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THE GRYPHON

AUTUMN

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JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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EDITORIAL

AND AGAIN it was the turn of Alice.

“And what are you this time, Gryphon?” she asked, prodding nervously at the red ball with her mallet. The ball, of course, missed the hoop. The Gryphon appeared to ignore her question. “That’s the result of hesitancy,” it remarked sagely and adopting the same philosophical posture with which it once posed for Rodin. “There should be a moral somewhere.” It looked under the humbug-striped roses, found nothing and gave up the search. Alice repeated her question. “What do you mean?” asked the Gryphon, rather annoyed at her distracting its attention from a rather difficult angled shot. “Well,” said Alice, “you should know what I mean. What form are you taking? Last time you were a Jubilee Gryphon, glossy like posters in the rain, and before that you were a Satanic Gryphon (and rather frightening), and before that a Double Gryphon complete with 3 D.” The Gryphon began to look like Mr. Micawber: “I anticipated Hollywood,” it said sweepingly. Alice didn’t like to contradict so she said: “Well, Gryphon, are you going to be something like that this time?”

“As a matter of fact,” replied the Gryphon, flicking away the last hoop (which was the Gambler’s Patent Ace of Spades with Ten Things Every Good Gambler Should Know written on the back), “I am not.” It saw a look of disappointment cross Alice’s face. “Not this time, if you don’t mind. It’s not easy, you know, to be a Double Gryphon, a Satanic Gryphon and a Jubilee Gryphon so close together. This time I’m going to be a plain ordinary Gryphon.”

"As you please, if you please," said Alice.

"Actually," went on the Gryphon, "I had thought of being an *avant-garde* gryphon you know writing my name with



a small g like mr cummings spells his with a small c and using all manners of str(a)nge ; p, unc ; tu, (a), tion but i thought it was all reminiscent of façade and dada and the nineteen twenties and anyhow years behind the times and not at all *avant* so i decided to leave the idea alone." He reverted back to capitals and sane punctuation. "But if you want to call me something you can call me

a Mirror, because that's what I really am. You can generally see the fairest of our community if you look into me. Nothing elaborate, of course—not a Merlin's mirror, or a Reynard's mirror, or any mythological mirror you may care to think of. Nonetheless, something more than a shaving mirror. Of course, it's dangerous."

"Why?" asked Alice.

"Once upon a time there was a man who used writing to reflect what he saw in the world ; but when he looked again at what was reflected there he gave up the world for lost and devoted himself to the destruction of humanity. Leaders of literary movements and Editors do it quite often."

"What is an Editor?"

"Once upon a time they were jovial men, but they took for their symbol the Frowning Eye and the Rejectionslip. They generally have a worried look and are much addicted to narcotics to preserve their mental balance. You can often see them in a position of prayer : they are asking for sanity and guaranteed contributions. And, of course, you know what Carlyle said about them."

Alice said she didn't but she would like to. The Gryphon shook its head and muttered things about Modern Education.

"Don't believe a word of it," it replied. "It's all nonsense." Alice made a mental note not to believe in it (whatever it was) when she read it. And to prevent the Gryphon's head nodding more and more (it was bobbing back and forth like a sewing-machine shuttle), and also to stop his dark meditations on "That the younger generation takes too much for granted," and "If I had had your chance," and "I don't know what the world is coming to," she changed the subject. "I see you are back to your normal size. Did you take something from the bottle that says DRINK ME?" Her eyes lit up. "Oh, you were a wonderful Jubilee Gryphon, being so large as you were. Wouldn't you always like to be as huge as that? I know I'm tired of being small."

"I should like to be a bigger Gryphon," it admitted. "But the Quids won't allow it."

"What are the Quids?"

The Gryphon thought Alice asked too many questions for a small girl, but it answered: "I do not know much about them, but they come from Never-Never-Land, where they are governed by King Kashdeposit. They are the Gryphon's worst enemy for I have so few friends amongst them that they are able to attack me. If I had more of them as friends I could be a bigger Gryphon." It could see a question forming on Alice's lips so it said very hastily: "Look, Alice my girl, that's enough questions for to-day. Let's start another game because the entire court is coming to watch, and they say the Queen may be coming with them. And you know what the Queen's temper is like if she has no entertainment." Alice was well acquainted with the Queen's temper and she agreed: "Yes, do let's start again. But I know you have something more to say about yourself." The Gryphon seemed taken aback. "How did you know?" it asked in a marvelling voice. "It's written all over your face," giggled Alice.

And indeed, in a lovely 10 point Bodoni Italic, there was written: *My aim is to please, and my pleasure is in your entertainment.*"

"I think that's wonderful," said Alice. "Thank you," replied the Gryphon, bowing first to the Queen and then to the court who had just aroused themselves from their afternoon nap to watch the new game.

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CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Contributions are invited for the next number of *The Gryphon*. All MSS., should be put into *The Gryphon* box in the Union, or handed to a member of the editorial staff by

NOVEMBER 8TH.

Who said this ?

- 1 ... Ghinis. Foamous homely brew, be battled by
bottle, gagerne de guegerre.
- 2 There's strength in double joints, no doubt,
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout
That the single sorts know nothing about.
- 3 The chattels of Mrs. Bloss were forwarded by
instalments. First there came a large hamper
of Guinness's stout and an umbrella . . .
- 4 In health I am well; which I ascribe to my
ascetic diet, and the magic of cayenne, which
has completely removed all my nervous sensa-
tions of discomfort as Guinness did last year . . .

ANSWER :

- 1 *James Joyce*, " *Finegan's Wake*".
- 2 *Thomas Hood*, " *Miss Kilmansegg*".
- 3 *Charles Dickens*, " *Sketches by Boz*".
- 4 *Benjamin Disraeli* in a letter to
Mrs. Wyndham Lewis.

We all say
"Lovely day for a GUINNESS"

Susan Tomline

SHEBA TO SOLOMON

"It was a true report I heard in my own country."

*His wisdom is perfect.
With a knife he made peace
Between two mothers of a single child
Without bloodshed.*

*His actions are perfect.
In his fairest temple,
Beneath the wings of the Cherubim, God
Hallowed the Ark.*

*Thy wisdom and actions
Exceed fame.*

*So I bring
A hundred and twenty talents of gold,
And precious stones.*

*All I desired, you gave,
Whatsoever I asked.
I praise, and return to my country, I
And my servants.*

Peter H. Gibson

LET'S FACE IT

A commentary on the new Refectory.

A CURSORY GLANCE at either the Complaints or Suggestions Book or at the files of the *Union News* will show that a hobby horse of the critical student for many years has been the subject of catering. Let's face it—there has been room for complaint, but also, wherever possible, adjustments have been attempted. I purposely use these phrases which lack positive statement as they tend to sum up the whole problem. In the past the individuals responsible for catering have had their "hands tied," as it were, by one material restriction after another. At first it was shortage of food, and then after the war we had the advent of the era of lack of space. There is no denying that in both refectories and particularly in the cafeteria, kitchen space has long been at less than the minimum needed for comfort and efficiency. This could not be helped, and in consequence more often than not any complaint which arose could not be remedied because of the lack of facilities. An example will serve to prove this point. The subject of chipped potatoes is a constant topic of conversation; why are they not served with such and such a dish and so on. Always the very true answer is that there is only one container to fry in and that that is being used for, say, fish. There is no further space in the present kitchens for another piece of frying equipment, and so the situation cannot be altered. Another subject of deliberation has been the constant rise in the price of meals and the equally constant lack of a credit balance to compensate for this. In many ways this has been caused by the overcrowding and the consequent fact that there are four

different places in the University where the preparation and serving of food takes place, and in each of these there is a separate organisation with the attendant overheads ; and thus no unity of policy has been possible. There will be a chance to try and put these faults to right when, in the early part of 1955, the new refectory building comes into use. Let us then take a glance at it before the event takes place, and let us examine what it will have to offer, not only functionally, but socially and artistically.

The New Refectory in action.

Sometime, probably during the Easter term, we shall find that the building has been completed, the equipment and staff have been moved into it, and that a variety of facilities will be available to the University as a whole. You will notice that it is a structure of three storeys : the topmost of these is to be devoted to the Staff House and will hold very little interest for the student population except that the latter will be able to mark the comings and goings of its tutors without moving from the warmth and comfort of the Union. The ground floor consists of three principal parts. These are kitchens, the great dining hall, and a smaller dining room. In the basement will be situated a coffee lounge, a bar, cloakrooms and storerooms. Together with these indoor arrangements there will be a sun parlour on the roof, which will not be available to students, and a terrace opening from the coffee lounge.

