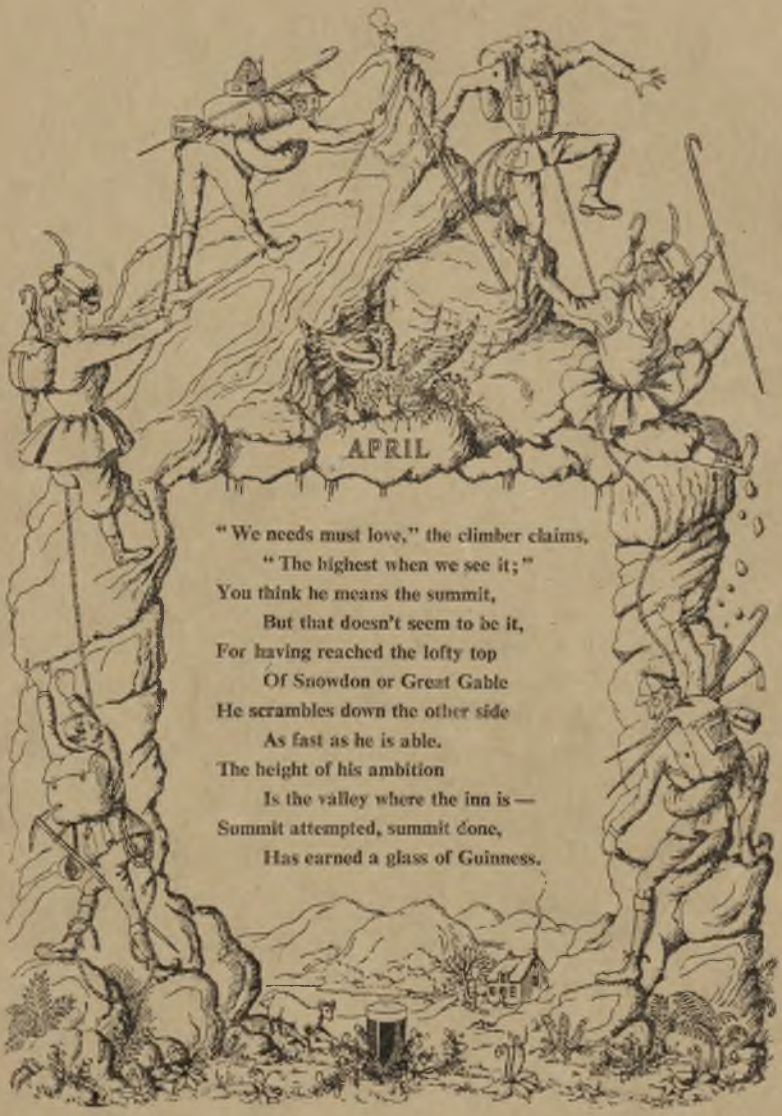
April 1950

The Gryphon

One Shilling


APRIL
"We needs must love," the climber claims,
"The highest when we see it;"
You think he means the summit,
But that doesn't seem to be it,
For having reached the lofty top
Of Snowdon or Great Gable
He scrambles down the other side
As fast as he is able.
The height of his ambition
Is the valley where the inn is —
Summit attempted, summit done,
Has earned a glass of Guinness.

The Gryphon

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THE JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Contents

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EDITORIAL

AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR things tend to become a little difficult for us of *The Gryphon*. The phenomena which usually accompany the onset of Spring are too well known and too well documented already to need much comment from us, though they do give rise to a certain number of troubles for us too, old and jaded as we are. But the principal difficulty arises from the fact that after the young man's fancy has turned, as it is popularly supposed to do, in the general direction determined by the said onset of Spring, it is wrenched back again in a salutory manner by the thought that Summer cannot now be far behind—and in Summer what happens? June happens! The stimulus to creative, artisitic and literary activity which might have been provided by the one is thus checked, almost at its outset, by the other. And in the meantime we have to produce an April Issue notwithstanding. You expect it of us. Life without a *Gryphon* to criticise, especially with the prospect of early examinations to add an edge to one's critical fervour, could easily be absolute Hell, couldn't it? Besides which the regular subscribers would not like to be cheated of a return for one of the five shillings which they pay yearly for the sake of receiving the Current Issue neatly done up in a posh envelope marked "With the Compliments Of the Editor"—(always, we are given to understand, though this is a libel, rather doubtful).

Yet, you know—do we have to say it again ?—" we cannot print what we do not, etc., etc., etc." And this time we have again been forced to badger our long-suffering friends and colleagues, who also have examination study programmes, to help us out. And they have done so—we think, nobly. And we hope that you will like this issue. There are more stories and original features than usual, fewer straight articles, more illustrations, and we hope that by the time we actually go to Press we shall have some cartoons for you as well. To attempt to please everybody with one single issue of *The Gryphon* would be to invite certification. It's the sort of ambition which drives men to asylums—not just to hover around the wrought-iron gates as we are doing at the moment, but really through those gates—really *through* them! But we think and hope that you will enjoy reading this issue, or at least enough of it to justify not merely the expenditure of your shilling, but the amount of hard work, failing any frantically enthusiastic response to our editorial pleas from you, which our said friends and colleagues have put into it.

One point. We are intensely interested in any criticisms and suggestions which you may feel inclined to make either in the form of letters to the Editor, or as articles of between a thousand and fifteen hundred words. But when you send, as some of you have done recently, letters to the Editor which are too long to print as such, yet which are not quite long enough or quite organised enough to print as articles, or articles which are really more like letters to the Editor, without, however, being either quite letters or quite articles, you place us in a quandary. We want to print your stuff, but we would like it in one form or the other, so that others may have as much pleasure in reading it as we shall have in printing it.

With this thought we leave you, wishing you (and ourselves) either the devil's own luck or a good line in flannel for June.

Bill Moody

THESE FOOLISH THINGS

Some notes for a book that will never be written

PHILOSOPHY, nine o'clock. Joe hurries in just behind the lecturer and sits beside me on the front row. He tells me in a hurried and breathless whisper that breakfast was late and awful as usual and he's got some of it in his pocket because if he leaves any his landlady feels hurt and makes life worse than ever. The lecturer gets going : " Meditation One of René Descartes ; Of the things of which we may doubt." We all scribble busily. Lecturer quotes : " Nevertheless it must be admitted at least that the objects which appear to us in sleep .."......

(Here I am vaguely aware that Joe, after two or three loud sniffs, is feeling for his handkerchief with his left hand).

....." are, as it were, painted representations....."

(A battered fish-cake falls from Joe's pocket and rolls in front of the lecturer : he watches it intently until it comes to rest).

....." which could not have been formed unless in the likeness of realities."

FIRST-YEAR EXAMS., Old English. I open the question paper and start right into the translations. They take a long time and I haven't much time left for the other questions. Two days later a chance remark from Frank turns me pale. I sneak off and look at the paper. " Translate *four only*," it says quite clearly.

And for more than 20 years I've been hammering it into students of all ages : "*Read the instructions carefully before you write a word :* "

A BOY AND A GIRL, apparently straight from school, come shyly into the Union Library and sit opposite me. They open a magazine at random and I hear the following :

He : "This is a nice room."
She : "Yes, it's a nice room."
He : "It's a nice building."
She : "Yes, it's a nice building."
Pause.
She : "Do you have a lot of lectures?"
He : "Yes, I've a lot. Have you?"
She : "Yes, I've a lot."
Pause.
He : "Have you been to Scarborough?"

I drop a paper and pick it up. Yes, they are holding hands under the table. I gather my things together and steal away. Can it be? Was I once like that boy? No ..... I was never so good-looking.

A VISITING LECTURER is putting forward some new theories on Speech. Any questions? A student stands up and tells of some experiments which (he says) have recently taken place in U.S.A. A headless corpse was placed on a marble slab and the vocal cords were suitably arranged. A heavy weight was dropped on the corpse's chest and it said "Aah!" The vocal cords were re-arranged, the weight dropped again and the corpse said "Eeh:"

SECOND-YEAR EXAMS., first part of Finals. We stand on the steps waiting for the doors to open. I'm scared. I remember that for a short time in 1944 my life wasn't worth much, and yet I didn't feel badly about it. But if anybody had tried to tell me in 1944 that I'd ever be frightened of a mere examination I'd have laughed my head off. My only consolation now is that there are men around me who went through far more than I did during the War, and they look no happier than I feel. Can it be that we are more afraid of making complete asses of ourselves than of being killed?

