

March 1950

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EDITORIAL

OUR EXHORTATIONS in the last issue seem to have borne a little fruit, and as a result we are able to print contributions from people whose names, so far as we know, have not appeared in *The Gryphon* before. This is excellent. It is as it should be. It keeps us fresh, and it relieves an over-worked editorial staff from the necessity of sitting down to write, at the very last minute before going to print, odd articles to fill the space which you have not filled. But we feel that there are still many more people who DO write and who could write for *The Gryphon*—the odd critical article, for instance. Are you satisfied with... well, anything from the Cafeteria to the manners and customs of the young ladies and gentlemen who frequent it—from the New Building to your girl-friend's pre-occupation with the Women's Rowing Club to the exclusion of other and more important matters? Write us an article about it. Write us an article about us if you feel that way. But write it—AND send it in. We can only make *The Gryphon* of wide, general student interest—and that, may we remind you, is what you are always asking us to do—if you write us the articles. And as we have said before, if they ARE of general interest and in all other respects are up to the standard to be expected of a University magazine we shall print them, with pleasure and alacrity, irrespective of whether

we agree with your views or not. Someone else may, if we don't. And we may get someone writing in from the opposite point of view, which is all to the good. It makes copy, and (see above) keeps us "Live." So see what you can do. One word however—indiscriminate condemnation, mud-slinging, ill-humour, and sheer downright prejudice are not good criticism and usually make poor reading. If you are prepared to make out a case for yourself and feel that it is a good one, whatever the subject, however humorously or seriously treated, we of *The Gryphon* will welcome it, and see that your article gets the attention which it deserves.

But, please, no anonymous articles! Our office space is limited and we already have an accumulation of anonymous MSS. which we cannot return because the authors, by accident or design, omitted to tell us who they were. If you prefer to use a pseudonym (except in the case of serious stories and serious poetry, where we prefer, for many good reasons, to publish under the author's own name) your preference will be respected, but let us know, at the same time, to whom we are to return the article if we find that we cannot use it.

We want to ensure that even if you are not one of those who like, for instance, Modern Poetry (and recent experience has shown that there are far more people who actually BUY *The Gryphon* who DO like it than its opponents are usually willing to admit), you can still turn to the rest of the magazine and find enough well-written features to interest you to make the magazine a good "buy" so far as you are concerned. After all, if you insist that *The Gryphon* shall kick out everything but just the sort of things which you happen to like what about the other people whose tastes are different from yours? Their tastes may be different, but their shilling is a shilling, too. We can give you all a good shilling's worth with a little tolerance and above all, co-operation, providing that people will submit sufficient good copy to print, and sufficiently varied copy, too, to allow us to make up a representative issue. We repeat—we cannot print what we do not receive.

Thank you for your patience and, in anticipation, for your contribution.

Charles Kingham
LUIGI PIRANDELLO

AMONG THE DRAMATISTS WHO, during this century, have influenced the techniques of writing for the stage and of acting, a high place must be given to Luigi Pirandello. He was born at Girgenti, Sicily, in 1867, and studied at the Universities of Rome and Bonn, taking a Ph.D. at the latter. In 1894 he married, and for the next ten years lived in Rome as a free-lance author, receiving an allowance from his father; after this he became for a time a teacher. His literary career had actually begun in 1889 with the publication of a volume of verse, and he continued to write short stories and novels, with occasional poetry, until 1915. In that year his first play was published, and he afterwards left his teaching and devoted himself to the stage; but he obtained no real fame, especially outside Italy, until the staging and publication in 1921 of "Six Characters in search of an Author," which earned him acclaim all over the world. He died in 1936, having been the outstanding personality in Italian letters since 1918, and having won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1934.

Such are the bare details of his life—his art cannot be summed up so briefly. At first sight its main characteristic is humour—he usually calls his plays comedies; even "Six Characters" is referred to on the title-page as "a comedy in the making"—but it is a grim humour, and underneath we find a philosophical outlook, and a pessimism which tinges all his work. His private life was not happy—his wife eventually lost her mind—his duties as a teacher were irksome, and the Italian public, during his earlier years, was indifferent to his writings. These causes may have contributed to his pessimism; but the philosophy? Shaw attempts to show a logic and consistency in humanity, criticism in his plays taking a rational standpoint and attacking the irrational and inconsequent conventions of the world as he sees it. Pirandello, by contrast, exalts the irrational. His world is almost completely inconsistent—chance is the greatest factor in human life. It might be argued that chance is in practice at least as great a factor

as human will, that Pirandello is as much in the right as Shaw. The major problem for Pirandello was how to reconcile life as a cosmic whole with life as lived in an individual, life as an eternal and universal factor with finite human existence; and almost all his plays, short stories and novels put this question in one form or another. Unlike other beings, he says, man formulates a concept of his own self and his existence, which clashes with his instinct—instead of merely living, he watches himself live; tries to crystallise his fellow-men as definite types. But no-one exists as a well-defined type; different sides of a person's nature emerge in different company, and no man can know every side of anyone, least of all himself. In "Six Characters" the Manager has a speech which stresses the idea of the hidden reserve within everyone—"I know very well that each of us has an inner life which he longs to reveal. But the difficulty consists in setting out just what is necessary with regard to others, and at the same time in that slight revelation hinting at the life which lies within undiscovered." In the latter part of the play, too, the Father and the Manager argue the former's contention that the Six Characters are more real than human beings: the Father gains his point when he says that human beings are ever-changeable, their reality changes from day to day and they finally die, but a character created by an artist's imagination has its life fixed immutably. Pirandello's is always a "teatro dello specchio"—a looking-glass theatre, in which his individual characters are shown as in a mirror aspects of themselves which they cannot recognise; and his drama springs from their realisation that that is how others see them. In "Six Characters" the mirror is held up to the Characters as their situation is acted by the Leading Man and the Leading Lady of the company. They fail to recognise themselves as they would be represented by the dramatic art, and their reality for the audience is heightened by the unreality, for them, of the actors' concepts.

Pirandello's characters have a passion for reasoning, for arguing out their troubles. This is by no means a new feature of the drama, but Pirandello differs perhaps from his predecessors in that the more the emotion of a scene, the greater the tension, so the more do his characters become precise and

analytic, as their creator tries to achieve absolute truth of presentation. The Pirandellian style is peculiar—disjointed and irregular; the characters speak almost in jerks, alternating diffident, unfinished sentences and half-worked-out thoughts with reasoned speeches. But the jerkiness suits the moments of crisis in his dramas extremely well—it seems to give the impression of reality much better than the smoother styles of other dramatists, probably because in moments of stress human speech and thought are very often jerky and incoherent. Pirandello tries always to appeal to the intellect rather than the heart—Walter Starkie quotes him as saying in a lecture “People say that my drama is obscure, and they call it cerebral drama. The new drama possesses a distinct character from the old: whereas the latter had as its basis passion, the former is the expression of the intellect. One of the novelties I have given to modern drama consists in converting the intellect into passion.” How far Pirandello succeeded in his avowed aim is open to doubt—very often his characters seem merely to be puppets; the same puppets in every play, only in different circumstances. Only in “Six Characters” do the puppets achieve a degree of reality—the play’s *motif* is their struggle to do so.

The effect which Pirandello has had on modern drama may be partly due to this puppet-likeness of his actors—as dramatists have followed his style, so actors have had to change their technique. But that he has had considerable influence is undoubted. A comparison of the plays of, for instance, Wilde and Christopher Fry, or Pinero and Eugene O’Neill, shows that great strides have been made by the drama since the nineties; and in the work of every notable contemporary playwright (except Shaw, who is in many ways an anachronism by now) can be discerned something of the Pirandellian technique. It is perhaps significant in this connection to note that one of the two men who brought Pirandello to the notice of the non-Italian literary world in 1915—the second being Benjamin Crémieux—was that other literary innovator, James Joyce; and it might be said that Pirandello’s influence on the stage has been very similar, in nature and extent, to that of Joyce on prose writing.



B. R. Wilmshurst

THE BOAT

THE BOY STARED OUT OF THE WINDOW, resting his head on his hands. Outside the air was hot and still, except where here and there it suddenly stirred, beating deep hollows in the motionless foliage of the trees. He got up and walked restlessly through the house until all at once his eye alighted on a matchbox tray in an empty fireplace, seeming almost to glow in the shadows from the contrast between its clear-cut yellow sides and the powdery grey ashes underneath. He picked it up, turning it over and over in his hand, the discarded refuse of civilisation, yet already in his mind the heir to centuries of legend, of the earliest skin coracle twisting in the black, silent backwaters of primeval forests, of the great ships filling their white sails and dipping their carved balustrades through the spray of the heaving, blue, coruscating Caribbean.

With endless patience he glued on a splint as a mast, and more splints as spars, holding them in position until they set, finally attaching thin, blue paper sails, and soon it was finished. Picking it up he ran into the beckoning sunlight of the late afternoon.