The large dining hall has been given all the thought and consideration it deserves and, still more, experts of every kind have been called in to advise on all the technical details ; and the work has been very satisfactorily carried out by the contractors. There will be seating for 767 in this room and this will be arranged in two ways : the greater part will be taken up by large tables to accommodate 16, but there will be a number of tables for 4, thus giving variety, flexibility and character. The method of serving will closely resemble that of any of the Lyons Corner Houses and will be available to four separate queues which will, in their turn, give more rapid dispersal of

numbers. There will be the added attraction of being able to choose from sight rather than from sound. There will be a series of coffee and water serveries at various points of vantage about this room, and there should be consequently a complete absence of congestion. This last detail is further corroborated by the fact that the doorways are so arranged that they will coincide with several entrances as it is hoped that there will be no tendency for the queues to rival one another in popularity. The whole movement of diners has been so planned that it will be convenient, quick and for their greatest comfort.

The hall is fitted with every imaginable kind of device and should be an outstanding example of technical efficiency. The heating system is twofold : on the one hand there is a moving current of thermostatically-controlled air, and on the other, to supplement this, there are radiators along the walls. This air-conditioning is so arranged that there will be no back-flow of cooking smells, a most thoughtful idea. The lighting is to be soothing, but yet adequate, and there will be a system of spot-lights for special occasions. A highly scientific amplification scheme has been conceived and executed, and there will be a tannoy available for urgent calls. The ceilings have been fitted for acoustics. The room is divided into two parts by a moveable screen, and half the floor is to be laid as a sprung dance floor which will take over 400 couples without overcrowding. Every eventuality has been planned for, from balls to conferences and from receptions to banquets, and from every point of view the room is well equipped for each of these.

A word about the kitchens. These are situated in the very centre of the building and thus are most conveniently placed for their function. They are airy, spacious and well lit from above ; the delivery and disposal facilities leave nothing to be desired. In theory, this part of the building will be rival to any other catering establishment in the city. Thus they will not only obviate the former arguments of lack of space but, as they are to have many additional pieces of machinery which will facilitate the production of better meals (probably at a lower total cost), there should be an all round improvement. Let's

face it again—here is plenty of opportunity. We must now wait and see.

The small dining room at the north end of the building is for those who for any reason wish to dine with greater style. It is proposed to have a waitress service and . . . a greater tariff. This will be the place where staff and students can dine together, or where students can entertain their families and friends with a greater degree of comfort and in a slight atmosphere of withdrawal. When necessary, the bigger formal luncheons for the Council and for Honorary Graduates can be held in this room, which is of ideal dimensions for such functions.

The layout of the basement has already been described. The coffee lounge will be very much bigger than the cafeteria and will have two serving counters which will greatly increase the speed of service. The bar room is exactly the same size as the existing one, but the counter will be longer and the atmosphere much more congenial. A very pleasant feature of both these rooms will be the french windows which will in time open on to the terrace and thence lead to gardens. A facility which is now very popular amongst students, namely that of imbibing of one kind or another, will soon become one of greater charm, and leisure spent in this way in these new surroundings will cease to be such hard work.

It cannot be denied from the details given in the above account that the New Refectory has everything to offer. We must be sure that on our part we create the right kind of tradition within the walls and have sufficient imagination to use the opportunities which this environment offers. The question of the degree of success which the refectory will have is locked up with us and when the time comes we must make certain that we turn the key in the right direction. If we do this our life in the University will be a fuller one. This is perhaps rather an abstruse comment, but reflection and experience will prove its truth as it did in a similar situation when the Parkinson building was opened. Care must be taken that we do not seize the new situation and impose our old ways upon

it. We must use the new facility with perception and the correct energy.

The New Refectory as a work of Art.

We are confronted with an idea which is one of extreme utility and great foresight. What of its execution? First we would impress readers that the architect was faced with several limitations when he was asked to plan a building of this type. There were difficulties of site, with the Union on the east, Lyddon Hall on the south (although this will eventually disappear), the gymnasium on the west, and a planned new road to the north. Added to this there was the matter of expense and also the limited availability of certain building materials. These circumstances are unsurmountable. But why had the building to be so dull? We must face it—it is dull. There are only two really interesting features in the building and both of these are at present obscured by Lyddon Hall. I refer to the rounded apse that forms the southern elevation of the building, and to the striking window that runs the whole length of the staircase to the east. To offset these two credits there are debits in the eyesore of a sun parlour and several minor features. The use of brick dressed with stone on the copings and sills is attractive and helps the building to harmonize with the Union, but the excrescent and ridiculous flower boxes are nothing less than hideous.

The façade of the building will eventually be on a main road and is singularly uninspired and fails completely to relate itself to the existing buildings it adjoins. One realises that the two buildings are not intended to be related functionally, but they are perforce related geographically and so surely greater attention might have been paid to a balance of levels at the top, or to some true relation between the doorways. In this respect there is no outstanding achievement artistically.

The inside of the edifice at one time looked like an overgrown barn, but now as it nears completion is beginning to diminish. There is no getting away from the enormous size, and especially the extravagant height of the main room. But

it is well lit and when furnished will have a certain, perhaps elegant, dignity. Of the Staff House nothing significant need be said as we shall not have recourse to use any of the numerous lounges and dining rooms. One very striking feature of this "forbidden" part of the building, however, is the so-called combined lounge which is the loveliest of them all. It is situated in the apse and has windows from floor to ceiling and has a lightness and grace which is not found anywhere else in the University. Of all the rooms this is undoubtedly the greatest success, the only regret being that more people will not be able to appreciate its beauty. The basement is regrettably dark and seems on first sight to be cluttered with pillars. This feeling will no doubt disappear when the decorators have finished their work.

The total effect of the refectory, both inside and outside, is one of ponderous stolidity. Here there is certainly a sound structure which will be an asset functionally, but function can surely be wedded to imagination. It may be that we are intoxicated with ideas of hyper-contemporary architecture, but one does feel that in this depressingly pedestrian structure some greater attempt might have been made towards introducing ideas which were not out of date twenty years ago. That there are attractive features we have not denied, but it is a shame that the best of these can only be seen from the back of the building, and even then there is no vantage point from which the elevation can be truly savoured. This fact also applies to the Union, the most pleasing aspect of which can only be seen from the net on the tennis court. It would be nice if we could face it.

The New Refectory and its interior decoration.

No effort has been spared by any of those concerned with the furnishing of the rooms; the much-slandered Dr. Lodge has been most anxious about this matter. In every case function and design have been considered in direct relation to the room in question. The full result of this will not be seen until the last days before the opening, but the ideas are interesting. In the

dining hall, everything has been studied, from the colour and pattern of the floor to the screens that will hide the serving hatches when required. The juxtaposition of table-tops and floor and of both with the upholstery of the chairs were for a long time a pressing problem. All the discussion has now finished and orders have been placed for furniture which will lend a pleasingly dignified atmosphere to this room. There have been no split-second decisions on these matters and the result should be a notable achievement with a contemporary flavour ; an unobtrusive yet well defined character which will not go out of date very quickly, if ever. The chairs are light beech and are covered with a subtle shade of green hide, the moulded table-legs match those of the chairs in colour, and the tops are in keeping with the flooring, part of which will be in traditional parquetry, but the dance-floor will be in an attractive geometrical design which is to be repeated by a similar one in the curtains.

The new refectory should prove a very sound investment. Functionally it will fill a gap that has ached almost for too long ; its success will be mainly in this sphere. It is not an achievement of great aesthetic value, but on the other hand it is not a hideous monstrosity or an eye-sore. Let's face it—it is dull, but we will probably respect it very much more when we finally discover how well it fits in with the other buildings that Dr. Lodge has planned. He will certainly have given Leeds a set of University buildings of unified character and vision, however we may disparage them for their failure to be *avant-garde*.





James S. Lee

THEY WALK OBSCURE

H E TOLD HIS MOTHER that he didn't believe in God and she sent him upstairs to his bedroom.

"What did you say?" she asked. Her words came quickly and sharply.

He told her again.

"Go up to your bedroom at once."

He tried to tell her that he wanted to talk to her. He wanted to tell her about all the trouble he felt inside himself. But when he made an effort to speak, to sort out his thoughts into words, she slapped her hands together and shouted: "Don't talk to me! Go up to your bedroom!"