ONE OF THE sweetest pleasures in the Union is to look at the list of lunch-time engagements, weigh the respective merits of the debate, the music recital, the one-act play and the exhibition of paintings—and then go spend the precious unforgiving minutes drinking coffee with a few old cronies as unenterprising as myself.

ALL THESE BEARDS; and scarves worn all day long. Fools. But what about my stuff in *The Gryphon:* My beard and scarf perhaps.

ONE OF MY ENQUIRIES has taken me into the Textile Department. Everybody helpful and the whole place most interesting. I had no idea such exciting things were going on. We get stuck in our little corners and have no idea what's happening next door. What about each Department having its Open Day once a year? Has it been tried?

DEGREE DAY. All very silly. Why do we have to wear gowns and endure a lot of mumbo-jumbo? They say they whizz you through at an awful speed and if you happen to trip up you're trampled to death..... Oh, come off it: Secretly I'm impressed. Do I make the most of my height, or how about a scholarly stoop?

ANOTHER girl engaged. She's happy, proud and prettier than ever. The lucky man, try as he will, has a slightly trapped and bewildered look. I learn that there are three stages in this business: first there's an Understanding, then an Unofficial Engagement, then the Official Engagement. Every girl seems to know what condition others are in—whether they've reached Stage One or Stage Two, or slipped back from Two to One. The whole thing is beyond me. There seems room for an interesting piece of research.

HEARD to-day the story of a man who bought a pet monkey for his wife and took it to his office until he went home. He shut it in a little store-room attached to his own room and got on with his work. The monkey was very quiet and the man wondered more and more what it was up to. Finally he crept to the door and peeped through the key-hole. He could see nothing at first, then he made out another eye looking into his.

Must take this story to heart.

I THINK it will be better for the chaps straight from school when all the ex-Service men have worked their way through the University. The gap between the two groups has been very wide and not—so far as I can see—very successfully bridged. The younger men seem to have a vague sense of grievance, beginning perhaps with : " Well, it wasn't our fault we weren't old enough, was it ? "

SITTING gossiping to-day over a coffee and cigarette I think " This is the sort of thing I'm going to miss." The Union is to a great degree what it sets out to be—a Club where all meet on equal terms. There is great friendliness, enormous tolerance and a courtesy of a curious kind (so curious that some profess never to find it). It is, on the whole, a civilised sort of place. So it ought to be, of course, but many things are *not* what they ought to be. Yes, the great world outside is full of friendly people—when you know them. Here the mere fact that you're a member is enough.

WELL, it was good while it lasted. A lot of work ; and some fun. Good-bye.

Robin Skelton

YET THERE IS THIS

ONCE UPON A TIME, that is to-day and yesterday and also to-morrow (I tell you this story because of the green in the garden) a young princess was walking down the lawns of a dream, and laughing to see the young deer dance at the edge of the wood, when, singing in the silver stream at the close of the slope, she saw a strange fish chasing bubbles into the sunlight, and the fish, you must know, was really her own smile. And the fish sang to her of apple blossom and the white clouds of morning above distant valleys, and the step of

a young prince sounding like bells upon his shining terrace half a time away. And the young princess threw a golden ring into the water and the singing ceased as the fish dived, and the lilies swayed in a breeze that was now all twilight as she waited.

And as she waited the liles sang to her, and this is the song they sang,

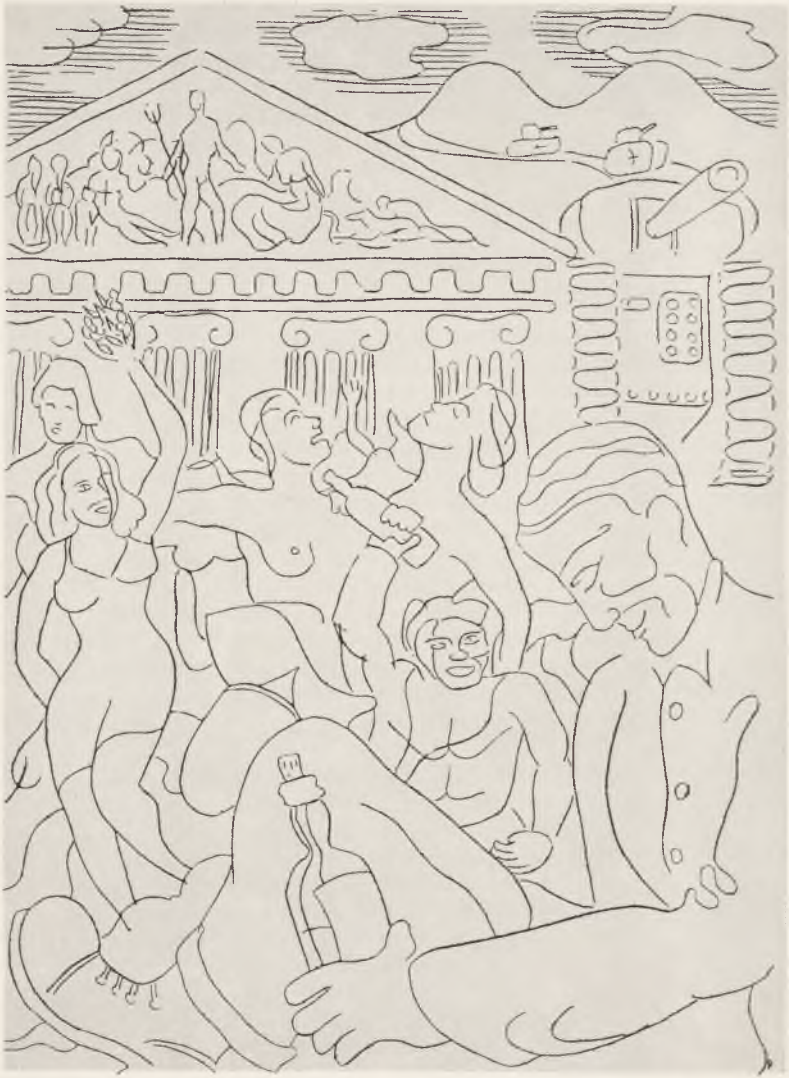
"If there is none other,
Yet there is this,
The dead time of winter
In a season of lilies."

And the lilies bent down to the earth, as on the plain surface of the now still stream she saw forming the thin quick threads of ice.

After a little time the frost came and powdered her lawns with silver and the young deer at the edge of the wood shook snow from their shivering backs. And as she walked in her garden she grew lonely for the silver stream was singing no more, lying still and silent under a mask of ice. And the princess grew pale as the sleeping lilies and cold as the patient snows in the distant valleys, waiting for the springtime and the step of a young prince sounding like bells upon her terrace half a time away.

And she waited a long, long time, until one day the ice upon the silver stream echoed to the sound of sleighs, and a young prince upon a crystal throne was drawn by five white horses beside her lawn of dream. And the young prince rose from his throne and stepped on to the grass. And as his first foot touched the grass the stream cracked loudly once and the rose bushes trembled. And as his second foot touched the grass the ice splintered and the rose bushes broke into bud. And he walked up the sloping lawn and took the princess by the hand, and as he touched her hand the sunlight drenched the garden, and a strange gold fish in the silver stream, chasing bubbles into the sunlight, sang (as it might have been yesterday or to-morrow, my dear, or even this day)

"If there is none other,
Yet there is this,
The quick song of Springtime
In a season of Roses. . . ."



THE VENETIAN

TONI LEANED BACK IN HIS CHAIR, happy as a king, with the red wine twinkling before him, and the gay, spangled crowd around shouting their enjoyment, the little Italian cafe echoing with the din, while the two dancers in the middle of the floor swayed and jangled their way through the flamboyantly colourful crowd.

Toni laughed, leaning back with his whole body shaking, the tears pouring down his tanned cheeks. Mama mia, but it was a fine life !—If only every night could be like this !—Everyone happy—singing and dancing—Caro Nome—but how jolly the singing sounded, roaring out from every corner ! There was nothing but happiness—nothing but happiness !—It was as if the old river itself were bubbling over. This was the life ! Just as it had been before the war. Who would have thought, in fact, that there had been a war at all ? Not Toni—not with the flaming wine burning through him, making his legs feel like water and the noise of the people making his head surge like the sea. No !—Peace !—Armistice !—No more fighting now. Every night now would be like this. Once again life belonged to Toni—life where anyone could drink and sing and drink, especially drink, just as long as he wished—until he wanted to stop, without interference and without care.