He sped down the cart track, the air vibrant with the hum of summer. The arching sprays of bramble-flowers tore at him as he passed, but he paid no heed, running on, his feet pounding on the grey, sun-baked mud, till at last he leapt over a low dry-stone wall into a great meadow beyond. The grass was tall and yellowing, and rustled continually around him as he moved. Flashes of reflected sunlight swept past from the whirling stems, transient and ephemeral, doomed to fall before the scythe, yet witnessing in whispers to all eternity. He bore away to the left, plunging under a thin trail of pines on the river-strand where the long quivering shafts of sunlight flickered on the great, still boles, and the long-dead pine

needles, lying in great dark heaps, absorbed every sound and footfall; then he was out on a grassy cornice above the river, in the full glare of the summer sun.

Putting the boat down in front of him he began to take off his shoes. The water-edge here was lined with low-growing alders, the bank above topped by a swaying yellow wall of grass. Further downstream where the river made a sharp bend, the steep slope of the hillside was clothed with trees, the lower branches extending out over the shadowed, shimmering water, the highest rising into the pale blue sky directly below the sun, whose shafts of light, passing parallel to the treetops, left them in deep gloom, except where a bleached limb rose swaying out of the formless shadows, its leaves glittering and golding in the light.

The boy leapt barefooted down the hot gravel of the bank and carefully put the matchbox boat into the water. The paper sails stirred, the boat mounted the ripples spreading from under its bowsprit, and moved through the dark green shade of the trees, where the tenuous waterweed moved in the cold, transparent water, on into the dancing light. Light was circumambient: saturating the tree-lined valley and blue hills, its golden flood breaking over river and boat. The boy, his hands to his eyes, statuesque, saw the sails change from common paper to beaten metal, saw the hull stand out darkly from the surge and shine of the massing ripples. Suddenly the boy, wishing passionately to regain it, waded through the shallows, but the cold, clear, slicing water rose above his knees, forcing him back. He stood and watched it sail away, now lost to him for ever, merging into the dancing whorls of light, leaving him alone on sun-baked gravel with the yellow, rustling grass.

*S. P. Sundaram***THE STORY OF THE PLAYING CARD**

THE EXACT DATE when the playing card was first devised cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty, but it must have been very long ago indeed judging from the innumerable stories associated with the fifty-two cards which comprise this small pack—stories that date back to the Middle Ages and earlier.

One story is that the idea of the playing card was first conceived in 15th century France during the reign of Charles VI, and according to this story, a Frenchman devised this to “provide entertainment” to the king when he had not to deal with any civil war or other disturbances.

Another story claims the date of inception to be earlier and it credits the nomadic gypsies of Egypt of the 14th century with the idea. These gypsies found this an easy way to spend their free time—which they seem to have had in very good measure—and it was the Arabs and Saracens who learnt the use of the card from these gypsies, who later took it to the European countries.

The Indian princes and feudal chiefs of the 11th century and later are supposed to have played cards too, after returning from a strenuous day of hunting in the woods, in an effort to recover from the physical strain, to “forget the cruelty of the blood-sport” and to derive “much” pleasure.

A story current in China is that the Chinese kings of the ancient days used to have a number of wives, among whom there was invariably some clash or other. One Chinese king who was perturbed by these constant squabbles and at a loss to put a stop to them, is reported to have thought out the playing card, the use of which he taught his wives so that they no longer quarrelled, their attention being diverted by their enthusiasm for the card.

Though there are so many differences of opinion about the birth of the card and the place of its birth, so far as England is concerned, there is good reason to believe that the card was

introduced for the first time in the 15th century. During the time of the Tudors, the card was used fairly regularly by Royalty, the game played being known as "Primeró." It was, of course, played with very high stakes to win or lose. When the notoriously unlucky Mary Queen of Scots was reigning she is said to have lost a fortune following the hazard of the cards, and her gambling debts afforded the material for the most outspoken scandal of the day.

When the Tudors gave way to the Stuarts, the playing card continued to enjoy Royal Patronage and James I, though he did not know how to play the game, was very keen on the cards. During his spare time, he used to deal out two hands and ask two of his Lords to play the hands, one of whom was to play on his behalf and whichever card the Lord representing him asked to be played, he himself would play it. He derived immense pleasure out of this and till the end he never took the trouble to learn the game.

The cards used in those days among Royalty were very long and the pictures of the reigning monarch and his queen were often painted on them. (Probably this is the origin of kings and queens among the cards.) The cards themselves bore pictures of flowers, fruits, leaves, bells, etc. Also in those days, the Catholics used a particular type of card for themselves on which there were certain pictures drawn, to signify some appropriate virtue; for example, the Cup to denote faith, the Coin—righteousness, the Dagger—justice and the Club—fearlessness.

During the days of Queen Anne, England was involved in a number of wars and there was a large number of soldiers fighting under the generalship of Marlborough. There was not enough money in the Treasury to pay such large forces and to increase the State Revenue a surcharge of sixpence was levied on every pack of cards. This tax is reported to have enriched the Treasury to the extent of thirty thousand pounds in the year 1739 alone.

Before the use of the card by the gentry and society people, their servants and valets used to play the game of "whisk," or "snobbers." In 1740, a few of the gentry met

in a London Coffee House and elevated the card game and gave it status and rules as well as the name, Whist. Whist was thus for the first time introduced into Society and recognised as a respectable game. This has been followed by a steady rise in the popularity of Whist and Bridge.

During the period of the Georges, cards were played day and night throughout the country by many people. There were gentlemen who lost all their possessions in the course of a day, ladies who lost all their jewels (to become wiser—or did they?). During the time of Queen Victoria excessive and irresponsible gambling was prohibited by Law.

There has always existed a belief that certain cards bring luck while certain others have bad luck associated with them. Even to this day, many people entertain such ideas. Nine of spades, for instance, is often supposed to bring luck to the player. Once Cavour, the Italian Statesman and political wizard, whilst playing against an Englishman, had the welcome experience of winning 10,000 francs when the nine of spades was declared as the trump card. At the end of the game, the victorious Cavour presented his opponent with the nine of spades as a consolation.

Eight of spades, on the other hand, is believed to be the bringer of the most wretched luck. Once Lord Lansdowne was playing a game of cards in the famous White's Club in London. In one of the games, spades were declared as trumps. When his turn to play a trump came, the Lord became nervous, his hands shivered and he felt very uneasy. Instead of playing a trump, he played a heart rather hesitatingly. At this, his adversary looked up with an amazement suggestive of disbelief in his fairplay. This made matters worse, for it put the noble Lord off a little more. He grew pale and disinclined to play any further. He got up saying that he was not feeling well and that he was going home. A few of his cards fell down from his hands. The Lord's condition grew worse with every minute and his men called his carriage and took him home. At the doorstep, while alighting from the carriage, the treacherous card, which was evidently lost in some part of his dress fell down. One of his men picked it up and gave it to

him. Lord Lansdowne observed in a failing voice, "Oh! dear, this is that wretched card which clouded my memory and made me sick—the murderous card that it is!" and collapsed. He died immediately after whilst being carried upstairs to his room. The card was the unlucky eight of spades! His personal servant immediately burned the fateful card and threw the ashes into the Thames.

Apart from the popular stories and jokes that are associated with it, the playing card has, naturally enough, found its way into literature too, and many references to it are to be found in the works of Goldsmith, Pope, Dr. Johnson and others. Its popularity during the present day is probably the greatest that it has ever known and in many homes and clubs throughout the world it continues to provide people with an enjoyment and mental stimulation of a kind which no other form of relaxation can provide.

(* Adapted and translated from an article in Tamil).

L. Minson

THE ART OF THE FILM— ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

THERE IS A GROWING number of people who believe that the Film is as much an Art Form as is, for instance, Painting. They believe that certain films will be of as great a value in 2050 as they are to-day. The fact that such films are infrequent does not alter their viewpoint. Now, whilst it is perhaps true that by far the greater percentage of films made in these days are of little artistic value—badly directed, threadworn productions without much interest or originality—it is equally true that in every year many hundreds, possibly thousands of novels are published of which much the same sort of criticism could be made. I have yet to see any literary critic suggest the Novel form is not an Art Form

because of the fact that so many bad novels are written. Yet Mr. Kingham's article, for all its irony, did, in fact, seem to hint that he DID wish to apply such an arbitrary judgment to the Film. Surely it is a canon of good criticism that a sound judgment can only be made on the basis of the BEST—not of the WORST examples in any given field of Art, and it seems legitimate to point out that if the Film IS to be considered as an Art Form it is surely inconsistent to apply standards of criticism which are not accepted as sound in relation to any other Art Form. Such a critical method can only lead to ill-considered generalisation, if not downright prejudice.