He hunched his shoulders and walked to the foot of the stairs.

"I'm sorry!" he said, turning his head to look at her over his shoulder. "I'm sorry!" He didn't know why he was saying he was sorry. Deep down inside he didn't really feel sorry.

His mother merely stood with a blank expression on her face.

"Go up to your bedroom!" she said again.

He rushed up the stairs and into his bedroom.

The door slammed shut behind him.

He didn't feel sorry about it. The only thing he felt sorry about was that he had ever told his mother at all. He had thought that she would have been able to help him, to talk to him and tell him of things he knew nothing about. And when he had summoned up all his courage and gone into the kitchen and stood behind her for a while and then said: "I don't believe in God!" all she had done was to clap her hands together and shout: "Go up to your bedroom!"

She hadn't even tried to help him one little bit. She hadn't even realised he wanted helping. She just clapped her hands together and said : " Go up to your bedroom ! "

He moved over to the dressing table and picked up one of the two glass swans. It was cold. But after a little while the heat from his hand made it warm, warm and smooth. He took it with him and sat on the edge of the bed.

He tried to listen for his mother coming upstairs, but there was no sound. Not even the sound of her moving about in the kitchen. Judging by the quietness of the house she had gone out. She had gone out and left him sitting on the edge of the bed. She didn't even realise he wanted to be helped.

He hated his mother.

After a while he put the warm swan back on the dressing-table and picked up the cold one. Then he took it back to the bed. There was still no sound from downstairs.

He wondered what time it was. He seemed to have been up in his bedroom for a long, long time. An hour—or two perhaps. But there was still no sound from downstairs—only the silence. Perhaps his mother had left him. She had gone away from him, she was ashamed of what he had said. But he was not ashamed. He had thought about it for a long time and he had had to tell someone. He was ashamed of his mother for not realising he had wanted to talk to her about it. She had merely clapped her hands together and said : " Go up to your bedroom ! " And there he was, in his bedroom, sitting on the edge of his bed, playing with a smooth, warm, glass swan.

He hated his mother.

Then he heard the front door open and his father walk into the hall. He could hear him struggling with his overcoat and he heard him rattle his umbrella into place in the stand. Then he heard the buzz of his voice ; then the shriller buzz of his mother's voice.

There was a silence. And then the two voices began to buzz again. Sometimes alternately, sometimes both together. And the buzz became louder and louder, and as it became louder, some of the sounds were not buzzes but words.

He heard his father say : “ . . . an idiotic thing . . . ” and “ . . . why the devil . . . ” and once he heard his mother screech : “ Because I’m ashamed of him.”

And he had the feeling that his father was defending him. He loved his father.

After a while the buzzing stopped entirely and there was a long silence. He sat on the edge of the bed—waiting—waiting for something to happen ; for the sound to begin again or for someone to move. But there was only the deep silence.

Then he heard his father come out of the living-room and up the stairs. He paused for a moment outside the bedroom door. And then he knocked, very gently.

“ Come in.” The words were quiet.

His father opened the door and came in. He walked over to the bed and sat down beside him. He did not speak, but sat there watching the boy play with the swan.

And then he said : “ Your mother’s very worried.”

The boy burst into tears and curled up against his father.

“ I’m sorry,” he gulped, between the sobs, “ I’m sorry.”

His father didn’t answer him. He stroked the back of the boy’s head, sending a queer electric sensation through his body.

“ I’m sorry . . . sorry ! ”

The stroking stopped and the boy felt his father’s hand resting on his head. For a moment he did not move, but then he turned up his face and looked into his father’s eyes.

“ What is it ? ” asked his father.

The boy did not reply.

“ What did you tell your mother ? She’s very upset.”

“ I told her that I didn’t believe . . . I said I didn’t believe . . . in God.”

He was afraid to finish his words. He was afraid of what his father might do. He remembered his mother clapping her hands and shouting : “ Go up to your bedroom at once ! ” He watched his father’s face very closely, but there was no change.

“ And is that what you mean ? ” asked his father.

The boy didn't reply immediately. His father might be trying to trick him, trying to lead him on. Perhaps he had covered up his first reaction and was trying to make him say worse things. He said what he had already said. He wouldn't fall into the trap.

"I don't believe in God."

His father took the glass swan out of his hand and stood up.

"Why?" he asked. He went and put the swan back on the dressing-table.

"I don't know," said the boy. "I don't know. But I feel it. I seem to feel deep down inside of me that there isn't a God. There's just nothing. It's all pretend."

His father came back and sat on the edge of the bed.

"You know," he said, "there was a time when I didn't think there was one."

The young boy straightened himself up and looked deep into his father's eyes.

"Is that true?" he asked.

His father looked back at him.

"That is the truth."

The boy felt a kind of warmth in his body, a warmth that seemed to reach out to his father.

After a while he asked very carefully: "And don't you now?"

His father didn't reply immediately and then: "Yes, I do now."

A little of the warmth seemed to disappear. His father *had* been trying to lead him on. He *had* been pulling out a confession. But he had found him out and he would not say anything else.

"I'm sorry," he said.

His father looked a little puzzled.

"You've already apologised, you don't have to apologise again."

His father really was trying to help him; trying to talk to him. His father wasn't trying to trick him into saying more

than he wanted to say. He was trying to help him.

"I thought you were angry with me," he said.

His father stood up.

"I'm not angry with you. I just want to know why you don't believe. And I want to help you." The boy felt the full warmth coming back.

"If you don't believe in God you don't believe in God—that's all there is to it. But I thought you might want to talk about it. Don't you?"

The boy nodded.

His father sat down again.

"You see, everybody feels like you do at some time or other. I remember I was about sixteen or seventeen. It took me a long time to get over it. But I did. And you will. It's not that you don't believe in God. It's that you want to test things. You want to put everything to the test. You want to test me, and your mother and God. And all the time you are testing yourself." He paused for a moment. "Do you understand what I'm saying?"

The boy didn't know. He thought he knew what his father meant, but he didn't exactly understand what he was saying. But he felt grateful towards him for saying it to him in the way he was saying it. He might have been talking to one of his friends. It was the way he talked to Mr. Johniss.

"I think I understand," he said.

"Good. Now try to understand this : what you are going through now is a testing time. It's a testing time for everyone and everything connected with you ; but most of all it's a testing time for you. You probably don't realise it but you are putting yourself to the test. And it's up to you to work it out for yourself."

He didn't understand a word of what his father was saying. He didn't know what he meant. But he didn't say anything.

"I want to ask you one more question," his father said.

The boy raised his eyebrows.

"Why don't you believe in God?"

He was stunned. Now that he had been asked what he had wanted someone to ask him he couldn't think what to say. It was all in his mind, but he couldn't say it. He could think it, but he couldn't talk it. He realised that thinking and talking were two quite different things.

"I don't know what to say."

His father moved towards the door.

"I'm going to leave you for a little while now," he said. "You just stay where you are and think it out. But just remember all that I've told you and be fair to yourself." He paused for a moment and added: "Your mother says she's sorry but you took her by surprise telling her straight out like you did."

He opened the door, turned round, smiled and went out.

He was alone again in the bedroom, but somehow it was different now.

He hadn't understood all that his father had said, but he had the feeling of what he had meant. It all seemed different. Perhaps after all he had been wrong. Perhaps he had been too rash and hasty. Perhaps. He was not sure though. But he was sorry he had hurt his mother. He loved his father; he was a fine man—and he loved his mother. He thought he understood now.

He got up from the bed and went across to the dressing-table.

"There is a God!" he said to the glass swans.

He put out his hand and touched one. It was warm.



K. G. Spencer

*If you have two loaves, sell one
and buy a lily*

Oh, lovely lady, on this day of Spring,
Why now reject the skylark's song,
Ignore the chaffinch on the blossom bough?
Why close the door on Beauty
And remain with those
Who never question why they live?

Oh, lovely lady, on this day of Spring,
Come now and claim the precious things of life.
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Of holding someone close within your arms,
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Of making one man happy with your kiss?

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John H. S. Pettit

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

BALLET IS A BUSINESS. It does not depend upon individual patronage, as does painting or architecture, but upon large audiences who have to be pleased by an entertainment; and for this reason there is no form of ballet which can be labelled "contemporary" with the same facility as a type of interior decoration. Any new approach to theatrical dancing which is presented as an entertainment without the admixture of what is considered to be "ballet" by the audiences is doomed to financial failure. In the small space available here there can therefore be no discussion of an art form known as "contemporary ballet" but rather a survey of the present state of the ballet, particularly in Great Britain, and an attempt to indicate the origin and development of the more recently successful innovations.

