacked feeling and articulate power, while Michael Lawrence as Oliver relied almost entirely on the sinister sibilant. Patricia Thomas's Celia spoke her lines unfeelingly, though with an eleutionary sort of clarity, and, later, during the long wooing scenes, smiled prettily from the back of the stage. Undoubtedly, the worst offenders were the commonalty's amorous representatives Silvius and Phebe. As Silvius, David Denham-Hutchinson spoke and gestured with

unselfconscious clarity, thereby emphasising the complete inappropriateness of his costume and voice. Neither remotely suggested the Forest of Arden, but rather a strange attempt to reconcile *Sir Fopling Flutter* with *Wuthering Heights*; while Christine Barrett, as his partner, looked like *Patience* and reduced her speeches to a smear of words by toneless gabbling.

This lack of a pervading dynamism resulted in failure to define the inherent oppositions of the play. The summer-winter opposition, the contrast of nature's unkindness with human cruelty, these have, since *The Shakespearian Tempest* become commonplaces of our interpretive heritage, and, while their significance was not ignored by the producer, they failed ultimately to be dramatically realised by his cast: in short, one remained unconvinced that our protagonists were buying their happiness by suffering.

And where the actors failed, the set gave no assistance. The backcloth for Oliver's house was visually the most satisfying thing the critic has seen on the Riley-Smith stage, but it blended too readily with the pastoral greenery of Arden to emphasise the expulsion from civilization, the break from court to country which is the central antithesis of the drama. However, and this cannot be overstated, overemphasised these defects were only made obvious by the fundamental integrity of Mr. Boughton's approach. Having attempted to assess the play on the very high standards Mr. Boughton set himself, it remains to say that there was much that pleased and succeeded. The presentation of "All the world's a stage . . ." was wholly justified in conception and might profitably be exploited more; the wrestling bout was executed with terrifying authenticity; while Michael Allen spoke his long, twaddling speech with a variety and richness of expression, which made one wonder why he had not been cast in a larger part. Admittedly he showed a certain disregard for the importance of gesture, but so did many more important players. A lack of confidence and vocal flexibility was common to all the larger parts, and only Miss Buckle and Cyril Jacob, as Adam, exploited the element of pathos in the play. The small-part players, the amusing sketch of William apart, were shyly inaudible and clearly scared stiff.

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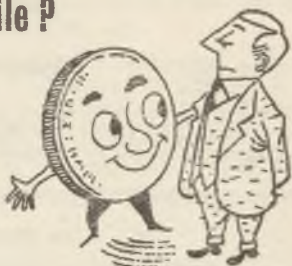
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