I therefore wish to re-examine the whole question of the Film as an Art Form from a viewpoint which seems to me to offer a better prospect of a balanced judgment. The main question to be solved is whether there are, in fact, any Films at all which are artistically worthwhile. If there are, then surely the Film must be judged on the basis of these examples, and must be considered to be indeed a valid and worthwhile Art Form.

As a first step, I must challenge Mr. Kingham's ironical categorisation of Hollywood films on the basis of the type of story round which they may have been made. As a self-confessed critic, claiming some experience of criticism he would surely agree that subject matter is not by any means necessarily the determining factor in judging a work of Art. Great stories, novels, and plays have been written repeatedly, throughout history, around stories which, treated by lesser artists than those who have actually written them would undoubtedly have been dismissed as hackneyed in the extreme. The judgment, surely, must be based on the imagination and technique with which the story is handled, and not on the bare bones of the story itself. Think back to the acknowledged masterpieces of Film-making and consider whether it was their stories, or the manner in which those stories were presented which made them memorable. Think back, for instance to the restaurant-car scene in "Night Train from Munich." Was it simply the fact that the hero's drink was drugged which provided the almost-unbearable tension of the scene? Drinks are so often drugged in films, aren't they?—Was it not rather the imagination of

the Director in concentrating so subtly on the glass, building up, by slow degrees, in a simple and unobtrusive manner, that pitch of tension which affected almost everyone who saw the film and afterwards committed their impressions to print? Consider, again, the film "Johnny Belinda"—written round a story which was nothing if not of the most "novellettish" kind, with the most sugary of sugary endings. Yet in the brilliant direction of the piece, and in the superb acting of Jane Wyman, Lew Ayres, and Charles Bickford, a film was made which only the most churlish and impercipient would deny as a work of real cinema Art.

The main direction of attack of Mr. Kingham's article was towards Hollywood. This gave his article its particular flavour of "special pleading." And it was so easy to attack Hollywood. Hollywood produces by far the greatest proportion of the films seen throughout the World, and it is true that to many filmmakers in America there is only one maxim—the box office! But to suggest that this is true of ALL American studios, and of ALL their products is unjust, and unfortunately like most of such generalisations has just that slight element of credibility in it which supplies the reason for that body of opinion which actually does exist in Europe which considers that every work of Art which does not originate in Europe is either spurious, or else moronic, and entirely lacking in mature artistic feeling.

The American industry is certainly an open target. But this does not mean that defence of it is not either desirable or justifiable, in spite of the undoubted preponderance of plotless musicals without any pretence to anything else but box office appeal (against which, set the acknowledged artistry of Dannie Kaye, for instance), of hideously boring murders, of fake psychology and sadism in the spate of epics which America does undoubtedly pour into both her own and also into the European market, supported by all the ballyhoo which the expert American film-huckster can devise. In spite of this we HAVE seen American masterpieces, and America deserves the courtesy of at least a fair-minded consideration of these masterpieces before any too sweeping generalisations are made.

And there is still more to be said. Many years ago before

the advent of the talking Film, when the cinema really was red plush and vulgarity for the most part, the British industry was busy trying, and to some extent still is, to fuse two entirely different Art Forms, by treating the Film as though it were only another form of Theatre. The policy was to carry out the successful filming of successful stage-plays just as they had been performed in the Theatre. The result was an unhappy translation of works designed for the three-dimensional Theatre medium into a two-dimensional medium which did not suit them or do them justice, with the further result that the "moving pictures" so made just did not move! Meanwhile, in America, D. W. Griffith had already realised what some Directors have even yet to realise, that the Film was an entirely new medium demanding an entirely new technique both of acting and of Production. Nor was he alone in this realisation. Men like Jesse L. Lasky, Robert Flaherty, and Fred Niblo were already making films which are still regarded as Classics to-day. If Hollywood had nothing else to its credit and, as we have already seen, this is not the case, surely this early work of its film pioneers, vital if the cinema were ever to become an Art Form, must certainly be accounted to it for good. When we add to this such names and titles as John Ford, with his "Stagecoach" and his recent "Red River"—Orson Welles (as a Director), with his "Citizen Kane" and "The Magnificent Ambersons"—and films like "The Southerner," and that brilliant and unpretentious little murder masterpiece (for once) "The Window," surely we must admit that the American industry has produced, side by side with some of the worst, some of the best pieces of Film Art which have yet been exhibited.

It would seem therefore that Mr. Kingham's contention that the American Film Director either could not, or would not produce good Film Art, or that if he did he would automatically be placed in the position of the renegade or exile, cannot be supported for one moment as sound criticism, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Kingham will find himself able to bring a somewhat different attitude to bear upon any film, English or American, which his role of film critic may make it necessary for him to go and see in the future.

OBTUSE ANGLES

KULTUR (contd.).

CUMBERBATCH'S EQUATION (post Einstein).

$$k\infty = {}^{\circ}E|\chi| \cdot \frac{d}{d\theta} \cosh^{-1} \left(\frac{\sum i \Delta^p}{{}_n C_r} \right)$$

Where :—

- χ is the ellipticity of the Mean Spring Equinox.
 p is another Equinox (unspecified).
 θ is a function of the Stress Function V !
 Σ is the base of Ptolemaic Logarithms, (13 figs.).
 Δ is an Obtuse Angle.
 i is cis $\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right)$ as usual.
 ${}_n C_r$ is a number of combinations.
 E is the Entelechy of Driesch.
 and, k is Cumberbatch's Constant
 EUREKA !

THIS MONTH'S GADGET.

In response to a general demand I have agreed to print in this column from time to time news of inventions and technical developments of interest to an audience rather more select than that reached by normal commercial advertising.

I have recently had the opportunity of testing an extremely interesting little gadget which should completely revolutionise the teaching not merely of foreign languages but of our mother tongue. I refer to the "O.K. Diction Spanner."

This beautiful little piece of precision engineering allows the relative positions of the nostrils, teeth, ears and lips to be altered completely at will, and by a series of fine adjustments, carried out by means of micrometer screws, re-orientation of the features may be achieved through an infinite number of variations, making it possible for the student to pronounce not merely the complete range of sounds to be found in Follick, but also those appearing in such rare dialects as Chapeltown and Harrogate. There is also an ingenious locking device which

ensures that the features remain in situ for as long as required without further recourse to the Diction Spanner.

The instrument, which is in short supply at the moment, may be obtained from me (privately). It sells for 18/-.

SEQUEL.

Passing the establishment of "Tum-Tum," our most exclusive corsetière the other day, happening to glance up, I was horrified to see the face of Lady Frédégonde Horsch leering out at me from behind the plate glass door. At the time I was with the man whom I had hoped would be my future father-in-law, General Sir Talleyrand le Gûme, K.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., D.S.O. and Bar, Chevalier du Legion d'Honneur, etc., etc., and being unwilling to risk another interview like the one reported in my last column I averted my eyes and affected not to have seen her. It was too late, however. Bursting out from the shop, obviously straight from the fitting-room, she confronted us there in the main street, clad only in a scanty confection of satin-elastic and chiffon lace.—"Cumby dear,"—she shrieked—"But how WONDERFUL!"—What DO you think of THIS delicious little thing?—Only forty guineas dear." . . . Here she posed in a manner reminiscent of the Folies Bergères, to the great delight of the crowd which had gathered meantime. I was too thunderstruck to speak. The general turned to me in his most dignified manner.—"It appears, sir,"—he said—"That you are acquainted with this lady.—I wish you a very good morning"—having said which he strode rapidly away in the direction from which we had come.—Lady F. giggled.—"Such a DEAR man!"—she said.—"He's never forgiven ME, you know.—So sweet!"—"Forgiven you?"—I asked, in spite of my indignation.—"His NEPHEW, dolt!"—she hissed,—"Everybody knows the silly boy shot himself in my flat.—Really, you make me tired!—Ta-Ta!"—Then she was gone, pausing only to dig me in the ribs with her elbow to the accompaniment of the most abominably suggestive wink.

I fear that the episode will have cost me the General's friendship.

CUMBERBATCH.

Colin West
I DONT GET IT

ANYONE WHO STUDIES any of the Arts soon discovers that the history of their subject is usually divided into ages or periods. In literature, for instance, one has the Romantics; in painting, the pre-Raphaelites; in music the Classicists; and in architecture the baroque. Such periods denote times when some characteristic was common to the leading practitioners of the art. Frequently it is a superficial trait, and almost always it is very general. But the innate human liking for classification demands that such nomenclature be used, and in any case it is useful for chapter-headings in history books.

Occasionally, one label is attached to the expositors of all forms of art in a given period. Who first applies such names is one of the mysteries of history; but there is one period which is going to be christened here and now, and it is going to be christened by me. The name will probably not enjoy universal approval, nor will it be sanctified by common usage in the future. But at least it has a fair chance of arousing wrath in the minds of the pseudo-intellectuals, and of causing wailing and gnashing of teeth in the ranks of the ultra-aesthetic. For the period is now, and the name I shall apply to it is Incomprehensible.