Twenty-five years ago Sergei Diaghilev died in Venice, and it is necessary to review the scope of his work to understand the foundations of the ballet as it is now seen. Diaghilev was not only a ballet impresario but, from 1906 onwards, he arranged exhibitions and concerts of a wide range of Russian artists, being largely responsible for the introduction of Bakst, Benois, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Mussorgsky and Chaliapin to Western Europe. Starting in 1909 his Ballet Company

travelled around the world for twenty years, with all the best painters, musicians and choreographers working together in a mutual co-operation which had never before been attempted and has never been surpassed. This artistic collaboration produced a series of ballets which are still of immediate impact : *Sylphides*, *Prince Igor*, *Carnaval*, *Schéhérazade*, *Fire-bird*, *Spectre de la Rose*, *Petrouchka*, and *Après-midi d'un faune*—all of which can be seen even to-day in the repertory of one or other of the British companies. From then on the interest in ballet, which had been at a low ebb for many years, revived and spread. Karsarvina, Nijinsky, Bolm, Lopokova, Idzikowski, Markova, Dolin, Danilova, Lifar, and many others all appeared in a tremendous series of ballets choreographed by Fokine, Massine, and Balanchine which owed their success not only to the dancing but the continual adventure in choice of musician and designer which was inspired by Diaghilev. Rouault, Chirico, Bauchant, Utrillo, Braque, Derain, Matisse and Picasso made their first designs for the theatre under his influence, while his specially engaged musicians included Beecham, Constant Lambert, Lord Berners, Auric, Poulenc, de Falla, Ravel and Stravinsky, who wrote the scores as an integral part of the ballet and not just as music to which dances may be set.

It is this insistence on the co-operation of the best available artists which finally crystallised the concept of ballet as being an amalgam of painting, dancing and décor, and established the form of ballet that we know to-day. Always on the look out for new influences, Diaghilev produced the first "machine" ballet and introduced Spanish dancing to the stage. He was also insistent on the value of the older ballets and was responsible for the Western presentation of *Le Lac des Cygnes*—never seen in Western Europe before 1911—and continually revived *Sleeping Princess*, *Casse-Noisette*, and *Giselle*, although these were abbreviated versions as the taste of the time did not accept a full-length ballet. To emphasise the pre-eminence of Diaghilev in modern ballet, it must be pointed out that the directors of all three major British ballet companies—Sadler's Wells, Festival and Ballet Rambert—worked with Diaghilev in their earlier years, as did the directors of the Ballet of the

Paris Opera (Lifar) and the New York City Ballet (Balanchine) ; and it is entirely due to him that the complacency of late nineteenth century ballet was changed to its present period of stimulating activity.

Although Diaghilev was always prepared to adopt other styles of dancing for use on the stage, the main form which he used most was that of the classical ballet which followed in the main stream of tradition as far as technique is concerned. Quite early in the century other individuals and small dance groups had been striving towards the evolution of less artificial types of dancing. Isidora Duncan with her style of free-expression was one of these pioneers, being influenced by the plasticity of the Grecian dancers as shown on friezes and pottery, and evolved a pseudo-Grecian technique in dancing with bare feet, which had a considerable effect on Nijinsky who used an adaptation of it in his first work as a choreographer *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. On the other side of the Atlantic an inheritor of the Duncan tradition is Martha Graham, who has developed this freedom of style and combined it with a rather introspective view of life to produce an expressive form of modern dance which is rather serious in intent and has not so far found any great popular acceptance as a form of entertainment.

The revolt against the artificial technique of the classical ballet was also the cause of a Middle European school of dancing led by Laban and Kurt Jooss, whose ballet *The Green Table* has been played in all parts of the world, and is as significant an anti-war fable as it was when it was first danced over twenty years ago. The Jooss form of dancing accepts a considerable amount of the classical ballet, but has discarded such refinements as dancing on *pointe* and the rather rigid positioning of the hands and feet. This technique has led to a graceful stage picture, but most people do not object to a degree of artificial movement in such an artificial setting as the theatre, and unfortunately the Ballet Jooss has been unable to find enough public support to stay regularly in production.

In the past thirty years there has also been a great increase in the Modern dance exponents as exemplified by Fred Astaire

and Gene Kelly who have adapted tap dancing and musical comedy dancing into an expressive type of theatrical dance ; and this, combined with more or less classical ballet technique, has been the basis of the dancing in the American musical comedies which have had such a great vogue recently. The dancing in *Pal Joey*, seen on Broadway in 1940 with Gene Kelly, and recently in London, started a type of dancing which rapidly improved until *Oklahoma*, which started the use of well-known choreographers for the dance routines. Unfortunately the more recent musical comedies seem to be content to go no further than *Oklahoma* in their styles and are already showing signs of flagging invention.

The modern choreographer working with a ballet company has therefore a much wider experience of forms of dancing to call upon, and so the themes of the past ten years have been more diverse than would have been considered possible even at the end of Diaghilev's life. As the major ballet companies employ a large number of people and necessarily must use the largest available stages and big theatres, the basic cost of a new production is extremely high and the usual bugbear of theatrical art intrudes. In the absence of the old type of patron the audience must pay for the show and it must be guaranteeably popular before production is contemplated. In spite of this financial censorship a number of new works are produced regularly which have features in them of the most recent thought in ballet.

A considerable advance in the ballet was introduced by Helpmann in *The Miracle of the Gorbals*. He tells the story of a supernatural, compassionate healer who brings a woman back to life and befriends a prostitute. This story, set in the squalor of a Glasgow slum, could never have been produced until the break from classical dancing advocated by Jooss was acceptable and the less natural movements discarded. In America Anthony Tudor has produced a series of ballets on psychological themes, intermingled with stories of the development of America ; and with Agnes de Mille has started a type of ballet which in time will become as distinctively American in style as the productions of our companies are English.

In the past twenty years there has been some attempt to mix words with dancing. Starting with individual ballets which owed their origin to opera and were originally performed with a sung accompaniment (*Prince Igor*, *Le Coq d'Or*), the use of singing as part of the score has been continued in Andree Howard's *La Fête Etrange* and Ashton's version of *Daphnis and Chloe*. Other ballets have incorporated the spoken word; Ashton's *Wedding Bouquet* has a continual commentary written by Gertrude Stein and spoken by a non-dancer on the stage, while in Helpmann's *Comus* the leading dancer speaks two of Milton's longer descriptive passages. In the past year Orson Welles' ballet *Lady in the Ice* has used a fairground spieler to assist in the setting of the scene. None of these attempts have been of lasting interest and it does not seem that this throw-back to the masque will meet popular taste.

In recent years the French and American companies have been rather more adventurous than the English, and probably the most exciting of all modern repertoires was that of the Ballet des Champs Elysées, with its settings by Derain, choreography of Roland Petit, and the assistance of such dancers as Babilée and Leslie Caron, but this has unfortunately been lost in the financial storms which overwhelmed the Ballet Jooss. These foreign companies, with their greater fascination for novelty, have produced a series of ballets on psychological themes (*Age of Anxiety*, *Pillar of Fire*, *Lady in the Ice*, *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*) which are unmatched by the larger companies in England. Similar works are to be seen in England, in particular at the little Ballet Workshop at the Mercury Theatre in London, where all workers in the ballet combine to produce experimental work for private performances on Sunday evenings. This venture, which is still thriving, has enabled young dancers to obtain experience in the mounting of ballets, and has already produced one major young choreographer in Michael Charnley, whose *Symphony for Fun* and *Alice in Wonderland*, now performed by the Festival Ballet, are interesting mixtures of classical and modern dance.

Ballet Workshop has produced several ballets which have been taken into the repertory of the Ballet Rambert, Charnley's *Movimientos* being particularly successful, while others were performed by the Walter Gore Ballet which had a short life in the provinces this year. A similar venture has been sponsored by the Sadler's Wells Organisation who occasionally produce evenings of ballet by untried choreographers in the company. Kenneth Macmillan's *Somnambulism* was so successful that it was repeated on television with the easier-to-understand title of *Sleep-walkers*; and his *Laidrette* will be seen in London soon.