The dancers suddenly gathered round them a close packed swirling mass of hilarious people, leaping, shouting and laughing to the rhythms of their own happiness—for no music could make itself heard now. They overflowed through the door, knocking over Toni's chair and bearing him with them into the street ; leaving him there to keep pace with them as they danced or to follow in their wake just as he chose. He staggered on to the Piazza, still laughing with happiness. The lights were lit again—lights—lights—and for the first time for many years the river rippled with reflections.—Toni was in love—with the river, with the lights, with the crowds which jostled and pushed, hustling him this way and that. He climbed, lurching and staggering, up on to the steps of the Teresa fountain, singing and shouting with the crowds, gesticulating

wildly as he recognised, or thought he recognised an odd face here and there, calling greetings to them in his drink-thickened Venetian dialect. Eventually the wine overcame him completely. He rolled over on his back, shrieking with delight, and fell asleep.

In the middle of the next morning he woke up, stretching himself, and looked around him in astonishment. Everything was strangely quiet. He looked at the clock above him, the movement of his head as he craned his neck, sending sharp blinding daggers of pain through the back of his eyes. It was just after ten. He sat on the step holding his head in his hands, trying to master himself and to solve the riddle of the empty streets. After ten, and deserted—and Armistice! It was not natural. He staggered to his feet, his head bumping and banging, and stared round him blinking his eyes. Not a soul in sight—everything was as solemn and as silent as the grave. He walked a few halting paces, bewildered. He shouted. His voice came singing back at him from the dead-faced houses across the square. Surely! Surely there was someone! Last night.—Had they forgotten that it was Peace?—He tottered down the Via towards the Piazza where the great buildings hovered silently above him as he clattered into the silent square. There was no sound here either save that of his footsteps.

Or was there a sound?—Yes, yes—his heart leapt momentarily, until he realised that it was not like any sound he had been expecting to hear. He waited in bewilderment, listening to a slow rumbling which came steadily nearer as the moments passed. Louder, louder—and then a few seconds later he saw them, at the end of the Via.—German tanks!—A Bastanza!—They must not stop the peace! He ran towards them, shouting at the top of his voice. "Go back—back! This is peace! This is our town and we are at peace.—You must not stop the peace!" Blindly, sobbing, screaming at them, he ran down the Via towards them, his arms outstretched. —"Go back!—Go back!" he shrieked, his fat little body grown pathetic and almost child-like against the bulk of the foremost tank as it rolled over him, crushing him so effortlessly

that there was not even the slightest change in the note of its engine.

Life was ended for Toni. The tanks rumbled on solemnly into the still-deserted Piazza, and on past the Teresa fountain where the clock showed twelve minutes past ten.

Eric Ackroyd

RELIGION AND MORALITY

FULLY TO UNDERSTAND RELIGION, we must know something of its relations with other branches of knowledge and aspects of life. Thus, culture generally—including science and art, as well as morality—should come within our purview. In discussing morality, however, we must note that, while in the case of science (particularly) the " plain man " takes it for granted that religion and science are ever at loggerheads, and irreconcilable, yet in the case of ethics he sees religion and ethics as one, or at least as inextricably bound up together. (Art comes somewhere between morality and science in this connection.)

For the common man, then, religion and ethics are inseparable. For him the man who, although an atheist, yet speaks kindly with his neighbours and gives generously to the needy and generally leads a decent, respectable life, is more religious—not merely *better*, but more *religious*—than the man who professes a belief in Christ and attends his local place of worship regularly every Sunday, yet does not shine so well in daily contacts with other people. This is hardly a fair judgment. But to discuss this point is to presuppose a knowledge of the relations existing between religion and morality.

These relations are not easy to find. In the earliest beginnings of human life on earth, religion and morality may have been one and the same thing ; but certainly the conjunction (supposing they ever were separate) of the two came very early in the process of man's development. No matter how crude to our eyes appear the primitive man's religious

beliefs, they were without exception accompanied by a categorical imperative. That the obligation felt was one which compares but ill with present-day moral notions is of little moment: it does not affect the argument that where religion is, there is morality. Of course, if the religion is of a low nature, then so will the accompanying morality be of low standard. The main point is that obligation is felt to moral duty.

In later times, as religions developed (because of man's own development), morality developed likewise.

Of course, it is possible to conceive a religion unaccompanied by morality of which it is itself the source. Thus, if it were possible for man to worship a God who cared nothing for man's behaviour, it would be equally possible to conceive of the devotees of this faith living amoral, if not immoral lives. However, it is a moot point whether or not a man can "worthship" what he does not see as good. In any case, if the God is not interested in man's conduct, then the morality must have some other source; for, although there be religion present without a moral system, yet the people who share this particular faith are living "moral lives"—in the sense that they are living their lives against a background of "Thou-shalts" and "Thou-shalt-nots"—and if these ethics are of a low standard, so is the religion which sponsors them.

Now, it might be maintained that even in a highly developed religious system—namely, Christianity—morality holds a purely subordinate position. In the New Testament, Paul shows us the "paradox" of justification by works and justification by faith. It might appear that Paul rejects ethics when he says that we shall be justified, not by works, but by faith. However, the point of the argument is clear when we realise that by "works" Paul means "ritual works," such as circumcision. Thus, Christianity does not tolerate antinomianism.

This given, can it not be asked whether or not it is possible for religion to develop highly without ethics, or ethics without religion? It may be asked, and often is asked to-day. The majority say ethics can be had without religion—ethics in a satisfying form, too. But there are still those who assert that

when the people of this country rejected Victorian religious habits, the next generation but one (our generation) was doomed to be a generation without ethics.

There are men who, upon their own confession, have no faith in a God, and who, nevertheless, are widely acknowledged as good men. On the other hand, there is the well-worn case of the Sicilian peasants who, after Mass, rob their neighbours. In the latter case, it must be queried whether their religion is, in fact, anything more than a rather complex series of ritual acts which has no significance for the conduct of their daily life. This raises the question: does God make himself known to such people as these? Some would affirm that these Sicilian peasants have, as all men have, a "knowledge"—albeit unconscious—of God. Yet even were this so, the religious state of these people would be only a low one—and consequently their morality must not be expected to be much higher.

The conclusion must surely be that religion cannot progress far without morality, and morality cannot develop highly without religion. It has often been said that in religion the good is given, in ethics it is a thing to be fought for: thus is ethics warfare, conflict; religion is peace. This peace may be attained either by retirement from fate or by conquest of "fate," as respectively in world-renouncing and world-affirming religious systems. But it must be allowed that morality at least seems to do better without religion than religion without morality. Yet the question remains unanswered: had there never been religion, would there ever have been morality? Some would reply, "Yes, because ethics is man-made for the convenience and smooth-running of society." But if morality were an expedient merely, why the feeling of obligation? And so we come back to our first conclusion that morality and religion are mutually dependent. That morality appears to get on without religion better than does religion without morality is easily understood when one considers that religion embraces morality (and indeed all culture), that religion is the whole, and morality a part of that whole. To put it in a figure: a wheel is not a true wheel if it has lost one of its segments, while the lost segment remains truly a segment.

It is natural to ask about the dependence or independence of morality and religion. If morality is only a matter of expediency, why worry about it at all ? But if it springs from a faith in God—and if the moral sense is given us by this God—who cares for the way we live (even though he may not judge us according to our works), then we may plod on calmly along the " narrow " way of morality, rather than give ourselves up to hedonistic indulgence. If, however, religion depends upon morality—that is, if morality is the more nearly ultimate of these two things—why not devise for ourselves a system of ethics without a religion, a moral code without a faith infusing it ?

In this brief examination of so gravely important a subject there have been many questions raised, not quite so many answered. But perhaps it is better that the reader should be left to form his own opinions and himself labour for solutions, than that he should be bullied into the acceptance of another's preconceived notions.

Gerald Robinson

KNIFELIGHT

THE TIME WAS GETTING ON for five o'clock and most of the students had already left, but he wanted to made a good job of this particular dissection, and that was why he was staying on. As the hands of the clock crawled round, the remaining few switched off their lamps, wiped their instruments, pitched sundry books into their bags and joined the general scramble for trams and 'buses. Tram, 'bus, home, tea. . . .but you couldn't let your mind wander on a job like this, while the sterility of scalpel and seeker was following the tortuous windings of the dorsal aorta and pulmonary vein. This seagull was really quite fresh, the formalin had hardly bitten into the flesh, and the incongruous feathers still had the remains of whiteness around them. He tested his scalpel against an exposed strand of muscle, and a thrill of satisfaction

shot through him as he noticed its crisp resistance to his blade. Perfect tools, perfectly designed and tempered for their job. He tilted his lamp a bit further over his tray and concentrated on the fresh furrow he was ploughing through the moist flesh. Sweep, sweep, cut back and fold over, the precise movements of his cold fine-drawn hands fitted into a sort of rhythm, a ballet of surgery under the focus of light.