There have been, in the past, many odd artists. In fact, I have frequently meditated a thesis to prove that all great writers were either abnormal or had an unhappy home-life, and I have only been prevented from putting thought into action by the consideration that the final year of an honours degree course in English Literature is a time for greater diplomacy than would be shown in publishing so heretical a doctrine. But the frantic outbursts of modern artists of all types make complete silence on the subject impossible. Let this essay, then, be in the nature of a safety valve for the release of pent-up emotion.

Consider first the painters. Since the early years of the century there has been a complete revolt against previously

accepted standards. In the days before the invention of the sub-conscious mind, an artist saw a cow, liked the look of the cow, and drew the cow; and people looked at his picture and realised that it was a picture of a cow and discussed whether the artist had drawn the legs correctly or done full justice to the soulful expression customarily seen on the front end of such a creature. Now, however, all is changed. An artist may possibly still see a cow (although considering into what disrepute the country-side has fallen in the eyes of the modern artist even this is a little doubtful). But, once having seen the cow, the contemporary painter will probably produce a composite picture of a number twenty-six Belle Isle tram, a knife and fork, a couple of eyes, and a battered top-hat, taking great pains to keep everything quite out of perspective. He then entitles the picture "A Cow," and is applauded by his associates for having shown a new interpretation of rural life.

Turning from painting to poetry, something of a similar nature is found. Let me quote from the works of that patron saint of all aspiring poets, Mr. T. S. Eliot.

"Hoo ha ha
Hoo ha ha
Hoo
Hoo
Hoo."

That is poetry. But at least it does not pretend to be comprehensible. There are others who enmesh the reader in a torrent of words like "polyphiloprogenitive" and similar multi-syllabic monstrosities, and leave him with a dreadful feeling of inferiority complex and a despairing cry of "But what does it *mean*?" And if one of the eclectic body of the initiate can stoop so low as to speak comprehensibly for a moment, he will probably say that it all has something to do with symbols.

The modern novel has followed the same trends, notably in the work of Mr. James Joyce and Miss Gertrude Stein, both of whom have done away with punctuation and both of whom invent new words. This, according to theory, is in order that they might convey their meaning more exactly. How one is

able to do this by using words which have never been seen before by anybody else is a little difficult to understand.

It is, however, in the theatre that the Incomprehensibility flourishes in its most advanced form, for here art, poetry, prose, and music can all be mixed up in a glorious combination, to which is added a touch of what was once known as drama, but which now only helps to make confusion worse confounded. Ever since Signor Pirandello's six characters set out in search of an author (presumably in an effort to find someone who would put them into a reasonable play) the theatre has been drifting further into the morass of modernism. Perhaps the final touch has now been given by the great M. Picasso who, not content with reigning as Lord High Incomprehensible in the field of painting (a position established in part by drawing a picture of a box and calling it "My Father") has recently written a play in which, among other similar characters are a Pair of Boots and A Curtain.

The reasons for all this are not far to seek. The Victorian era saw the apotheosis of bourgeois respectability, a state of ultra-conventionalism which broke down under the weight of its own boredom and permitted the originality and the adventurous questing spirit which is a constant part of human nature to burst through the crust of traditional decorum. But instead of being merely a release of pressure, the effect was a complete shattering of all restraint, and artistic conceptions jumped from one extreme to the other. Nineteenth century ideals were anathema, and therefore that which was furthest away from them was nearest the new ideal. Experiment followed experiment, until the main criterion of value in any branch of art was originality. The basis of the philosophy of aesthetics was the search for something, anything, which was different; and the craze for newness was encouraged by the tremendous strides made in science, and paralleled by the new conceptions in politics and philosophy. Added to this was the cynical pessimism and general despair induced by the Great War and its aftermath, which completed the demolition of traditional values and brought about the breakdown of pre-1914 culture. Changing circumstances called for a new order, and

as the doctrines of Communism and Fascism answered the call in politics, so the Incomprehensibles answered the call in art.

But Fascism has already aroused the opposition of the ordinary man, and Communism is doing the same. Both are revolutionary doctrines lacking any basis in tradition and relying for their growth on despair, cynicism and extremism. The rise of the Incomprehensibles is based on the same foundations. The cry of the Typical Incomprehensible is for self-expression and freedom from restraint, and he pursues these ends without the slightest consideration for anyone else. Disregard for others is selfishness and great art cannot come from him who is selfish. A painter or writer may say that he works in order to express himself, and that as long as he achieves this end it does not matter whether his work is understood by anyone else. But the man who is given the ability to work in any artistic medium has a duty to perform. He must convey his vision to other men in a way that they can understand. Great art is not personal but universal, that is, universally applicable and universally comprehensible. The artist who is incomprehensible is lacking in that universality which is the hall-mark of greatness. And that lack is the main characteristic of present-day art.

A Miller of Dee

ALL BUDDIES TOGETHER

OR

An inquiry into the possibilities of a closer relationship between the Staff and the Students of this University within the present system: together with some animadversions upon the prevalence of intellectual dishonesty and humbug necessitated by that system.

A GREAT DEAL OF FUSS IS MADE about the necessity of improving the relationships between the staff and students, the theory being that we're "all buddies together," and the more we become aware of each other's frailties the more we will respect each other's convictions. Let us examine the situation.

The Lecturers across the road are not all alike. Some are scholars cursed with a critical integrity which the examination system does nothing to support. Others are utilitarian teachers, crammers whose only desire is to impose upon their pupils those opinions which are guaranteed to please the appropriate examining body. Even more are not at all interested in education, regard intellectual honesty as an idealist myth, and merely do the job they are paid for with the minimum of necessary effort. Their work varies in quality. Lectures range from the incoherent to the inaudible, from the darkly obscure to the frankly obscene. Tutorials are occasionally useless and frequently dull. The personal element necessary to argument is almost invariably absent, for many adolescents, still imbued with the idea of teacher versus pupil, prevent the tutors from doffing their masks. To these students tutorials are times of torment, every question a court martial, and each essay an ordeal. The staff dare do little to change the situation for they are not supposed to teach us to educate ourselves but to make us conform to the standard opinions in order to gain marks. The barrier of their own awareness of the intellectual dishonesty of these methods of "education" as well as the natural barrier between age and youth prevent them from relaxing their defensive mechanism of aloof superiority. Their pretence that we're all buddies together is as shallow as their assumption of omniscience, only occasionally qualified by a specious dubiety. And the necessity of their separation from us only makes their occasional condescension doubly embarrassing. Ex-service students have learnt that lecturers are human and fallible, and even suspect them of being frequently pathological, so that *they* are able to cope with the situation and even enjoy some companionship with people "from across the road." Ex-school girls and boys, however, find it more difficult to discover a common ground with their tutors and professors, and they are not helped to solve the problem by the equal embarrassment of their "superiors." There is nothing more amusing than the spectacle of a self-conscious lecturer unbending to a timorous blonde.

Poor men! If only we stood up to them—but the

intellectual honesty of a true process of education would only lead to the loss of those letters which imply it.

That is the trouble. The aura of the form-room which surrounds all academic activities is made permanent by the existence of an examination system which demands the subordination of the pupil's opinion to that of the probable examiner, and by the conspiracy of cant which makes of Established Opinion the Golden Rule, a single deviation from which may mean disaster.

Moral blackmail is the motor force of the University. If you wish to gain a degree you must deny your own soul. You must play the game of humbug and cant so well that, in time, its method of scoring points will seem an immutable scale of values for life itself. This is intellectual discipline. This is "education." The great God of Examinations creates the statutes, and the by-laws are constructed by his minions in their lecture rooms. We can have no true Staff-Student fraternity until the arbitrary authority of the ruler is matched by the intellectual liberty of his subjects. This would force competence upon the teacher and maturity upon his pupils.

But we are not fit for liberty. We do not use those powers which we already have. We allow ourselves to be pushed around by self-constituted committees, and only object when our food supply is threatened or our beer curtailed. We believe in the God of imposed law and order to such an extent that the threatened, and possibly phantom, big stick of rustication never has to fall. The unnecessary stupidities of life are allowed to remain unharmed, not in the belief of their eventual removal but in the conviction that the powers-that-be would not listen. The treacherous stone stairs at Weetwood remain uncarpeted, in spite of numerous accidents. The inadequacy of the University Library, though common knowledge, occasions no outcry. The University Newspaper is allowed to continue its newsless and dreary way uninhibited. *The Gryphon* coterie continues to print its mating cries of long-haired soul to soul. We do not create a disturbance. We do not break the windows. We simply accept the situation and go our ways. And the Staff, no less aware, go theirs. Together we could, perhaps, build

a University worthy of the name, but we cannot combine forces. The well-meaning parochialism of misinformed conferences cannot bring it about. Staff-Student teas, organised by a self-constituted committee of conference-conscious students, do little to change the nature of our class society. A vast deal of tea is drunk. A great many sandwiches are eaten. But the party remains a common bunfight at which the prevailing atmosphere is one of acute intellectual dyspepsia. And whom do we discover at these feasts of intellect, working for a closer Staff-Student relationship, but the old gang of oligarchs paying lip-service to fraternity?