It will be understood that the large companies must be wary of any innovations which would produce a further journalistic outcry against the waste of money by the Arts Council, and Sadler's Wells deserves great commendation for the recent appointment of an almost untried choreographer, John Cranko, to a permanent position in the company. Cranko has already developed into a most important choreographer with *Reflections*, *Harlequin in April*, and *The Lady and the Fool*, as well as showing a delightful humour in *Pineapple Poll* and *Bonne Bouche*. It is to be hoped that further experiments may be carried out along these lines to find choreographers with new ideas.

The Diaghilev tradition has been continued in the encouragement of new composers and painters to work with the companies. John Piper, Graham Sutherland, Kenneth Rowell, Osbert Lancaster, Robin and Christopher Ironside and Leslie Hurrey have done good work for the ballet, while such musicians as Charles Mackerras, Dennis ApIvor, Antony Hopkins, Malcolm Arnold and Richard Arnell are following the path of the more established composers as Bliss, Walton and Britten.

Ballet is a living art which, if it is to succeed, must attract people to the theatre. It can never be studied in a library or a museum. For this reason it must always change with the times to appeal to the present taste of an audience. Over twenty-five years ago Diaghilev set the pattern of ballet and the other forms of dance. New approaches to painting and

music are always available to be called on to aid in the synthesis of this nebulous but exotic art form. If the directors of the companies remain susceptible to these influences, and the public stops thinking of *Coppélia* as the acme of ballet, there is no reason why ballet should not maintain its position in the world of contemporary art.

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Kenneth Brown

VINE LEAVES IN MY HAIR

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL, 1954.

EDINBURGH IS A BIG CITY. I had not been prepared for its size, and once I left the comforting emptiness of the railway station the activity going on outside made me reel. People were rushing purposefully across the wide streets, for in Edinburgh, if you are wise, you defy the heavy traffic in one firm dash ; a series of timid little spurts will probably land you on a 'bus going the other way. A band of pipers was proudly skirling its way down Princes Street, and all those strong-minded, yet gentle, souls I had vaguely expected to see drinking in the beauties of the Northern Athens were at that time taking more urgently needed nourishment. I looked round for one of the golden cockerels which I knew were perching here and there throughout the town to advertise the Diaghilev exhibition. In place of the strident surrealist screech I had hoped for was a tame gold-painted fowl on a dirty yellow stand. A little despondently I climbed on my tram and rattled along to my Scots landlady who cheered me up and said I didn't eat enough.

Edinburgh is a big city, but I soon came to love it for its size and infinite lack of variety. It is not cosmopolitan, and there is such a strong unity of atmosphere along George Street, in Charlotte Square and down all the back-alleys off the Royal Mile that the only word one can find to describe the place is elegance. This is the ideal home for an exhibition, and if you do not hanker after the intense devotion of Salzburg or Stratford, if you do not mind that a few of the companies are indulging in little more than a glorified tour, then Edinburgh can offer all you desire.

It is a pity then that some of the festival fare was unworthy of the table, and in this respect the British contribution gave way as inferior fare to the Comédie Française performance of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. As a manifestation of the power of a tradition of security it was tremendous, and gave a tantalising glimpse of what it is like to have a National Theatre. Louis Seigner, as Monsieur Jourdain, was less rough and obstinate than might have been expected, but the glow and polish of the whole company's performance are something only possible when an actor is secure and free from worry. I was fascinated by the performance of one of the lackeys although not, I hasten to add, because he overplayed it in any way. He did not stand about, as the bit players of the Old Vic did, hoping for bigger parts in the remaining plays of the season before being thrown at the feet of the theatrical monopolies, but, I dare swear, felt it a great honour and privilege to be playing for the Comédie, and as a result his performance (and he spoke only a few conventional lines) had that gentle glow of contentment not often found in the most selfish profession in the world. He, and most of the company, knew the secret of relaxation.

The Old Vic production of *Macbeth* offered no relaxation at all, except perhaps in the gently-controlled Macduff of John Neville. Paul Rogers must be the best British character actor to-day ; at no point did his Macbeth o'erstep the bounds of nature, but neither did it move the audience. We were not caught up and personally involved in Macbeth's downfall. Ann Todd, to whose career this Old Vic season is of great importance, seemed afraid of playing Lady Macbeth straight. It was fascinating, but irrelevant, to see the Sleepwalking Scene played with the actress contorted on the ground in some kind of terrible birth-pang. Unfortunately, Miss Todd can't be said to have played Lady Macbeth at all ; she simply showed us a clever gloss on the character. But in *Macbeth*, at least the characters were allowed to stand up for themselves. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (also produced by the Old Vic) they had to choose between acting Shakespeare or posturing

in front of a lot of scenery. It was only too obvious, regrettably, which alternative Robert Helpmann had chosen. His Oberon with the Old Vic in the late 1930's may have been a good performance but now it is a hideous caricature, a nasty little gargoyle, and the sight of the King of the Fairies being raised aloft by his attendants in dreary and repetitive choreography was nauseating. Moira Shearer, as Titania, managed a clever compromise. That is to say, she danced and mimed her part so well that one was surprised and gratified to find she could also speak it in a relatively rich and full voice. Besides Miss Shearer, there were fine and thoughtful performances from Puck and Lysander. Miss Shearer and Mr. Helpmann also performed in Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* : and entertainment done with great style. Helpmann is much more acceptable and very funny when clowning his way through a pastiche of himself.

But the best acting performance of the Festival came not from Edwige Feuillère, whose assumption of beautiful and experienced women is becoming something of a habit in the French cinema, not from the Comédie Française, and not from the Old Vic. It was given by Ruth Gordon in Thornton Wilder's farce *The Matchmaker*. When Miss Gordon is on the stage you can have eyes for no-one else. Her hair is outrageously red and she prattles incessantly, gasping a little to recover her breath or her thoughts, and rising to indignant and irrelevant climaxes. She often forgets her lines, or pretends to, but she never loses her grip on the audience. Eileen Herlie seems glad to have been rescued from her tragic fate and plays with a quiet happiness which is very touching and a perfect foil to Miss Gordon's virtuosity.

There were many other Festival delights. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf is a singer and artist of much accomplishment, but above all she impresses with the radiance that can only belong to a happy woman ; and Sena Jurinac portrays Fiordiligi and Strauss' Composer with a most moving grace. Then there were innumerable "fringe" performances sprouting in little odd courts and churches everywhere. My last evening in Edinburgh I spent at Rossini's *Comte Ory*. Fortunately it was more than

worthy to be the climax of my visit. Oliver Messel's settings and costumes were the only really fine ones I saw, and the production was infinitely the best of the three by Carl Ebert which I attended. Perhaps some of the singing could have been bettered, but by that time I was too intoxicated with Edinburgh and its Festival to care.

Bernard Jones

IN THE SLAG DAYS OF OUR TIME

In the slag days of our time
When all things simmer, nothing glows
Who believes the famisht rose
Will grip the fence and climb ?

Yet still we plant our simple sprays
Hoping, praying. And in the spring
We cannot think of anything
To cause these drab delays.

Alas, the winter piled upon
The heap we knew new-slaughtered earth.
It must wait for its rebirth
And time and we move on.

Our praying done and hope forgotten,
Upon the slag we find the sprays.
How came, we say, such things of grace
Upon a thing so rotten ?

It's long since we would plant a rose
Yet this aged slag it copes, we see
As might some ancient gallows-tree
Or once a wooden cross.



“Have you a Faculty of Finance?”

“Don’t ask me!” said the Freshman. “You should know more about the organization of this University than I do.”

“I should have said faculty, not Faculty,” went on the Third Year Man patiently. “The f is small, as in f French.”

“Oh, I see,” said the Freshman. “Well, all I can say is that the £ is small, very small, in my £ s. d.”

“If your income is, shall we

say, slender, all the more reason for having financial guidance at your disposal,” the Third Year Man explained.

“And where do you suggest I look for such guidance?” asked the Freshman.

“I’d strongly advise you to let Lloyds Bank look after your interests,” answered the Third Year Man. “That was one of the first things I did when I came up in *stat. pup.*”

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Martin Banham

Mr. DUNSTABLE'S DAHLIA

THE VILLAGE OF DOWNLEA has always been renowned throughout that particular little area of the Chilterns where it is situated for three things : cricket, sweet-peas, and dahlias. Cricket has its great day on August Monday, when the might of Turbledon challenges the village, alternately upon the sloping sheep pastures of Downlea Common, reputed to be deadly for a chinaman pitched with bucolic cunning, and the more dangerous downs of Turbledon, where many a cow has with fatal accuracy made the wicket exceedingly sticky. Sweet-peas follow swiftly in the first week of September, filling the Village Hall, and indeed, in the memorable Jubilee year of 1935, the Church Rooms too, with a blaze of colour and a heavy scent. But to Mr. Dunstable it was the dahlia day that was most important of all. The Dahlia Show followed the sweet-peas after an interval of a fortnight during which the gardeners could clear away the successes or failures of one show, and prepare for the next, and for at least the last twenty years it was Mr. Dunstable who carried away all the prizes.