Looking up for a moment he noticed that he was now quite alone, and this astonished him almost as much as the fact that his lamp was beginning to move. Yes, it was certainly moving, like some grotesque old man raising his head, the wing-nuts creaking against its rusty joints. All the other lamps were switched off—dead—but there seemed to be a sort of whiteness up there in the gloom of the high ceiling—something coming down like snow flakes. Fluttering, fluttering seagulls gradually settled on the benches, on the floor and all over the room. When they sank through the beam of his lamp it was like the tiny specks of dust dancing in a sunbeam.

They were falling thicker now, piling up in great drifts against the walls and windows. He frantically brushed them off when they settled on him, but the air was full of them, blinding, suffocating, still falling like thistledown, like cotton wool. His head began to pound with blood as he struggled for breath, spitting them from his mouth and rubbing them out of his streaming eyes, and it was only just in time that he saw that his lamp was shining out through a hole in the wall which he had not previously noticed. He took a great mouthful of air and plunged into the softly resistant mass of whiteness. Completely buried, he forced his way through till his fingertips touched the white wall-tiles, then he began to grope systematically for the hole. Up, down, no—further across, till his fingers lodged in a cranny and he heaved himself up. His ears were full of the roar of surf, and the back of his throat was parched as he pulled himself through the hole, some of the clinging whiteness coming through with him. The other leg over, he slowly lowered himself till he was hanging by his hands, then with an effort he pushed off and kicked back from

the wall so that he landed on the beach on his feet, his legs tensed to take the strain.

The sand was crisp and golden, and was quite warm in the lamp light—so he took his shoes off and dug his feet into the bright grains. The sea was a long way out, folding and refolding on the beach, which stretched as far as he could see. He looked up to see where he had come from, but the low white cloud had already started to drift away, and the strong amber light made his eyes ache.

There was no shade anywhere, not even his own shadow—just blazing light pouring out of a black sky, and in the distance the muffled roar of the sparkling sea. He was alone in all this, nothing but sea and sand and this lump of rock at his feet. Rock ? No, it was a shell of some sort, but he had never seen one like it before. It was a tarnished brown colour, with bands of gritty brass coiling round the outside. Obeying some childish impulse he picked it up and placed it to his ear, but the only sound he heard was the sound of weeping—weeping from the shell which still continued when he held it away from him to look at it, turning it over and over. There was a small niche in one side of it and he tried to lever it apart with his scalpel, but the tip of the blade snapped off. He thrust in the rest of the blade with demonic fury and prised apart the two halves of the shell, their surfaces cracking and flaking. When he had made the crack wide enough he withdrew the broken scalpel and looked inside, but all that he could see was a mess of dorsal aortas and pulmonary veins weeping blood ; so he threw it over the sea with all his might.

He waited for the splash but he heard none because it swooped low over the water, then with dripping wing tips wheeled up against the light, circling, circling, till it finally settled on a rising cliff.

The air was still full of weeping, but somehow there was singing mingled with it ; singing and the sound of the sea. And a shining girl came out of the sea, singing with the sea and stepping barefoot on the sand. The sand was golden, but she was white, all white, and he thought that she was beautiful. For a little while she was beautiful, but she had dorsal aortas

and pulmonary veins, so she stepped out of the lamp light into the forests of darkness that were springing up all round.

The darkness was drawing nearer and nearer, grinding across the throbbing sands and blotting out the sea. It was towering up all round him, buttressing itself against the distant sky. He was standing on a patch of sand, burning in the pulsating light, yet all the time growing smaller and smaller as it was swallowed up by the darkness approaching from all sides. Panic seized him. He flung himself into the darkness, frantically trying to break through it, but immediately he left the lamp light he was chilled to the bone by the shimmering green and purple. Splinters of ice were forcing themselves up his legs from his bare feet, which were completely frozen and paralysed. The only thing he could see was the dwindling patch of light which he had just left, seeing himself in the middle of it, now clearly, now blurred, with a strange insistant rhythm as each successive wave broke over him, bringing the darkness. His ears were full of salt water. He did not hear the scream of the seagulls as they glided low over the water.

A. Griffiths

FROM COMEDY TO NECROLATRY

THE RILEY-SMITH BOARDS were well trodden last term and if there was a good deal of inexpert crowing from amongst the borrowed plumage there were also occasional compensatory trills. Spanish Society and Theatre Group gave us Lope de Vega once more, the Staff Dramatic Society frolicked in "*Love's Labour's Lost*," and the Tudor Players harrowed us with "*Salomé*." If we had little virtuosity we at least had variety.

Comedy, except the purely adventitious sort that titillates the malicious and chagrins the virtuous, has been absent from the Riley-Smith Theatre for some time. The news that another of Lope de Vega's two thousand plays had been chosen for our edification was disquieting. True, we were assured on the

highest authority that it was to be a comedy, but after our chastening experience of that prolific playwright's "*Punishment without Vengeance*," we could hardly be blamed for expecting a comedy without laughter. Nor were we encouraged when, remembering John Boorman's agonisingly protracted dalliance with "*The White Devil*," we learned that he was to produce this excursion into Spanish comedy.

But it is sometimes pleasant to be confounded, especially when the culture-patter of the programme notes had settled us further into anticipatory gloom. "*The Inconstant Countess*" really was a comedy. It had wit, speed, and at times almost an excess of high spirits. John Boorman produced it in an Eighteenth Century setting, but perhaps a Seventeenth Century one would have been more suitable for a play which recalls Ben Jonson at times, although its essential light-heartedness is far removed from the Englishman's excoriating satire.

Malcolm Rogers' *Tristan*, the parasite whose cunning, common sense and inventiveness contrast so effectively with the Countess's waywardness and Teodoro's near-stupidity, was a spidery, agile and infinitely insinuating fellow ready for any intrigue or effrontery the plot demanded. His master, *Teodoro* (William Hall), was rather more bewildered than was strictly necessary. Miriam Senior, as the *Inconstant Countess*, was the weak spot in the production. She contrived to be fussy when she should have been masterful, mulish when she should have been wayward, and snobbish when she should have been aristocratic. Ken Grace and Neil Morley were agreeably asinine as the two suitors. Joyce Berridge, Marguerite Tate and Jean Eckersley, as three ladies-in-waiting, pleasantly decorated the stage and occasionally enlivened proceedings by displays of speaking looks. Keith Cottam's *Ludovico* was a too-too aged count, addled rather than matured by time, but an explosive cough, a fiercely brandished stick, violently oscillating knees and magnificently bad acting raised ineptness to the ludicrous sublime.

The play was translated by John Boorman and A. E. Purver. Costumes and sets were effective, and although it is perhaps unfair to say so, one was left hankering for a

professional production which, pruned of the occasional gaucheries of even the best amateurs, would enable us to see the play as the not inestimable thing it is.

The Staff play was also a comedy, but a more familiar one and depending less upon situation and circumstances than upon verbal wit and fancy. It was hardly the actors' fault that the puns and verbal by-play did not get across to a somewhat lumpish audience, for if they did not actually supply diagrams they very nearly ran up a signal whenever the puns came along. Comedy, no less than tragedy, requires the participation of the audience, and Shakespeare requires not so much the willing suspension of disbelief as the willing suspension of the belief that, because he is a Great Poet, he must be listened to in supine and silent adoration. Not that the actors were unduly troubled by a phlegmatic audience or an unnatural veneration for Shakespeare: they enjoyed themselves in a brisk, simple and workmanlike production by Francis Diddy and Marjorie Spink.

Arthur Creedy's *Ferdinand* was a pleasant, unassuming idealist, a somewhat transparent figure beside the more rounded *Berowne*, to whom Frederick May gave a graceful yet worldly gallantry sobered by intelligence and a more penetrating quality of experience. John Boorman, whose *Armado*, a tall, oddly misshapen figure, postured and sputtered his way through the play, revealed a fine sense of caricature. His page *Moth* (Louise Eickoff) shared, in her spritely way, our amusement. As *Boyet*, Arnold Kettle had a sort of seedy foppishness and an ingratiating way with a handkerchief. Kenneth Muir's *Holofernes* was a truly fearsome pedagogue to whom a good meal was merely a stimulus for more flights of pedantry. Douglas Jefferson's *Costard* was a happily contrived mixture of simplicity and bucolic cunning which found full outlet in the last joyous charade. Among the women, Diana Holmes, as *Rosaline*, made the most of her part. The idea of the recorder trio was a good one which went on too long.