How can it be otherwise? The University is balanced on the knife edge of inequality. The Examination system, with its attendance registers, depends upon it—depends upon it the more because the majority of scholars are anarchic by temperament, and, were they to step down from the dais which custom and blindness have erected, the false discipline of arbitrarily imposed values would, in its extinction, also kill the whole spirit of the University as we know it.

What would be the result? Tutorials would become lively and divorced from the examination convention of which they are at present the prop and stay. Lecturers would discover empty as well as crowded rooms. The Union Bar would hold the inebriated and companionable of both species, while many an Arts student would discover science, and many an Engineer discover a latent ability to appreciate Art. By common demand the Brotherton Library would be filled with the necessary books. The pettifogging restrictions of Hostel life would vanish. We would have, by virtue of the majority voice, a Student University.

Utopia? Perhaps. The plan, however, like all Utopian plans is impracticable. It takes no account of human frailty. The University is a class society and both lecturers and students realise it. Lecturers do not want Staff-Student fraternity. Neither they nor the students want the co-operative anarchism of a Student University. It would be too much of a strain. Scholarship would suffer as more and more time had to be spent on student education and less and less upon private

research. Student opinions would conflict with those of their "teachers." Many lecturers would lose their jobs, and many more would be lost creatures, taken from the warm nest of their self-absorption and exposed to the buffeting winds of young and growing intellects. If the falsity of their position were exposed they would lose more than they could afford, their own self-deception realised as such and known to be the only foundation upon which their lives are based.

In spite of the numbers of men who would not suffer from the introduction of a Student University, for the sake of scholarship, and for our own sakes we cannot afford the experiment. Our lecturers are men who need the system, and are only able to be useful members of society when supported by it. And we, too, need the system. Like our "superiors" we need the imposed discipline, for we cannot impose our own. We are subjected to the necessity of intellectual dishonesty, humbug, and committee-worship mainly by our own inadequacies. While agreeing with Keats that "Memory is not knowledge," we continue to memorise facts and the opinions of others, not only because we are told that it is advisable to do so, but also because we cannot think of a better method of procedure. In spite of our dislike of the examination system, we do not, *en masse*, demand that investigations into the possibilities of another system be started; we look up previous papers and indulge in profitable calculations. We play the game of humbug as well as we are able, and by the very nature of this game we cannot meet our lecturers upon any basis of equality. The game demands a class society, for a classless society, with freedom of communication between staff and students on all subjects would make the game impossible to be played.

Let us retain this oligarchy, and cease these ineffectual committees. The Divine Right of Senates, and the Omniscience of Examiners must remain at the head of the statute book. Were they to be expunged, we would be happier and develop our own identities the more surely, but the University as we know it would cease to exist.

And yet . . . perhaps that would not be altogether a bad thing.

BALLAD FOR CENTENARY

Feste

O William was a humbug,
 William was a castaway ;
 William was a rum bug
 Who tried to wish his past away.

William was brutally selfish,
 William was often a bore,
 William resembled a shell-fish,
 William had bolted the door.

He thought that sexual passion
 Ought always to be avoided ;
 But now he's again in the fashion
 Because he's been properly Freuded.

Poor Mademoiselle Annette
 Tried hard to teach him French ;
 But he could never forget
 The thing he taught that wench.

Sara, William's wife's sister,
 Was something of a beauty ;
 After he had (warmly) kissed her
 He wrote his " Ode to Duty."

William took to the C. of E.
 After 1807,
 Since Nature could not guarantee
 A modest seat in heaven.

Trains to him were a shock,
 He wrote very violent verses,
 But he bought up railway stock
 In spite of all his curses.

That's about all I know,
 Of Wordsworth, not known as Willy ;
 His face was a horse's, and Oh
 His verse was frequently silly.

Bill Moody

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

MY RECENT INVESTIGATIONS into personal names and their influence on character owe their inception to an unfortunate accident, the results of which have darkened my life for a long time.

Two years ago I wrote a story for *The Gryphon* and forgot to put my name to it. If I had remembered it would have been "F. W. Moody"; but I didn't, and somebody added "Bill Moody," and thus my name appeared in print. Now arose a terrible problem. Should I appear in subsequent *Gryphons* as "F.W." or "Bill"? I was a coward. Afraid of being thought stuffy, I kept to "Bill." It was a grievous mistake.

Now please don't get me wrong. I'm not proud. I have, as Mr. Belvedere said of somebody or other, a great deal to be modest about. I answer to Hi! or to any loud cry. I *like* to be called "Bill." But I *don't* like to be looked on as the sort of chap who announces to all and sundry that he *wants* to be called "Bill." What do you expect of such a chap? From my bitter experience I can tell you. You expect him to be Straight and Bluff and Hearty; or perhaps you see him as a Wag, always ready with a merry Quip. Fool that I was,

I played my expected part, my self-disgust growing with every performance. More and more I felt like Logan Pearsall Smith :—

... in a glow of self-satisfaction I walked out into the night. "A delightful evening," I reflected, "the nicest kind of people. What I said about finance and philosophy impressed them; and how they laughed when I imitated a pig squealing."

But soon after, "God, it's awful," I muttered. "I wish I was dead."

I wanted to write heart-rending stories, but how could I? No true artist was ever plagued with such a name. Bill Shakespeare, Bill Wordsworth, Bill Langland, Bill Morris, Bill Cowper, Bill Walton... impossible! (It is worth while noting in passing that the stories in *The Gryphon* about little boys who are chased round orchards and dumped in dams are written by a chap who takes care not to print his Nickname).

But I have stood all I can. The show is over. My friends tell me that I am morose, distraught, depressed; which is cheerful evidence that I have thrown aside all pretence and reveal my true misanthropic self. And any time now, thinking and writing as "F.W.", I expect to give birth to a miserable short story about a beautiful young Etymologist who is accidentally crushed beneath a volume of the Oxford English Dictionary; the cleaners discover her, an enigmatic smile on her face, lying stiff and stark in Icelandic Bay.

These troubles of mine, as I suggested at the beginning, have caused me to make sympathetic enquiries on how other people get on with their names. I have been appalled at my discoveries. I cannot of course quote the actual names of my informants, but my fictitious names are similar to theirs in character. My case-book contains many sad stories and I select one to illustrate the complexity of the problem:

Aggie Darnell, student, 20 years. Was christened Aggie—have seen birth certificate. At five years began to practise deceit, stating that her name was Anne. When Christian names were asked for at school she used to burst into tears or go out and whisper to the teacher, thus acquiring from her school-fellows another set of names which did nothing to increase her

self-respect. Came to University a mass of complexes. Met a man and got on well with him. "Call me Sammy," he said. "No, Mr. Slubb," she said, "we do not know each other well enough to exchange such familiarities." She was, of course holding him off because she didn't want to reveal her own name. And something else had cropped up; could she bear to be called "Slubb"? Put off this problem for a while and told Sam that her name is Anne. She now realises that Finals are approaching and if she is successful nothing can conceal her true name; it will be cried out in the Town Hall and printed all over the place. Meanwhile I have had a quiet word with unsuspecting Sam and discover he doesn't care for the name "Anne," which reminds him of a previous unfortunate love affair, while he likes "Aggie," which was the name of an aunt who left him a hundred pounds.

Complicated, isn't it? I don't know what's going to happen. But how different it might have been if the girl had been called Elizabeth and the chap's surname had been Wilson!

This case and many others force me to the conclusion that a child's most necessary equipment for the Battle of Life is a good set of names. Children are very susceptible to sounds. Do you remember W. J. Turner's lines:

"When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land.
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand."

Of course most children are caught by sounds long before they reach thirteen. I once knew a nine-year-old boy who picked up "reciprocating swivel cam" from the wireless: he muttered it all day and no doubt all night for three weeks until I weaned him away from it with "biomolecular structure." My nephew, at the age of four, was possessed by "Lampedusa Island." On young persons with such sensitivity to the beauty of sounds the impact of their own names must be terrific. I pass this notion to my psycho-analytical friends for further investigation.