But this year, something had gone wrong. Somehow the old green fingers hadn't worked. The greenhouse tucked away behind the laurel and before the gooseberries contained but one sad little dahlia, and that rather anaemic. To Mr. Dunstable life seemed empty. There only came to his mind the dreadful day when he, the original breeder of the famous *Lady Caroline Branchwood Purple Darling*, should offer to the critical gaze of Downlea one anaemic bloom.

For three weeks he had gone night by night into the greenhouse, hardly aware of the laurel that begged to be trimmed, and unconcerned with the blight on the gooseberries, and sat staring at his failure. He was not really conscious of his habit of talking aloud, and it was only on that incredible evening two days before the Show that he realised he did. That was the evening that the dahlia first spoke.

"Oh! For the sake of my granddaddy dahlia, do stop moaning, man!" were in fact the first words it said, at least publicly. At first Mr. Dunstable ignored it, putting it down to a mixture of dreaming and the pigs in the sty next door. It was only when the dahlia broke into *Red Sails in the Sunset* in a rather toneless bass voice that he really did take notice.

"Who's that?" he stuttered.

"Me," yawned the voice, and proceeded into *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Well, of course, this was the greatest thing in dahlia history, and Mr. Dunstable, after the initial shock, came to look upon it as rather natural that he, a dahlia champion and the man who had produced the *Lady Caroline Branchwood Purple Darling*, (which, incidentally, he later sold to an American who wanted a buttonhole spray), should be the one to get the first talking dahlia. He became very friendly with the bloom, which he called *Sir Orator Dunstable of Downlea*, and was overjoyed to think of the publicity and renown that would be his after the Show. Nor was he slow in letting the village, indeed the whole world (as far as Chepping Wyestream), know of his feat. To Downlea it was the greatest thing that had ever happened, and on the day of the Show, the great day upon which *Sir Orator Dunstable of Downlea* was to appear for the first time before its millions of admirers, the village threw open its arms to the representatives of the *Chiltern Clarion*, *New York Times*, and the B.B.C. Television Service.

The Show was to be opened by Lady Branchwood herself, accompanied, of course, by Sir Burberry Branchwood, Bt., and assisted by the retinue of local celebrities, including Canon Wisp, the rector, Mrs. Gourly-Bannerman, President of the Women's

Institute and Head Warden, and the schoolmaster, Mr. Adrian Adrian, who had known better days. The Hall was packed, as, under the heat of camera lighting, against the tap of several press typewriters and the gentle splash from the overflow, Lady Branchwood spoke. She referred briefly to the history of the village, pointing out, in passing, its associations with her family, and touching on the question of nationalisation of the land. But she mentioned too the fame of the Show in past years, and beseeched the humble dahlia growers of the world not to seek only after glory, but to grow mute as well as talking dahlias in the days that were to follow. She then turned her attention to the showpiece of the day—Mr. Dunstable's dahlia. It stood silently on a table of its own, framed in twisted green crepe paper (hand worked by the senior scholars of the Sunday School) and protected from the crush of spectators by the muscular efforts of Constable Blewitt. There too stood the proud father, Mr. Dunstable himself.

"Now," continued Lady Branchwood wittily, "let us ask Mr. Dunstable to call upon the dahlia to open the Show for us. After all, he is really the guest of honour!" (The assumption of sex was on account of the voice, which according to Mr. Dunstable was decidedly bass). Silence fell upon the Hall. The typewriters paused in their work, and the caretaker thoughtfully flushed the W.C. and, temporarily at least, caused the overflow to be still. Of course, nothing happened.

Mr. Dunstable cajoled Sir Orator, pleaded with him, threatened him, even watered him, but not a word had he to say. The crowd was growing a little restless, not to say disappointed, and one or two rather forward people began to observe that after all they had only Mr. Dunstable's word that it had ever spoken at all. Lady Branchwood felt distinctly cut and slighted, and Sir Burberry was heard to rumble. Canon Wisp drew his finger nervously round the neck of his collar, fearful of disorder, Mrs. Gourly-Bannerman donned her Civil Defence beret and pulled a whistle from her pocket, and even Mr. Adrian Adrian (who had known better times) moved closer to Constable Blewitt.

Meanwhile Mr. Dunstable slaved away at Sir Orator, attempting in every way he knew to persuade him to talk. But, of course, nothing happened. The crowd began to catcall and jeer, and moved angrily towards the door. The B.B.C. Television commentator hastily thrust the **NORMAL SERVICE WILL BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** caption before the camera, and the representative of the *New York Times* yawned and lit another cigar. Lady Branchwood, feeling herself a much maligned woman, strode towards the exit. Sir Burberry tottered unhappily in her footsteps, and behind him followed the rest of the official party, with Mrs. Gourly-Bannerman significantly equipped with a stirrup-pump that she had somehow acquired.

"Good day, Mr. Dunstable," Lady Branchwood said, tersely.

"Er . . . cheerio, Dunstable," spluttered Sir Burberry.

"Tut, tut, unhappy business," murmured Canon Wisp.

"Not cricket, old chap," observed Mr. Adrian Adrian; and Mrs. Gourly-Bannerman gave the order for the ambulance to be stood ready, if the horse could be found.



"Goodbye," muttered a sad and dejected Mr. Dunstable.

"Goodbye," yawned the dahlia.

Everybody stopped as if they had been struck by lightning. They were still standing there when Sir Orator had completed *The Fishermen of England*, including two unbidden encores, and was halfway through *Annie Laurie* . . .

The rest of the story is too familiar for me to need to repeat it. You all saw Sir Orator on *What's My Line*, where he achieved even more acclaim as the only person to insult Gilbert Harding, and most of you have read by now his famous maiden speech on Foreign Affairs in the House. True, his politics are somewhat influenced by Lady Branchwood, who felt it her duty to society to adopt him as her protégé, but even the Labour Opposition cannot but be impressed by his rapid rise to fame.

As for Mr. Dunstable, he now has a tea-garden where the greenhouse used to be, and he basks in the sunshine of proud parenthood, supported by a steady income from tourists' teas, and postcards of Sir Orator as a seedling.

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THE SILENT ORCHARD

She was a waking dream
kissing the slumber from my eyes
but she fled my gaze
in a mist of dawns,

and now with the
interwreathed boughs of blossom
sighing their gentler
petals down the wind

I, in a fading thought,
glimpse something of her grace
and feel the weight
of the failing light.



Sydney Larter

THEATRE GROUP ON TOUR



IT WAS A COURAGEOUS ATTEMPT to answer the requests we received last year after the tremendous success of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but fate was against us and the six-week tour became one of a fortnight with performances at the Festivals of Bruges and Erlangen. Perhaps the venture was planned on too large a scale, but we were certainly dogged by ill-luck, its period of maximum intensity beginning with the accident to Barbara Hughes and ending with the damaged springs on the autobahn. Compared with this, all other strokes of adverse providence were trivial. Of course, the root of the trouble was at home. Had we played to full houses in the Riley-Smith Hall, we should have been able to embark on the tour in complete safety, but because of the apathy of the general public we started in a precarious financial position. The citizens of Leeds were full of sympathy when we returned, but by then it was too late. It was pointed out to me that in almost any other city a chance to see that rarely performed play *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, would have been taken with enthusiasm. I gather, however, that the average member of the public took the attitude that he, or she, was not going to provide the funds to give twenty students a good holiday on the Continent.

Be that as it may, let us face a few facts. We left Leeds knowing that if anything serious were to happen we should be unable to continue. And it happened. The rear springs of the

'bus we travelled in had to be repaired at considerable expense. This drained our financial resources, and we had to return home after the Erlangen Theatre Week, cutting out Munich, Hamburg and Amsterdam. This trouble came about because we were loaded to capacity—personnel of about twenty, private property, costumes, scenery and extras. The annoying thing was that it was the scenery as much as anything which was responsible for the breakdown, scenery which was never used. Yet had we left it behind we would doubtless have gone on with the tour, and then we might well have found ourselves at a theatre with no (or with unsuitable) scenery with which to concoct—and I use the word advisedly—a set. Life's little ironies accompanied us on this tour *en masse*.