The Bible has been the source and inspiration of much in English literature, but perhaps the strangest use to which it has ever been put is in Oscar Wilde's "*Salome*." From the

clear, if puzzling, Biblical story he produced his essay in aberration, slow-moving and heavily decorated with piled up similes and strange, incantatory heavily jewelled passages which seem to parody the antiphonal and choric qualities of Bible poetry in general. Yet the screwing up of sensation to an unbearable pitch does nothing in the end save blunt the point of what was, in the Bible narrative, keen and direct. Wilde went to the Bible for jewels and came back with paste. The speeches grow wearisome, and virginity's yearning for an orgasmic contact with virginity is perverted to corpse-kissing, until finally one is glad of the release which comes when Herod, a king at last, orders Salome's execution. Catharsis, like Salome's strange consummation, is too long delayed.

With such a play, David Coombs was set a heavy task in which he only partly succeeded. His production was orthodox with a sort of numbing competence about it. His scenes were flat and static when they should have been fluid, and the natural heaviness of the play became less like an over-rich robe than a flannel blanket. The play is a sort of declamatory ballet, and he produced it as a naturalistic costume piece tricked out by spurious and amateurish dancing. But the play, regarded as a whole, was one not to be missed, even if one went only to have one's misgivings on reading the text fully proved.

Patricia Doxey, as *Salomé*, had ease and assurance and a too restrained hint of voluptuousness. But this quality is as rare on the stage as it is in life, and perhaps no actress could ever do justice to a character commonly regarded as the essence of feminine voluptuousness, flaunting beyond the bounds of everyday caution and obeying its own laws. Richard Hinton's *Herod* vacillated delicately between second-rate kingship and doddering incestuous lasciviousness. Frank Granville Barker gave *Jokanaan* an immobile harsh purity, and Robert Ayling was a young Captain of the Guard with a soft voice and a strangled passion for Salome. There was also some dancing of the sort to which we are now inured in Mr. Coombs' productions.

A.G.

EARLY MORNING INCIDENT

A DULL RUMBLE brought by trembling sound waves through the still morning air, set the ear-drums vibrating and, magnified by Malleus, Incus and Stapes, was of sufficient importance to be sent to the department headquarters, where it was analysed and diagnosed as originating some quarter-to a half-mile away. This information had been expected and was immediately transmitted to the Cerebral Head Office, resulting in a further message sent down to the mighty Biceps Femoris and Quadriceps Femoris for instant action.

B.F. and Q.F. quickly got under way and soon settled down to a long easy lope, three-quarters speed ahead. Meanwhile, more messages were received at C.H.O. from the Auditory Department Headquarters, claiming the rumbling to have grown in magnitude, indicating its rapid approach. C.H.O. sent an urgent message to B.F. and Q.F. to increase activity to their utmost limit: back came a flash intimating that temporary stocks of supplies were rapidly being exhausted and at the present rate of consumption would not last more than five or six seconds.

C.H.O. notified the carriers to increase their loads, this was impossible, as the existing transport was laden to capacity—the only solution was more vehicles. Transport House agreed to increase the number of vehicles by bringing in reserves from the Spleen and also issued orders to the power station to increase production and speed up delivery.

Subsidiary or Sympathetic Control Centre relieved C.H.O. of some of its burden and rapidly formed a state of emergency: B.F. and Q.F. were to receive top priority in delivery of supplies; other less important industries were cut down or cut off completely.

This gave new life to B.F. and Q.F., the lope increased to a rapid, rhythmic pounding. Even so, the Auditory Dept. H.Q. was becoming frantic; the rumbling had increased and swollen to a series of thunderous staccato roars.

C.H.O. declared the effort to be insufficient, B.F. and Q.F.

must increase their activity AT ALL COSTS, all supplies must be used on delivery, if necessary, reserves must be used as well.

Transport House reported diminution of supplies ready for shipment, there was enough transport for a considerable greater amount if available.

New sources must be found: the great pool of raw materials in the Liver could be utilised; these were soon prepared to suit the needs of B.F. and Q.F.

Disaster! One of the key industries could not hold the pace! The great Oxygen Combine could not get the transport unloaded and reloaded again quickly enough; a bottle neck was formed, and although Messrs. Lung Bros. were working to full capacity, steadily increasing numbers of vehicles piled up or were returned only half loaded.

This soon told on B.F. and Q.F., who repeatedly sent hysterical flashes to C.H.O. for more oxygen; in vain. The spleen was squeezed dry of the last reserve of ships: Liver pool was converting its vast supplies of raw material for B.F. and Q.F.: the power station was producing power at such a rate that the whole structure rocked to its foundations in unison with its engines. All were working at maximum capacity, successfully keeping B.F. and Q.F. supplied; all, that is, except Oxygen Co. Ltd.

Then miracle of miracles, a lone message from Fevea Centralis, an outpost connected with Optic Thalami H.Q., who reported the goal in sight. C.H.O. issued an emergency broadcast stating the glad tidings and pleaded for the extreme effort from every individual cell, no matter how insignificant, "let no one say an English cell ever shirked his duty."

Even before the broadcast was over, everyone could feel the vibrations set up by the monster as it snarled on their very heels.

Everyone who could possibly do without forfeited their food and oxygen in an effort to help B.F. and Q.F.; Power House raced the motors until they threatened to vibrate from their supports; Oxygen Co. Ltd., undermanned as they were, performed veritable miracles in their turnround of vehicles; then all eyes were turned on B.F. and Q.F., it was up to them!

Like true heroes, staunch to the end, they lived up to the moment ; they actually managed to increase their Herculean efforts and finally consumed all the extra supplies coming in and appeared even to absorb food from themselves in order to complete that last few yards.

They'd made it !

There was a hideous screeching behind them as the frustrated monster pulled to a halt—I had caught the 'bus !

C. Crossley

THE ABYSS

HIS BODY SEEMED TO GROW clumsier and more monstrous in the white, opaque mist, which rose up round him as he floundered drunkenly along the narrow waterlogged passage, his dimming light glancing thinly back at him with a slight sparkle here and there from the smooth, wet walls. The sharp echoes of his footsteps went bouncing back along the narrow rift, back into the vast depths behind where they set up a faint hollow rumbling. It reverberated round him continuously, full of a strange, impersonal menace, emphasising with its curious insistence his awareness that struggling along this narrow fissure, four hundred feet below the surface of the peat moor he was completely alone, save for the body of Tomaso, lying smashed at the foot of the shaft back there, God knows how many hundred feet down in the pitchy blackness.

Six hours since they came in through the crevice on the peat-moor. . . . Six years. . . . Deeper and deeper in they had come, down three hundred feet of ladder, a mile of twisting passage between them and the open air, deeper and deeper yet, till, with a stunning suddenness Tomaso had given that single, short, startled cry and had dropped away from him into the blackness, leaving him alone. The thought of the climb before him was terrifying to him now, alone as he was. He tried to forget it and to concentrate upon the effort which he had to

make if he was ever to reach the surface again. But as soon as he thrust one thought from his mind the other would come insistently back....Tomaso....The passage falling sharply away....the long, tenuous ladder, looking as if it were made of nothing more than thin twine as it hung suspended from the huge block wedged ominously in the roof....Tomaso, straddling the rift like a great black spider....edging, edging cautiously out over space. Then it had come—the usual searching glance at the belay—the deft kick from the wall as the ladder swung in under the block—and then the sudden, convulsive jerk—the short startled cry as the ladder broke loose and Tomaso plummeted with it down into the impenetrable blackness of the shaft. He had shouted—almost querulously at first, then frantically.... "Tomaso, Tomaso!.... Answer me, Tomaso....!"—craning desperately over the gulf, striving to pierce its blackness with his feeble lamp...."Tomaso!"—But with the realisation that Tomaso was finished—that in any case he could do nothing about it—he had cracked momentarily. Then there had come pouring out of him that crazy, senseless torrent of blasphemy rebounding dully from the black walls. Then commonsense again—and silence, more intense and more infinite than before.

But that had all been back there. Thinking back, his body almost seeming to be working automatically, he stumbled over a half-submerged rock and sprawled weakly in the black water in the floor of the passage. He cursed under his breath, feverishly examining his lamp. Another few hours....maybe four....maybe six....one could never tell exactly. The thought of the big pitch with the hundred-and-eighty-foot ladder still lying what seemed an appalling distance ahead, filled him with a stunned horror....that first ladder down which he had slid so glibly on the way in, knowing that Tomaso, cool, experienced, safe, would be there to help him with the two-hundred-foot line. Alone now....No Tomaso....