Has it ever struck you that the course of history may be changed by the prevailing fashion in personal names? For

a long time I have believed that the usual explanations of William's victory at Hastings were inadequate. I now present my theory which is new and startling and therefore most likely to be the correct one. The Old English used to have strong harsh names like Tostig, Grimketel, Blitscrieg, or names which sneered at you like Hnaef. Just before 1066—and here I quote the authorities for that period, Messrs. Sellar and Yeatman—they grew fond of names like Ethelbreth, Athelthral, and Thruthelthrolth. These names made the English sound short-tongued and gave them an inferiority complex. They were thus at a disadvantage before battle commenced, as their opponents had plenty of top-drawer names like Fitz-Osbern, Fitz-William, and Fitz-Walter. The Normans rubbed in their advantage as soon as they stepped ashore. "Avancez, Soldats de Fitz-Osbern!" they cried; to which the English could only reply "Forward, Thanes of Thruthelthrolth!" From this moment the result was never in doubt.

I have now, I hope, sufficiently indicated the lines along which my investigations have taken me. Why, you may reasonably ask, have I abandoned my researches which promised to be of such inestimable value to mankind? I will be frank. My retreat is bound up with the name "Helen." I do not know anyone called Helen, I do not wish to know anyone called Helen, but if I go on with my enquiries I am bound to find a Helen. Helen is my Impossible She who has commanded my heart and me for as long as I remember. Hers, as you are well aware, was the face that launched a thousand ships and burned the topless towers of Ilium. Her beauty is to me like those Nicean barks of yore, that gently, o'er a perfumed sea, the weary, wayworn wanderer bore to his own native shore. I wish I were where Helen lies, night and day on me she cries. But she is dead, long dead, and I cannot bear to meet her counterfeit:

" Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye."

In fact when it comes to one name, at least, I find my self drunk and incapable. I give up.

K. Midgley

JOURNEY TO CAIRO

WE HAD BEEN WAITING almost two weeks at the Transit Camp in Port Said before our movement order came through. It gave us quite a jolt, as we had now fallen happily into the routine of shopping, sunbathing and show-going, and the fact that one day we should have to resume work had quite slipped our minds.

How one's impressions of a town may vary, depending on whether one is working or merely loafing! I doubt whether the Parisian workman thinks much about the charms of his city. And as to the European working in Port Said, I doubt if he would admit that the port has a single redeeming feature. He would describe it as a conglomeration of garish light, raucous noises and pungent smells, with far too much sun and sand, and too many flies and people. But we on "holiday" felt more romantically disposed, and by half-closing our eyes (how different life may appear by means of this device) and using a great deal of imagination, we beheld a scene of starry blue nights and silhouetted minarets, of great steamers, and of a panorama of multifarious colours: a scene which we were loth to leave behind.

That afternoon presented the last opportunity for purchasing presents, and therefore we made our way to "Simon Arty," one of the few multi-stores in the Middle East. Here one may buy brocade and silk from Damascus, mother-of-pearl from the Dead Sea, ivory from Nairobi, gay leather goods from Egypt; a complete selection of all the products of the Middle East, if one so desires. We separated to make our several purchases, but later, when Barry, George and David returned looking like portable bazaars, I was still at a loss to decide what to buy for a young friend's birthday present. I voiced my perplexity to the three, who immediately took up my cause with great enthusiasm. They had bought all their presents and spent all their money, but they were still

sufficiently under the influence of shopping-mania to rejoice at the idea of spending mine for me.

"Buy her a silk dressing-gown," suggested Barry magnanimously; "there are some beauties on the second floor at eight guineas."

"Or what about a gold compact case?" offered David.

"Or one of those tiny wristlet watches," chimed in George.

"And don't forget those superb ivory dressing-table sets," added Barry, even more recklessly.

"Hold on a minute," I responded, weakly, "This gift is not for my dearly cherished sweetheart, but for a young friend whom I used to see every Friday at the badminton club. Also I am not, as you seem to think, a brigadier on general's pay, but a lieutenant on lieutenant's pay. Now—have you any practical ideas?"

Eventually we agreed that perfume was the solution, being easily transportable and within the correct price margin. Accordingly, we invaded the perfume counter.

I can't remember having taken an interest in perfume before, but now, I was presented with a magnificent opportunity for extending my education. There were bottles of every shape and size, each with its own special name; and further to influence the prospective buyer, there was usually a small sketch depicting the inevitable consequence of using this love potion. "Irresistible," "Precocious," "Adventurous Nights," and "Ou la-la" were typical captions; but in spite of the variety of choice, if one were to believe the accompanying illustrations, they were all designed to lead to the same end.

The shop assistant was very obliging: she explained the subtle powers of each perfume, driving home her point by applying a liberal portion on Barry's person—she seemed to have taken a fancy to Barry. She sprayed a little "Vive L'Amour" into his hat; deftly flicked a drop of "Toujours L'Amour" behind his ear, and transformed his lapels into two great sampling areas for further "L'Amour" compounds. To all this Barry submitted simperingly. I thought the attention he was receiving had quite gone to his head; George and David thought so too. After all, one didn't have to smirk in

that conceited manner merely because of a pretty French girl. We made up our minds to rebuke him about his behaviour later on.

I finally decided on a bottle of that renowned perfume "Chanel No. 6," and ordered a small size to be wrapped up.

You're not going to send a *small* size, old man," said George incredulously, "I mean, dash it, don't be stingy about it."

I had not considered that I was being stingy about it, bearing in mind that I was paying about as much as I would for a similar quantity of gold dust. As I didn't wish to acquire a reputation for parsimony, I changed the order to the medium size.

"Look here, old chap," said Barry, warmly, "why not do the BIG thing, send her the large size"!

How I loathed Barry at that moment!

The "large size," I faintly murmured to the assistant, who was now eyeing Barry with even greater admiration than before. I couldn't help thinking that if my badminton friend knew just how expensive the large size was, she would be expecting a letter of proposal by the next post.

That evening we were given a demonstration of the magnetic powers of "Toujours L'Amour" and its accomplices. It is doubtful if any woman equipped with the artifices of perfume ever attracted the number of men that Barry did, as he walked, or rather wafted, into the Mess. He was almost immediately the centre of an admiring crowd of officers. He exuded scent: he smelled like the "Hanging Gardens of Babylon" and the "Rose of Tralee" all rolled into one. And when he left the Mess later on, he had at least a dozen offers to escort him back to his tent.

The following morning at seven, there was a delay in our departure: the hard rations had not arrived. George was in favour of leaving them as they would consist of little more than a few biscuits and perhaps a tin of soup. They eventually arrived on a 15 cwt. truck in a huge wooden case. With all my experience of hard rations I had never seen such a bountiful provision; in fact I found myself speculating whether there

had not been a mistake, and we had been sent the Camp rations for the next twenty-four hours. There were tins of ham, tins of chicken, in fact tins of practically everything that has ever been tinned. In addition we were supplied with four pounds of sugar, coffee, two huge loaves and a pound of butter. What a treasure trove it would have been to a British housewife!

As our train journey to Cairo was of only six hours' duration, it was impossible to understand on what basis the rations were issued. We soon discovered an effective and useful means of disposing of our food supplies. It is an established fact that the working-class element of Egypt derived, at this time, a considerable part of its total income through the extraction of "Bakshis" from visiting foreigners. And there was no better game for this most popular of Egyptian national sports than a party of English officers. The favourite hunting grounds were railway stations. Immediately a British officer set foot in a station, the pack was on him. Three porters would seize his baggage, and set off in different directions along the platform, leaving the bewildered victim wondering whether he would ever see it again. At the same time, effectively forestalling any pursuit, a bootblack boy would dash up and commence operations, and a pedlar would ply him with chocolate, magazines and trinkets. It was not until the train left the station that the nightmare ended.

Or so we thought! And how wrong we were! The train staff were even more adept at the Art, and practised it with a finesse entirely beyond the capacities of their humbler brethren of the station. We had been travelling about an hour when a slightly dirty, if rather distinguished looking gentleman in a blue suit looked in at us with an ingratiating smile.—"Good morning sirs, I am the train attendant," he announced, holding out his hand suggestively. . . . Ignorance and *noblesse oblige* came to our rescue. . . . David had never before travelled on an Egyptian train, but he was naturally of an extremely courteous disposition and seeing the hand of friendship extended thus cordially to him, he broke into a smile no less ingratiating than the attendant's own, and seizing his outstretched hand wrung

it warmly. "Happy to meet you," he said. The attendant seemed dazed at this reception, and retired immediately into the corridor without renewing his overtures for a tip. Unfortunately, however, the rest of the train staff presented us with no such opportunities for the expression of International goodwill, and David's smile could not be expected to work its wonders more than once in a single journey. And so for the rest of the time we tipped, and tipped handsomely, with tinned food from our rations! It was cheaper.

I had never imagined when I last left Cairo that I should ever feel nostalgic for the great Egyptian metropolis. Yet, as we drew into the station and heard our arrival greeted by a fanfare of strident noises from the streets outside, the dissonance of motor horns, the clanging of tramcars, the cries of the street vendors, and all that medley of sound so peculiarly characteristic of Cairo that I realised how much I really had missed its harsh contrasts of wealth and poverty, of ancient and modern, of scorching days and bitter nights.