This, of course, does not mean that the tour was a failure. Far from it ; it was a success as far as it went. The trouble was it didn't go very far. The plays themselves demanded hard work, especially at Bruges. But intervals of relaxation were pleasant and, for some, memorable. As was inevitable on a tour of this kind, there were differences of opinion, at times violent, but these were drops in an ocean and were soon smoothed over. Perhaps the most harassed member of the company was the 'bus driver, Barry Lewis. While we did not agree with him on all points in his production of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* there is no denying that he did a phenomenal amount of work before and during the tour, and it was no fault of his that we were unable to continue.

The best reception we had was at Bruges, a reception almost as enthusiastic as at Erlangen last year. The play *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was performed in the open air, in the evening, in the shadow of the famous Belfry tower, with the audience on three sides. This demanded a different technique from the Proscenium Arch technique used in the Riley-Smith Hall and at Erlangen. Intensive rehearsals in the gymnasium and in the gardens (weather permitting) of the College where we stayed soon brought the production into shape. We were in Bruges for less than half of the Festival, and consequently were able to see only two of the seven other plays. These, Gozzi's *L'Augellin Belverde*, performed by the Teatro Univer-

sitaro Ca' Foscari di Venezia, and Aeschylus' *The Persians*, performed in French by the Groupe de Théâtre Antique de la Sorbonne, both had to be performed indoors in the Théâtre Communale because of the famous weather about which we have long since ceased to comment. The Venetians, who also appeared at Erlangen last year, gave a polished performance of very high technical and artistic standard; and the French performance had its moments, although the treatment of the Chorus was strange and ineffective. We were favoured by good weather—a sunny but windy day—and the performance went on under almost ideal conditions. The large audience was by no means disappointed with the first play to be performed by an English Theatre Group at the Bruges Festival. As at Erlangen, the language was hardly a barrier, and when it was, the visual made up for it (although we did not agree with some of Mr. Courtney's visual addenda, especially at the beginning). The most noteworthy example was that of Derek Boughton, who, as Launce, had only to appear on the stage with his Harvey-like dog (Crab) at the end of a moth-eaten piece of rope to send the audience into peals of laughter. The over-emphasised outlaw scenes were also well received by the "gallery." The comic characters did not though, overshadow the more serious ones and the four lovers received their due share of applause, the best performance being that of Adele Buckle as Julia. The lighting was provided exclusively by spots situated some distance away from the acting area.

It was a happy company which left Bruges the following morning. We had only spent three days there, but they were not to be forgotten in a flash. New food and different ways of cooking, fresh drinks, new friends and the charm of Bruges itself had all come our way in those few days, and our performance came as the climax. But, before the next performance, the fate of the tour was sealed. No more need be said about the damaged 'bus, except that we made more friends at the garage in Frankfurt—friends who welcomed us with open arms when we had to call again on the return journey ten days later. How we came to hate that word *caput* whether with ? or !

There was never a dull moment on the 'bus. The wits were constantly at work, as were the photographers, usually catching

the unwary sleeper ; and when these came to a halt there would always be somebody looking for their food, or some important part of their personal belongings. Sleeping accommodation always proved such a headache and waking even more of one that it will be wiser to make no comment. Malcolm Nickson's tent sprang up in the most unlikely places—and so did Norma Clarkson, usually in the middle of a deep, but certainly not peaceful, sleep.

We did eventually reach Erlangen, to find the friends we made at Bruges waiting to greet us. Once there, it was rehearsals until the performance of *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. This was, fortunately, early on, and we had therefore time for relaxation, which varied from visiting the open-air baths to hitch-hiking to Beyreuth. It is worth putting on record that from the day of our performance at Bruges to the day we left Erlangen, we experienced summer weather. It was such a pleasant surprise that the majority of the members of the company spent rather more time than was good for them in the hot sun. They paid the price.

Sun-bathing and "globe-trotting" were not the only means of occupying the time. There were some dozen plays to be seen and discussions to attend. There were lectures on the plays performed in addition to discussions on them. We were unfortunate to miss the opening performance of the Festival—Carlos Magno's *Morgen wird es ander sein sein* by students from Istanbul. They too had journeyed by 'bus, with rather more good fortune than we enjoyed, and this was the first time they had been able to break through the red tape surrounding a journey from Istanbul to Erlangen. In contrast to *Gas* which the home University put on last year, we were treated to a new variation on the theme of *Puss in Boots*. Horst Statkus again showed his versatility, for in addition to being the main worker behind the Festival, he was one of the adaptors of the play and also an actor.

The Venetians gave a different play—*Prendi per mano il cielo*, by Castro and Carminati. Tübingen University gave a Shaw play. The Zurich University Theatre Group gave a very fine performance of Anouilh's *Antigone*. The disappointment of the week came from the same group as last year, Bristol.

Vanbrugh's *The Confederacy* was duly murdered as was the *Duchess of Malfi* last year, only in a different way. Once again we had a beautiful set on which to feast our eyes, a triumph of the science (if not the art) of theatrical set-construction. But the players, led by Glynne Wickham, trod their precise way, made their precise gestures and spoke their precise words in an irritatingly precise way, that one was left wondering if this really was a play. The highlight of the week was the Musikalisches Kabaret's *Henry VIII*, a delightful nonsense fantasy woven round the king and two of his wives, consisting chiefly of perversions of operatic arias and quartets, and excellently done. It was one laugh from beginning to end and the performers were constantly being called upon for repeats at every social that took place.

The final play of the week was to have been presented by the University of Padua, but they never arrived and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* took their place. Although we were assured that this was an honour we didn't feel quite so sure ourselves, but we started rehearsing once more and performed on the Saturday afternoon—back, of course, to the Proscenium Arch type of production. Despite the last minute rush, the performance reached quite a good standard and was well received by the audience, although it was noticeable that the more subtle jokes of this play did not strike home as did their counterparts last year. This was the final performance of the week. There was no discussion on this play because of this fact, but the outcome of a discussion on the Shaw play was that, for the most part, people wondered why we chose it.

Last year we set a very high standard. I doubt very much whether this year we managed to maintain it. Nonetheless, we enjoy a very high reputation at Erlangen. Every year cannot be a vintage year. The return journey was more or less a repeat of the outgoing journey, with the same garage figuring in it. Although there was a certain atmosphere of disappointment, the company was as lively as ever. Alan Curd, the company's doctor, had his first case, much to his delight, but he had to leave his patient in more capable hands in Brussels. The company returned to England in numerous groups—a little sadder, considerably wiser, but triumphant.

Dennis Pepper

THEATRE GROUP : TWO PLAYS

DURING THE PAST YEAR OR SO Richard Courtney, the producer of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, chosen by Theatre Group for performance in Europe, has made himself prominent in the University as a producer of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Characteristic of his work is a tendency to emphasise the visual aspect which sometimes calls into jeopardy the balance of the whole play, and frequently ignores subtleties in presentation and interpretation that the visual cannot compass. There is also a tendency to farce and slapstick which, though it may easily bring the laughs, can often destroy a play's inherent structure. It was accordingly somewhat reassuring to see that Mr. Courtney had partially resisted putting undue emphasis on the visual, even under the temptation of a production designed primarily for a foreign audience.

He is still to be drawn however, and this particularly in the outlaw scenes where, for a reason I have not yet discovered, he took as the centre of the action not Valentine, or Silvia, or the Duke, or even Proteus, but the Second Outlaw. Moreover the importance of the Second Outlaw lay not in what he said, for the part was played by a very small boy who attempted to speak in a deep voice and the result of which was complete unintelligibility, but, presumably, in what he was. Here I am at a loss, for I was painfully aware that the Second Outlaw was a very small boy trying to speak in a deep voice and gagging unceasingly. I cannot understand what Mr. Courtney was trying to convey, nor did the nature of his production offer anything by way of explanation. On another occasion the

whole effect of the song *Who is Sylvia* . . . ? was completely destroyed by the appearance of a "Dancer." Dramatic action seems to have become confused with physical movement and it was as though Mr. Courtney could not trust an audience to listen to the words or find sense in them if it did so. It was occasions such as these that gave one the impression that the production had not been conceived as a unified piece of work. The edges were decidedly frayed, and this was not helped by either the set or lighting. Balance of mood and pace was not well contrived and both acting and production were patchy.