His whole body trembled with chill, his fingers numbed with hours of immersion in icy water were like stumps of wood. He trudged on desperately.

After about half an hour the passage funnelled sharply

HEAD OF AN ACTOR

W. A. HODGES

DISCUSSION GROUP W. A. HODGES

RITUAL LEAP W. A. HODGES

THE BARGAINERS W. A. HODGES

down in front of him and he was at the entrance to the catrun. He lay down in the water and began to work himself into it, head first, the big battery on his left hip grating on the rock as he pushed himself along inch by inch with his heels, on his back in six inches of bitterly cold, swiftly coursing water, an airspace of no more than another six inches between his face and the roof. It was upstream this time. In the tiny passage the constant flow built up against his shoulders so that his head was continually braced upwards against the roof. Growing rapidly almost too numbed to move he fought against panic, struggling to maintain some semblance of that rhythmical body movement which was the only thing which would get him through the remaining twenty feet before the passage widened. It opened out a bare inch and with the slight easing of the constriction a new lease of desperate energy came to him, carrying him to the end of the almost tubular catrun. A final bracing of his feet and a blind lunge through the leaping body of water, which sucked at its mouth, and he was out of it, crouching on his haunches in the huge, dome-like chamber, with its bouldered floor and its two-hundred foot high roof.

He crossed the chamber and sprawled on a huge block, once part of the roof, and switched off his light for a moment's rest. A broad column of water fell incessantly and noisily from above, rushing swiftly between the heaped boulders on the floor, and sweeping, with a horrible gurgling noise into the small hole from which he had just come. The realisation of what his position might have been had the tarn up there on the peat moor been in spate made him almost sick with fear, now that he was out of the catrun and no longer contending with the press of water behind his shoulders. Pulling himself together he switched on the light, catching a glimpse as he did so of the ladder, just as they had left it on the way in, hanging motionless away out from the wall, the long tail-ends of the rope coiled neatly on the floor. He peered upwards, trying to follow its course to the summit of the pitch, but could see no further than the knots of the second twenty-five-foot length. He saw how it twisted upwards to the knots and then disappeared out of range of the lamp up into the gloom. He

thought for a moment....Seven lengths—knotted together—he remembered how it hung over the huge tilting slab which, as they came in had looked as though a mere push would send it crashing down into the dark—remembered the thin strand of half-inch manila, a hundred and eighty feet above, which secured it....the same kind of half-inch manila which had parted so unexpectedly, sending Tomaso hurtling down to his death. He felt in the pocket of his boiler-suit for the oil-bottle in which was his last cigarette....and then remembered that by some savage irony Tomaso had had the matches! There was another box at the top of the pitch with the detonators and the blasting powder, which they had left there coming in. Wearily he began to laugh, but his longing for a smoke suddenly became urgent. He moved with a desperate purposefulness towards the ladder. No man, he knew, ought to attempt such a climb alone—but it was no longer a matter of prudence. It was either attempt the climb, or stay down here with Tomaso until exposure and weakness made escape impossible—yet, somehow, though he knew that the matter involved his life, that no longer seemed the important question. It was the matches he had to reach—only the matches. Once he could smoke again he would be alright—could face the rest. He began to climb.

The ladder gave a yard as his weight came on to it, then tautened on the belay. He climbed quickly, arms at shoulder level behind the ladder, toes on the rungs as Tomaso had taught him. The ladder swung in to the wall and out again over the vault. He strove to lock his body to the ladder and so ease the strain on his arms. Then, after a few more rungs he passed the knots of the first length and moved rhythmically on to the second. Seventy feet up he stopped to rest, straining his body into the ropes. Ten feet away, from a vent in the rock, the water spouted, seeming to poise for an instant before the stream turned downwards and fell hissing into the depths. He went on, climbing more slowly now, looking for the next set of knots. He dared not rest again before he reached them. Suddenly he stopped, searching with his boot....a rung missing....twenty inches to reach instead of ten....He

brought his arms out in front, with the ladder at the full extent of them, and leaning out backwards over space, groped upwards with his foot for the rung. He found it and heaved upwards, the whole weight of his body on his arms for painful seconds. His tired body craved desperately to relax, to slide backwards, quietly, down into peace out of this agonising effort, but his mind urged him as desperately on and up. Painfully, slowly now, he struggled upwards, holding on by a tremendous effort of will. Thirty feet more and he came to a great flake of polished rock, jutting out nearly to the ladder, and managed to swing in to a stance upon it, perilous enough, but sufficient to ease the strain for a vital moment. Then the ladder moved slowly, slid out from the wall, kicking along its whole length, bearing him out into space again. He went on, climbing now by sheer touch, too exhausted to think any more about what he was doing, his eyes closed. When he did open them for a moment the big slab was only ten feet away. He could see the belay rope curling away over the edge. He made another eight feet and hung exhausted. Now, if ever in his life, he needed that vital last pull from above, helping him from under the block,....needed Tomaso to help him up over the edge and into that last narrow passage. Desperately he heaved upwards, nailed boots scrabbling at the rock, then, dully, he heard the light, dry sound of rope-fibres cracking under strain ....the belay parting strand by strand, as, he realised, too exhausted for emotion, the strands of his life were parting, ...without fuss, but inevitably. He sagged on the ladder waiting....

OBTUSE ANGLES

KULTUR (contd.).

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE.

According to the recent observations of Likna Helibebcnof, Aries α (Hamal — 2.23) culminated on the Prime Vertical of his Mount Preston Observatory at G.M.T. 30 h. 34 m. 39.68 s. p.m. on the 20th April, 1950, 3.56 secs. (Sidereal)

before the coincident Eastern Elongation of Taurus β (Nath — 1.78) and the Apparent Mean Ascension of Virgo α (Spica — 1.21).

The inference to be drawn from the above is that travel by water (H_2O) is inadvisable at this stage.

The only deduction to be made from the data tabulated in the Nautical Almanac, however, is " Beware of the Dog ! " It would appear, therefore, that the latter publication needs revision, and tenders are invited for this service. They should be prepared in sextuplicate and submitted to me, care of the Admiralty, envelopes having previously been marked "Tender" in the bottom left-hand corner.

THE HORSCH AFFAIR—FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

Those who read the account in my last column of my recent and most embarrassing encounter with Lady Frédégonde Horsch will, I am sure, share the forebodings which I then expressed when they read the text of the letter, just received, which I print below :

" Sir,

As a consequence of our recent experience in the High Street I wish categorically to state that the acquaintance of the lady who then accosted us, clad, to say the least, in a decidedly unambiguous manner, is one which I feel to be a qualification better befitting a complete and unprincipled scoundrel rather than any prospective son-in-law of mine.

Although I hesitate to apply such an appellation to you, sir, my judgment—reckoned to be excellent, I believe, in my day—allows no possibility of mitigation in the circumstances.

I may say that my daughter completely concurs with me in this, and has disposed of your ring—I believe, though I am not sure, in the Thames.

Hence, Sir, you would be doing us both a kindness if you would attempt no further communication with us

whatsoever. We do not desire it—nor, I am sure, will you, in the circumstances.

I am, sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

TALLEYRAND LE GÜME, KT., LT.-GEN. (Retd.)."

The letter has, I feel, a certain ominous quality. I think I may fear the worst.

AGONY COLUMN.

Madame Zoe Sphagnum, the celebrated medium, has asked me, at the instigation of her Red Indian Guide, Michael Faraday, to pass on the following Spirit Message which she has received from The Other Side by automatic writing.

" Sid,

Give my missus the quid.

FRED."

Madame Sphagnum assured me, with some emotion, that the matter was urgent.

WAYSIDE PULPIT.

" It is better to have spat upon a tombstone than to have kissed the feet of bishops."

Hep. iv. 127.

CUMBERBATCH.

NOTICE.

The *Gryphon* would like to congratulate Mr. & Mrs. A. Griffiths on the Birth of their Daughter, Alison, on the 5th of April, 1950.