It was not until the following day that the train departed for Aswan, so we secured accommodation at Shephard's Hotel and then set out to look round the shops (British Forces had several weeks ago totally evacuated Cairo, and only by wearing civilian clothes and obtaining a special pass, were we allowed in the city). The most noticeable change from the previous year, when I had lived in Cairo, was the absence of shoe-shine boys and guides in the streets; for when the Forces had left, there was no longer any market for their wares.

For some time, as we strolled along, I felt quite depressed, without knowing the reason. Then I realised that I missed the homely atmosphere of the Cairo I had known. I missed the soldiers and R.A.F. boys; the W.A.A.F.S. and the A.T.S. girls; the gum-chewing Americans and their jeeps; the Y.M.C.A.'s and the N.A.A.F.I.'s; the Garrison Theatre and the "Desert" shops. I even missed the persistent nagging of the street pedlars. Last year we really had belonged to Cairo; this year we were interlopers.

(To be concluded in a later issue.—ED.).

Peter Wallbank

RUIN AND REHABILITATION

(*"Ye shall be as gods. . . ."*)

Here more than transposition of our modes,
 For this was disestablishment divine,
 A doom to deeper-Death (beyond the abodes
 Of non-existence), where the wailing-womb
 Walls issue of reversed intent, a birth
 That sighs for Eden and abhors the bloom
 The apple wore that tangs the taste of Earth
 With every Abel-agony of Eve's decline.

Reversal ruinous, and vortex vain
 Of vanity! Humanity may tent
 Within its hollow haunches sons of pain
 But our apotheosis waits the event
 That prevents far the earlier travailing,
 The paradox of Glory's grovelling.

*John West***THE METALS**

When love's iron entered his soul
It rusted there and caused him pain.
Passion's steel drove in his mind
Drawing great drops of grief.
A brass-green, crystal Jealousy
Corroded and mined at his heart.
So he hacked at her white thin neck
With a beautiful blade of bronze.

So they nailed him to the wheel
And broke him with iron rods,
Then they tore out his broken heart
With a cruel hook of steel,
And with brass was the coffin clasped,
Closed over his bronze young head.

*Gerald Robinson***PAS-de-DEUX**

Into the wall of whitened brick
they lean their tired frames for greedy rest
while sweat breaks through their cracking masks of paint
and breathing pulls to glow of cigarette,
incense to the lights which show them now
broken in bearing a terrible truth.

In the bright beauty of their limbs
they dwelt and felt and had their being
seeing in the order of the piece their ordered place
where death behind hangs blue and grey
and life is the lambent fall of light.

But once they stumbled on a knowing
and fitting their limbs to folds of flame
a vision burnt their pall of passion
a curse, a hope, but dumb to tell
as this hand held to hold their meaning
falling to the side again
a burning in the eye, O transitory burning,
while we that are left grow old.

Derrick Metcalfe

DEFENCE

“**H**AVE YOU EVER SAT, with joss sticks either side of you weaving transparent streams into silk, burning nostrils, thudding your head with heated pain? That’s what it was like in How Feng’s room.

“Outside, and faintly, in fermenting streets, coolies and cars, passers-by and policemen, clamoured with the interminability of the East. Room silence closed out sounds, threw them into distant relief. Tap, tap, tic, came the shoemaker’s hammer, reminding one that the room was only just above the shop of Kow Nin, ‘Divine Shoemaker.’ Hammer tune closed invisibly into, ‘time will come, time will come,’ from an alabaster clock somewhere in the darkness.

“How Feng’s shutter was closed tightly against the day’s glare: wide spaced tracers in gold from faulty joints lit up ballets of dust playing out the moment on an eternal stage.

“‘You have been sent to see some stones?’ whined the voice of How Feng. His face reminded me of a rubber, crinkled through being placed in a stove. I had such a rubber when I was at school; one rather dull Latin period I botched in a pair of spectacles. How Feng’s silver rims held dark glass.

“‘You would perhaps like the fan?’ queried the rubber. “‘No, How Feng, I am quite well thank you.’

“‘I asked a question, Mr. Harding, perhaps it was foolish and that is why you do not reply?’

“‘Please forgive me How Feng, I was dreaming; watching an instant dust pass through sunbeams, thinking how it epitomised Eastern life. I have been sent to see your stones; my firm require diamonds, unusual diamonds—you are said to have something in that line.’

“How Feng switched on a desk-light. Dull olive bleached the heated Chinese amber which had previously filtered through the room. On to the desk he rolled a black felt cover; its

ivory holding scroll glared and pointed, human finger-bone flung on a dark sea.

“ ‘I will bring the stones, please to wait,’ said How, as he tottered from the room.

“ ‘Time will come, time will come,’ warned the clock to silence.

“ ‘But will you have the correct one?’ I muttered, not so that the old man could hear me though. It was a voiced mental comment emphasising the thought that I would look a fool if I had travelled four thousand miles for nothing.

“ My firm had never dealt with How Feng before, never even heard of him. I was here because I happened to meet Charlie Rylands, a very old friend, in London one day.

“ ‘George Harding!’ he exclaimed, ‘well, the last person I ever expected to see. Thought you were scavenging the world, buying up rare and out of the way stones for some firm or other.’

“ ‘Right you are,’ I answered, ‘but I’m having a rest at the moment. Come and have a drink: tell me all the dirty details of your life since last I saw you.’

“ It was over those drinks that Charlie told me How Feng had the ‘Green Beetle.’ I mentioned that I’d been searching for the ‘Beetle’ ever since it was stolen, twelve or so years back, from the temple of the ‘Eternal Lily.’ Five times I managed to track the thing down, five times I failed to secure it.

“ Perhaps you have heard the legend attached to the stone, how no one may hold it for more than a year and a day? I suppose the story started because of an ancient ritual. Each year a priest was appointed guardian to the ‘Green Beetle’ in the temple; one year and a day to the very minute from taking office the guardian had to die. This ceremony continued up to the day the jewel was stolen.

“ Each time I traced the person currently supposed to have the stone, he was either dead, or missing: no one ever seemed to know about a ‘Green Beetle.’ Once I arrived just in time for the funeral celebrations; I had to march past

a corpse which was quite ordinary, except for six small purple marks on its throat. Why they were there I never found out.

“‘Time will tell, time will tell,’ echoed the clock to my thoughts in silence.

“‘You dream again!’ came the voice of How Feng, thereby knocking down the stakes which propped up memory. I watched him close the door, slide over a dark iron bar, then cross to check the window and shutter locks. He nodded: all was secure. Suddenly he tittered. ‘I should die to-day, you know.’

“The nervousness of his laugh shocked a coldness through me.

“‘But I will not die, Mr. Harding, I am not afraid of death!’

“Walking over to the desk How Feng opened a small purple bag.

“‘You will like this,’ he mumbled. His yellow claw held frozen blue.

“‘Good, quite good,’ I said, turning it over—‘but,’ . . . afraid. . . not afraid. . . was afraid. . . should die. . . ‘but’— . . . ‘Then this! or this, and this,’ How Feng continued jerkily as I shook my head each time.

“‘A silvered quarter chime swallowed silence in the room. Automatically I looked at my wrist-watch. ‘Past twelve, lunch at one,’ I thought.

“The ticking regained its voice: ‘time has come, time has come.’

“Somewhere there was evil, I wished to leave, a sickness came into my stomach. . . ‘time has come. . . should die to-day’ . . .

“‘An excellent collection How Feng. For an ordinary dealer, yes! but my firm do not deal in the usual.’ I rose.

“‘Please! please, not yet Mr. Harding, there is one more stone. . . best always last, is that not so, Mr. Harding? Perhaps. . . perhaps you wondered why I asked you here at such a definite time?’

“I nodded.

“ ‘There were two reasons : first to show you I shall not die, second to show you—this !’

“ ‘In the palm of his hand moved liquid green-ness.

“ ‘Green Beetle,’ I hissed.

“ ‘Yes, the ‘Green Beetle,’ ‘Mr. Harding ; please, take—take hold.’

“ ‘Green quicksilver poured from his hand into mine. The craftsmanship seemed little short of a miracle, yet how wasteful. Once it had been a large diamond, until some genius cut it to the rough shape of a beetle. Six faceted legs held the glowing beast a little from my palm : yes, cutting masterly, but crude. Faceting was really its life. I held my hand nearer the desk-light. Every shade of green writhed over the stone, wave upon wave, from small head to legs.

“ ‘To-day,’ came the still voice of How Feng over my shoulder, ‘my term of office finishes, five minutes still remain. A year and a day ends at half-past twelve.’

“ ‘Time has come, time has come,’ beat the remorseless voice of the clock.

“ ‘But no death for me,’ continued Feng, ‘I will escape. You must buy the “Beetle”—now ! that’s why you are here. Buy it, then I am no longer guardian ; seventy thousand pounds, then it is yours.’