A rather interesting aspect of Adele Buckle's ability as an actress was shown by her portrayal of the character of Julia. At first she appeared ill-at-ease in the part and the verse, too, gave her some difficulty. This early inability to come to grips with character and interpretation immediately disappeared when she donned the disguise of page to follow her inconsistent lover. Then she seemed to grasp the part with a firmness and imagination that made one wonder if it was indeed the same actress. And this was quite apart from the fact that the play itself takes a new lease of life from the irony of the situation. The performance confirmed my impression that Miss Buckle is an actress who looks for a certain idiosyncrasy in the part, and builds her interpretation round it. Gordon Luck's Proteus encountered difficulties of a different order. Mr. Luck is an accomplished technician, but in following Shakespeare's verbal extravagances with a grace and charm that frequently made the shortcomings of other members of the cast embarrassing to watch, he seemed to neglect some of the deeper implications of plot and character. His was a Proteus that did not come to grips with the moral implications of false friend and inconsistent lover. Proteus' moral gymnastics were given little conviction and one constantly had the feeling that the actor was consciously striving for effect in his presentation, but the presentation was detached from meaning in the part.

Barbara Tarran and Malcolm Nickson as the other pair of lovers had similar limitations, for both appeared to approach their parts from without. But whereas Mr. Nickson concentrated on the swelling phrase roundly, though not always

meaningfully delivered, Miss Tarran generally showed an inability to grasp the dramatic movement of her speeches and was frequently guilty of undermining the pace and rhythm of the production. Another surprising offender here was Derek Boughton's Launce. Although he had moments that were little short of brilliant, this was offset by occasions, particularly in the soliloquies, when one found he was unable to hold the stage and he let the dramatic structure of his speeches fall. This may have had something to do with his interpretation of the part, and it seems probable that with a larger audience these passages would have shone with the sly humour his creation just failed to attain. Alan Curd as Speed, at first gave the impression of a rough and unpolished performance although this was frequently enlivened by a natural ability to clown. It was only at the end of the play that one fully realised what well-contrived clowning it was.

But the outstanding performance in the play was undoubtedly Geoffrey Scott's Duke of Milan. Although Theatre Group has always been able to depend upon Mr. Scott to turn in a steady and competent performance, it would not be untrue to say that both his Rufio in *Cæsar and Cleopatra* and his Duke of Milan show an ability that far surpasses his earlier work. The firmness of his characterisation as the Duke and his assurance throughout the play helped to bind it into a unity that was frequently absent in other directions. One most memorable scene was that in which the Duke plays cat and mouse with the unsuspecting Valentine who is on his way to elope with Julia. Perhaps it is not an important scene in the play's dramatic structure, but it is nevertheless an excellent stage situation and was well exploited. It certainly stood out in a production that did not seem to be conceived as a unified dramatic movement, but as a series of scenes and episodes that were of varying quality from incompetence to brilliance.

Concerning the choice of *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, the second play that Theatre Group decided to send to the Continent, there is not much to be said. As a play it is of little value; apart from Caesar's philosophy (which is not, in any case, specifically dramatic in nature) it relies on stock situations and

types which are of no great merit. In order to be effective in the theatre and pull the wool over the audience's eyes it needs all the help from large cast and spectacular staging that it can get. And this is what was lacking in Barry Lewis's production. Only the costumes made an attempt at such lavishness.

The production itself was a rather curious piece of work. Mr. Lewis seemed to ignore the laughs and play against Shaw's comedy in attempting to stage a serious drama of Caesar and Cleopatra. As a result the cast seemed to a large extent unaware of the comedy, and did not try for the laughs or play them when they came. For the first half-hour the production wallowed like a rudderless ship as the cast tried to put on the rehearsed version which the audience proceeded to ignore. And the audience won. That they did so was due mainly to Alan Curd's Roman Sentinel. His imagination was suddenly fired as he realised what an excellent comic situation he had in his episode with Ftatateeta and, bit between his teeth, he at last brought the production out on to the straight. Even then there were occasional lapses and the play never recovered from its false start. One thing, however, was abundantly clear; the production needed to be completely rethought before it was allowed to go to the Continent. I hope it was.

It is of course Caesar who is by far the most interesting character in the play—not because he is a character in a play but because he is the mouthpiece of a particularly interesting philosophy. The "action" of the play is centred round the philosophy to illustrate and exemplify it. Gordon Luck, a little unsure at times, and perhaps not quite old enough, gave a competent performance as Caesar. If anything was lacking it was, perhaps, a certain amount of point to some of Caesar's more subtle shafts of wit. Adele Buckle's Cleopatra confirmed what I have already said about her Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Here she was given just the idiosyncrasies she needed and accordingly turned in a very fine performance, particularly when she had to show the working of a girl's mind trying to live up to Caesar's philosophy. Two other performances deserve mention. Norma Clarkson's Ftatateeta, an imposing piece of work, showed that Miss Clarkson possesses a vocal ability that

is not always supported by her stage movements; Geoffrey Scott's Rufio, a part literally made for him, fully rewarded the producer's confidence in his ability. Here again he found himself acting as the anchor of the rest of the cast. In the minor characters, particularly Pothinus and Theodotus, there was a tendency towards caricature in the interpretation, although this is, perhaps, no great drawback. Britannus, who is accorded an ample proportion of laugh lines, was rather too woolly in his approach to the part to gain a full reward from the material he was given.

There is little more to be said. If Theatre Group wish to send Shaw to Europe, why send this? A higher all round standard is needed before Theatre Group allows plays to carry their reputations to the Continent and the standard must be ensured before the plays are allowed to leave. And it is not enough to rely on a few principals. After all it is a Theatre Group.



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BOOK REVIEW

JAMES KIRKUP : A SPRING JOURNEY.

(Geoffrey Cumberlege, O.U.P.) 8s. 6d.

*The least of it is putting down in words
What usually remains unwritten and unspoken.*

SO SAYS MR. KIRKUP at the beginning of his new volume of poems. And for the poet this may indeed be true enough. But for the reader Mr. Kirkup's use of words, his ability to communicate his poetic experiences, is of prime importance. It was here that I felt so often that the poems failed. The occasions from which the poems arise may have both meaning and significance for Mr. Kirkup, but little of this is given to the reader. Meaning and significance "remain unwritten." I am not particularly interested in what Mr. Kirkup thinks about gas fires, or dust-bins, or the Coronation, or even sticks of rock, and I imagine Mr. Kirkup is even less interested in what I think of them. On the other hand, what they "mean" to a poetic imagination and the significance such an imagination attaches to them forms the core of the poem. Yet it is the "meaning," the purpose behind the imaginative description, that is absent from the poems. As a consequence it is Mr. Kirkup's technique that tends to attract the attention.

Here again I found myself at a loss. The putting into words is "the least of it," and yet so frequently it appears to be all of it. A particular poem will do nothing more than bewilder the mind with complication for its own sake. Paradoxes and apparent paradoxes are frequently used, and both Christian teaching and the poet's art become subjects of poems seemingly for no other reason than that they offer

excellent material for such devices. And yet Mr. Kirkup can often present a strength and maturity of style that makes such objections appear mere quibbles. He has a remarkable control of "free verse" and, particularly in such poems as *The Child, the Woman and the Man* and parts of *The Observatory*, can exploit the extended poetic phrase which does not lose its power and moment through a structural laxity that frequently gives a broken-backed effect to much of this type of poetry. Yet it is also true that certain stylistic and technical devices become apparent in the first few poems and are used indiscriminately from poem to poem throughout the volume with a persistence that wearies the reader. As a result form and content do not appear to be inseparable. There is no conception of a poem having a form of its own, peculiar to that particular poem and none other, and dictated by its subject-matter and purpose. Then again there are images that surprise one but yet seem to fail in their appropriateness—a face that is described as "A gull crying silently into the storm," the whole of a poem called *The Gas Fire*, a stage dressing room which at night "becomes a cold Hanger, high and lonely, open at both ends."

And, in reference to a Liverpool public-garden which

*Is about to launch its terraces, the piles
Of civil architecture, niagaras
Of soot, masonry and steps, into
The neon gullet of the Mersey Tunnel.*

It would appear, in fact, that Mr. Kirkup has paid too little attention to the question of presenting his experiences to his readers. Although I can readily believe that he may have gained a full and profoundly satisfying experience from the occasions he presents in this volume, I can only feel that he has written the occasions down without communicating the experiences.

D.P.

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