W. A. Hodges

INITIATION

ONE DAY WHEN I WAS about sixteen, was still at school, and had learned all the facts of Life which then seemed worth learning, I made an important decision. All the boys in my year—all the boys, that is, who showed signs of offering me much competition in the business of obtaining notoriety—were smoking pipes. Not for them any longer the ignominious business of shared Woodbines at the far end of the large sports field in the lunch break. They had outgrown all that. Urbane, detached, dignified, they strolled nonchalantly about the streets in the long evenings with their briars dangling from their teeth. The summer-evening air was full of the scent of their tobacco as they strolled, followed by the admiring gaze of those little bands of young ladies from the Sister Foundation, who also spent their evenings in parading leisurely up and down between the new cinema near the station, and the suspension bridge over the Thames, just below the weir. It was a state of affairs not to be tolerated for long. I, too, must get a pipe—must abandon my school cap—at least, in the evenings—and must share in this new and satisfying experience. As things stood I was losing ground. Even " Monkey " Brown had managed to obtain a slender, beautiful, delicate thing of pale orange wood and shiny black ebonite, styled in the then fashionable " apple bowl " shape. He strolled each evening, a lone wolf, prowling between river and picture house as many times as could be managed between tea and the falling of night, making me feel as if I were already on the shelf, my " Craven A " tasteless, my spring-ejecting cigarette-case a trumpery toy. As often as not I would slink away out of the High Street and home through the by-roads where I was unlikely to encounter many of my acquaintances or of the young ladies from the Sister Foundation. I had to have a pipe.

I watched my father's face for some days, looking anxiously for signs. I had to be careful. I knew my father, and he knew me—very well—and the matter was going to need tact.

My father went in for hobbies—earnestly, enthusiastically,

at full tilt, spending pounds and pounds and hours and hours until he had learnt everything possible to the enthusiastic amateur without any previous training. Then, having gone as far as was possible, he would suddenly lose interest, and in less than twenty-four hours it would be as if that particular hobby had never existed for him. Already he would have found another, and would be starting again from scratch with frenzied enthusiasm. At the time of the pipe business, it was Wireless. For weeks now he had been building a monstrous ten-valve superheterodyne receiver, and was apt to seem remote and abstracted at such rare times as he appeared to his family from his voluntary exile in the wire-festooned and dusty shed in the garden, which he used as his assembling shop—clearly in no mood for the delicate discussions which had to take place if I was ever to get my pipe. He himself had dozens. He had collected them at some time in the distant past, and had two fretwork racks full of them above the bookcase. But they were old, and blackened, and dusty, and somehow menacing to look at. They were not beautiful, shiny things like the one Monkey Brown smoked. In any event, I could not have risked a raid. I had observed that whenever my mother had "tidied up" something of his in the sublime hope that he would not notice, his air of innocent and other-worldly abstraction was not to be trusted. And my father, in one of his moments of frenzied irritation was an impressive and startling figure. But my opportunity came. The monstrous ten-valve superheterodyne receiver worked beautifully. I can still remember how he brought it into the dining room, carrying the long wooden case with its dial-mounted ebonite front as carefully as if it had been a little child, his eyes alight with love and triumph—I can still remember how, disconnecting the pettifogging little five-valve job which had served us well enough until then, he gathered all the trailing wires together, plugging them into their respective places with the expansive air of an impresario, adjusted the knobs for maximum power, and then, beaming, stood back to watch the effect upon us of the terrifying blast of sound which came from it. We were horrified and impressed, but the occasion was the more important for me since I knew

that my moment had come at last. I saw the signs in his face for which I had been looking all these weeks. I gave him half an hour—expressed my admiration for the wireless set, and then, choosing my words carefully, began my speech.—" Dad " —I said—" All the boys at school are smoking pipes."—He looked at me with a sort of naïve wonder.—" Are they, my boy ? " he said. " Bit young, aren't they ? "—" Well "—I said—" I don't know. Doesn't it rather depend on—depend on—well—I mean—you know—some blokes sort of grow up quicker than others, don't they ?—I mean——" My father looked more naïve than ever. I didn't altogether like it. I had not been prepared for it. He did not normally look quite so naïve as this. His next remark took me completely aback. Pointing to the fretwork rack, his face almost childlike in its extreme innocence, he indicated the dirtiest, and the most foul-looking of the lot—a huge, bulldog briar, as monstrous, in its own way, as the superheterodyne. " Try that one," he said. " I used to like that one myself. There should be some tobacco left in that tin on my desk. May be a bit dry, after all this time, but still. . . ." I suppose my face must have showed my misgivings. My mother blenched, but my father fixed her with a look of saintlike innocence and she sat back in her chair, her own face suddenly impassive.—I hesitated.—" Here "—said my father—" I'll fill it for you "—and rising from his seat he fetched the abominable thing, and after rummaging at his desk for a moment, came back to his chair, pipe in one hand, and a rusty old tin in the other. Slowly and solemnly, his face expressionless, he filled the pipe and handed it to me, struck a match and held it to the bowl as I gripped the stem between my teeth. " Now draw "—he said.

It was awful. I had a dreadful job not to choke at first, but as I became used to it, I found a way to puff without taking in too much smoke at a time. Slowly, interminably slowly, my tongue blistering with the hot gouts of indescribably foul smoke, which played on to the tip of it from the hole in the discoloured old mouthpiece every time I drew the slightest of breaths, I worked my way through the ordeal, my father's face throughout retaining its look of childlike innocence, and

my mother's gaze remaining attentively fixed upon the knitting she was doing. I wasn't sick, but it was a very, very near thing. As I put the pipe down with a sigh, my smoke finished, it occurred to me that I would like to go to bed. I said so. My mother rose to prepare the usual cup of Ovaltine, but I motioned her weakly not to bother. I didn't feel like any Ovaltine. As I said goodnight, and crept from the room my father's face lost momentarily its look of innocence. "Good-night, my boy"—he said. "Not a bad old pipe, is it?" I never wanted to see a pipe again.

But the next evening, in the High Street, I saw Monkey Brown swanking along with his brand-new apple-bowl model. And my resolution stiffened. I would master this business if it killed me. I would have a pipe and would learn to smoke it so as to look as if I liked it, just as he did. I went into the nearest tobacconist and bought an ounce of mild tobacco and hurried home. My mother and father were both in the dining room listening to the new wireless. I walked nonchalantly across to the pipe rack. "Mind if I try a different pipe to-night, Dad?" I asked. He looked startled. "Why no,—" he said—"If you really want to." I chose the smallest and most innocent-looking of that evil lot, filled it casually from my packet, sat down in my chair, picked up a magazine, and began gingerly to draw. It did not seem so bad to-night. The tobacco was not so strong, and I felt much more confident this time as I puffed. I began to enjoy my tobacco. In spite of this, to my utter bewilderment, I had to rush from the room after my third pipe. I really was sick.

But I persevered and my father, a wise man, accepted the position. On my next birthday I received a better pipe even than Monkey Brown's—a beautiful golden yellow straight-grain in the even newer "Long Flat" style, with a quarter of a pound of expensive, mild, and really beautifully scented tobacco. I was at last in a position to assert myself, and from that time onwards Lone Wolf Brown was not the only monkey upon the High Street in the long, tobacco-scented summer evenings.

Mostyn Silverton

SEASIDE TOWN—TUSCANY

I.

The beginning had sprung from granite
a silver cleft among the olive slopes
rock-splitting source set in crystal
an old altar for an ancient cult
in the tired heart of pagan thickets.
The blue-worn marbles hold the keys
but wisely retain the secrets ; and the sun
bursts suddenly forth like a flaring crown
making all light.

II.

The pagan mysteries are gone in a sickle's sweep
transitory heat-filaments dancing into oblivion,
leaving a white suppuration, a fungoid smear
across the green cliffs, lapped by blue waves,
chemically vivid.
The camera's lies are painted on post-cards.
It is siesta time for the municipal whore,
and lulled by night images a gap-mouth snores,
anticipating the evening.

III.

A scene of magic, tubes of liquid fire
spell out the staples—Cinzano !—Ristorante !—
Only at the cobbled quay life crystallises
in nets drying in the cool sea breeze,
in a mandolin chorus and some cheap wine—
a consummation beneath a stuccoed porch
under a peeling poster.

Charles Kingham

NIGHT THOUGHT

The hammer-pulse of stubborn clock
Echoes the thunder in the blood.
To still the one is easy.
Night's web stretched skin-like
The coruscation of hard stars set in its strands—
What would it profit a man to
Tear the web down pluck its jewels
When his conjectural soul is already forfeit
Loaned to another ?
Compulsion of the blood the avid body. . . .
Subdue with sound these senses ?

> " Would I might build a solemn temple where
> Her eyes might ever shine for me alone.
> Within its walls would be no need of sun,
> Lit by the sudden beauty of her hair."

No peace that way—oh calm, calm
Would come after the heart-leap terror
Of waking lonely in the grinning dark
If I could turn to hear
Your even breathing by my side in sleep.