“ ‘Impossible . . .’

“ ‘Sixty.’

“ ‘No !’

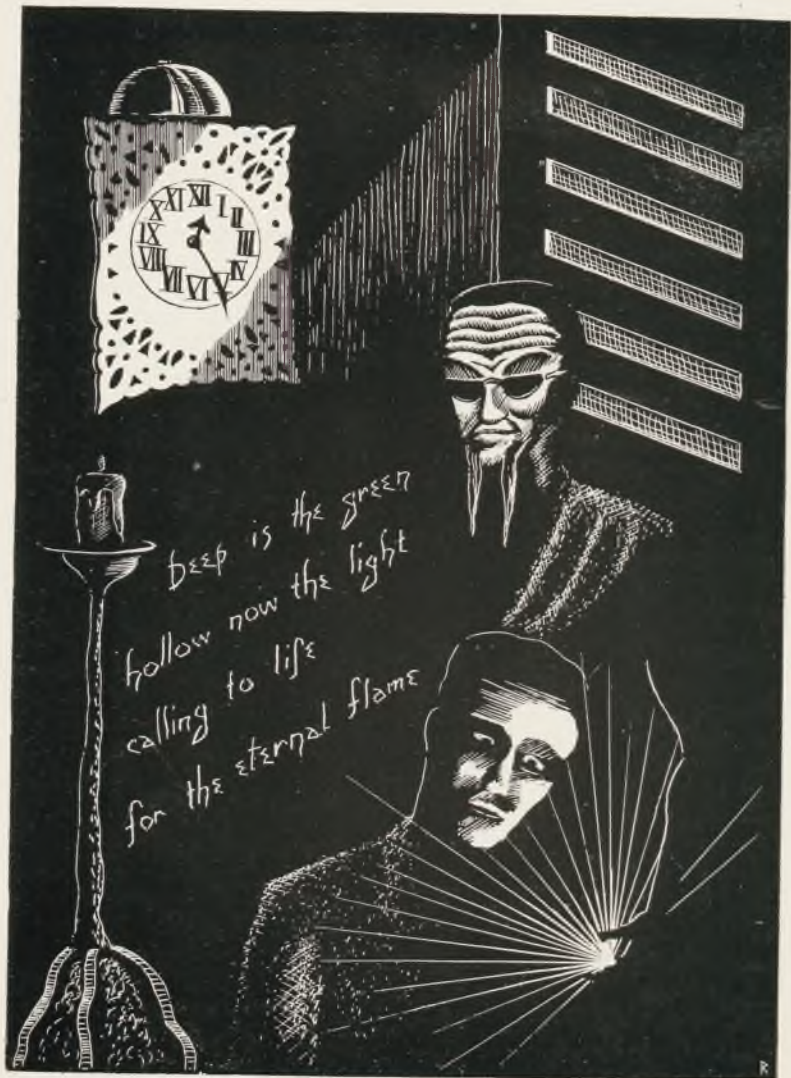
“ ‘Fifty . . . thirty . . . twen . . .’

“ ‘Stop ! I can’t. I have no money, no cheque . . . my firm must agree . . . my . . .’

“ ‘Take it !’ screamed How Feng.

“ ‘God, no !’ I cried, holding the jewel towards him.

“ ‘It was then a thin reed note eased through a crack in the shutter, crawled down immoveable sunlight. Silence faded deeper as the note came nearer . . . ‘time . . . ti . . . me ti . . .’



Deep is the green
hollow now the light
calling to life
for the eternal flame

“ Tap, tap, tap, answered a beat, perhaps on the window-pane, perhaps on a drum—scratched a million miles away at the opposite end of a telescope world.

“ Pipe notes swayed to melody with the tapping, and below the music a single voice, deep, clear, far away—yet only outside the window, singing :

“ ‘ Deep is the green :
hollow now the light
calling to life
for the eternal flame.’

death song of the ‘ Eternal Lily.’

“ My hand closed round the glowing jewel which faded to the rhythm of the reed ; sweat ran from my palm. The whole room became sea, shafted golden by solitary daggers of sun.

“ Into stillness splintered the whirr of clock mechanism ; a hammer was being drawn back to strike the half-hour bell. As it moved the shutter opened, slowly : gold reaped the floor with moving sun-shadow.

“ How Feng’s eyes bulged, and cords in his throat throbbed red, then he broke away to the door, screaming and scrabbling like a locked-in puppy.

“ I turned to the window, and, God, O God, there . . . there was the ‘ Beetle,’ backed by silver ring of sun, great and fierce, peeling with green light, walking, slow, blind and groping . . . walking towards How Feng.

“ The half-hour struck ! . . .

“ A faint breeze tainted with cabbages and bare feet blew against my face as I staggered from the chair by the desk. Spawned Cyclops eyes glittered on the black felt, piercing a thin wave of incense smoke. I turned to the door ; it was open. How Feng lay, sleeping forever, against it. Six purple points were on his throat, showing where the ‘ Green Beetle ’ had walked out in to the world.”

“ The defence rests, m’ lud.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade,

I have received this. Unfortunately, since you allow me only two pages I cannot print it AND my own stuff. But the dear boy deserves a showing, and, I think, should have it. I thank Miss Scawnthorpe for this (and her other favours), and pass it to you in the hope that you will find room for it. All honour to our great Eastern Ally!

On with the struggle!

Yours fraternally,

CUMBERBATCH.

Dear Cumberbatch,

Although I cannot concur with Sydney Haul (if his name is Haul) and his threats, it has struck me that you have been devoting too much space to prose-poet-*physicists*.

What about the prose-poet-engineers? How is it you have not noticed such a delectable work as this by Marmaduke Ppilling?

It was written after seeing his loved one, Lola Shuttlebotham, dancing a Rhumba with another man.

VIEW REAR.

If the motion
is simple harmonic
the accelerations on the container,
calculated, give some guide
to the amount of agitation.

Period of double swing = $\frac{1}{2}$ second ;

Radius $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. ;

Total angle of swing, 180° ;

Acceleration due to gravity
= $32\cdot19078$ ft./sec.²

Accelerations, approximately, are :—

Angle from vertical		0°	45°	90°
Overswing	Tangential	0	-162	-340
	Radial	548	479	0
Underswing	Tangential	0	-208	-404
	Radial	612	525	0

Yours, etc.,

PELLAGIA SCAWNTHORPE.

With the publication of the present issue, the following positions on *The Gryphon* staff become vacant:—

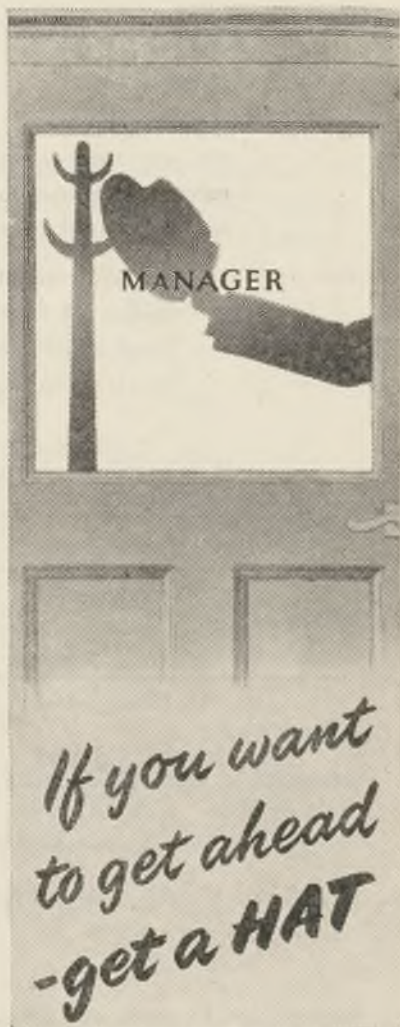
1. Sales Manager.
2. Business Manager.
3. Assistant Sales Manager.
4. Assistant Business Manager.

Applications are invited from interested students who wish to be considered as candidates for these positions, and those applying are requested to state whether they would be prepared to serve in the junior capacity in each case in the event of a more suitable candidate being chosen for the Managership.

The principal qualification would necessarily be experience in a similar or related capacity, but since it is recognised that this requirement is one not easily satisfied, keenness and enthusiasm, together with sound and lively ideas towards the improvement of *Gryphon* Sales and Publicity, would be considered as qualifications. Candidates should give the fullest possible details of any ideas of this kind which they might have in their applications, which should be addressed to the Editor via the *Gryphon* Box in the foyer of the Union.

Applications are also invited from **FIRST YEAR** students for a position on the Editorial Committee, of which several members will be retiring in June. For this position, too, experience would be an advantage, though not essential, but candidates should possess some literary ability in order to be able to cope with the editing of articles. etc.

Full particulars to Editor via *Gryphon* Box. Closing dates for all above:
Saturday, 22nd April.



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