John West

POEM

The last kiss kissed, the last sigh gone,
The last tear shed and all pain passed,
She of the white hands and the red lips,
The white throat and the dark eyes,
Is gone. He of the strong limbs
The firm, long, supple, stallion limbs
That shone in the moon like ice,
He, full of fire, he too is gone.
And the last dry leaf from Grief's dead tree,
Falls.

Peter Wallbank

STRANGE INTEGRATION

This Gloucestershire is glorified, the world's gone gold,
And told the text of Sunday's sour soliloquies
To shed-scale eyes which mark the Maker-mould
Of light and dark, the crisp penumbral colloquies.
Inseparable twins, the godly paradox
That locks Existence conjugate with Love,
Makes Beauty sorrowful and ties the equinox
Together with the tide, the low with that above

This consubstantiation of the opposite
God only would have bound, omnipotence alone
Have clasped companioning extremes, made implicit
In joy forgetfulness of pain, have doomed His Own
To death, and tallowed white the flame of sanctity
From spent-sin tears and penitential poverty.

Robin Skelton

NO, I AM NOT PRINCE HAMLET . . .

Six Variations upon a Theme.

1. COMMENT.

The lonely lover in his plaint espies
An angel seated in a maiden's eyes,
But married men hate more the good than evil,
Espousing Angels, wish them to the Devil.

2. WOMAN.

And She: only the stairs and the corner at the angle of the stairs (childhood memories a belt and a broken window): and over her dress she wore a facade of imitation, of imminent immaturity (the fumble and the first—ever to be the last—new shoes and that handbag of initialled obtrusiveness).

She: the personality like a spiralled lift descending through flats of mimery. The One, like a mountain that crept and a waterfall stopped to search behind the slimiest stone; over it all who knows? henna or les nuits Parisiennes, mud-packs or a snood? Maybe it is the habit that makes the obscene suggestion. Maybe it is the convention that derides the little lusts: only the back seat and sweaty unmentionably stiff in winter and in summer like the snows of winter? Sensuality through free access more jealously guarded, or perhaps.... (the rose bush by the river and twenty minutes of a forgotten cigarette). And Following....

Down from the corner (remember the belts buckle and.... but enough; it wasn't a beer drinkers deviation) out to what? to whom? the black crepe counter, the red mock silk dance halls contantibumleverberations, the white cotton court, or even the semi transparence buttoned loosely at a corners flickering lamplight.

Lust. Love. Him and Her: The Young Gentleman; Mah Fiancee; good for a drink; Five Pound; I've never done it before; "Oh Johnnie, Oh Johnnie"; the inevitable garter in the back seat; Help me Doctor; I know a man:

five and six ; Dearie, Dearie, Dearie ; A cupper tea : O God, my lipstick's smeared. . . .

A divine party and a tingle at the bottom : Reggie, Freddie, Jack, Hank, and Jan. . . . Back to the stairs, and, one might call it, I suppose, Sleep—or not, as the case may be—and the only life at the bottom of the spiral lifts invariable tortuliquencies

3. APPROACH.

you are pretty my cosset my nip kneed sparrow
did anyone ever tell you i had no mother
if they did they lied for i have had several
and one is a procuress on mount olympus

you are shipshape my neat nippled beauty
your pillar box kiss is a constant anticipation
in my damp bed. Kalisthos is stupid
with love for your bare arms on a silent mattress

you are desireable my dainty a tight clever wench
seeking a higher mathematic with line seamed nylon
walking on lecturers tread. did no one tell you
my sister is sleeping with the most important of examiners

4. GREEN GEESE.

green geese scream down cold courtyards when the sun is yellow, overturning milk pails with a thin skins pouring, waking the old brown mountain who undoes his heather buskins to call holloa holloa holloa while the dark man broods

the white newspaper cannot tell these things
even though the cigarette girl swallows cinemas or the park springs hands to snare young girls and perambulators and the curer kills, yet

red head lines call his deep and the black bird strikes at his eye, he whose torn sleeve crumbles walls, whose tall nerve severs houses. and the green geese fly over the white lake and the bright straw cackles like glass laughter when the quick knife draws her redline and the shy throat curls spring crocuses

again the hyacinth girl again Aha ! that Shakespeherian rag
so the wall broke and the house split and the shrill minute layered as onion shed its timing when the old clock called holloa holloa holloa on the dark dawn when she
waking as the piercing grass despairs and the eye drained of quiet drew on dim chemises of morning
and the green geese screamed down cold courtyards where he lay under the frost of a yellow sun

5. AUBADE.

Polite men in the tube raise bowler hats
In making place for ladies, dust their spats,
Umbrella furled, and fold The Morning Post
In aura of the breakfast tea and toast.

Polite, the men on moving escalator
Pluck aside invisible black hem
Of skirted manner for the unknown Her
In comprehensive habits regimen.

Polite the manners on the tube : eight-thirty
Clicks a clockwork pattern into place ;
The little prides grow mean, emotions dirty
Behind Time's immobility of face.

Behind the maquillage of morning duty
Nothing is accounted save the hour ;
Dream's Time's pimp, and Love's a raddled beauty
In slick drilled minutes' mechanistic power.

6. AFFAIRE.

Eveapple.
Why should the snaik, andunder the sensoriness of skin ! and urgebrand red the breech in mortality. WHY.
She notsomuch walked tottered glade orslip yet movemens, windword ofa curtain or how to dream a tree, She nothowyou smile giggle-glitter teeth oreyes but maybe a stream thattouching molten—the heart of YOU—or on astone light

sea wassled underneath a star thlakesmooth an astonesrippul, She ne her onlyhowayto Thinknow felsense an urges indafinight nonot intangible intransient—yetkissesdye—howto phraseit smehow somehow

Adamsfortune.

I suppose and he first never the evoused usage-habit, the primevals culmination onle asonnin' spring oran akesigh and he He HE

Well There It Waz An' he Had It. Nesomuch as a winkspersmile. . . . here we like squirrelcages—buheneverknewem—and all the rosy apple out of rewch. Norquite but moreto the irony of Gods, more of the grandeurs ridiculity, so high vast and all on a pinpoint !

Snaikhappy.

Frank Granville Barker
MUSIC ON RECORD

THREE RECENTLY RECORDED SYMPHONIES afford examples of the wide variety of style and feeling that can be achieved in this musical form. Haydn's *Symphony No.* 100 *in G* exhibits a sense of humour that is boisterous rather than witty, and this quality is well brought out by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Hugo Rignold (Col. DX 1623/5). More highly stylised and more contemplative is Mozart's *Symphony No.* 40 *in G minor*, representing the peak of classical grace and clarity. As might be expected, Furtwängler, with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (H.M.V. DB 6997/9), gives an interpretation notable for mature and scholarly musicianship, thereby achieving an authoritative ring which more than compensates for the occasional brilliance of Toscanini's earlier and less even rendering. In deep contrast to these works of the Viennese School is César Franck's *Symphony in D minor*, which with its cyclic form and superficial air of mysticism hardly falls within the range of true symphonic writing. The highly individualised chromaticism of Franck's style may offend the nice ear, but few can fail to appreciate

the gentle dignity and deep sincerity of the slow movement. Alceo Galliera and the Philharmonic Orchestra (Col. DX 1629/33) give a full-blooded performance which emphasises both the strength and weakness of this symphony.

It is reassuring to find in his performance of Brahms' *Violin Concerto in B*, with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, conducted by Furtwängler, that Yehudi Menuhin has returned to a more restrained and sensitive style of playing. In many of his recent recordings this artist has allowed mere display of virtuosity to predominate, but here showmanship is rightly subordinated to real musicianship (H.M.V. DB 21000/21003 and DBS 21004). Unfortunately, one cannot accord such praise to the Busch Quartet for its recording of Brahms' *Quartet in B flat, op.* 67 (Col. LX 1262/5 and LXS 1266). This work is a wonderful blend of gaiety and lyricism, with the influence of the Ländler in the Allegretto, but the studied performance of the Busch players fails to convey this essential light-hearted spirit. The same composer's *Tragic Overture* is intended to illustrate, not the programme of any specific dramatic episode, but the general mood of tragedy itself. Paul Kletzki and the Philharmonic Orchestra (Col. LX 1251/2) competently achieve the sombre strength appropriate to this work.

After a spate of familiar piano solos, often indifferently played, it is a pleasure to hear Louis Kentner's able performance of Chopin's early *Bolero in C* (Col. DX 1640) and Gerald Moore's sensitive playing of Bartók's *For Children* (H.M.V. B 9882). These may be light fare, but they are most refreshing.

Boris Christoff, whose unusual combination of vocal excellence with real acting ability secured him universal praise for his appearance in "Boris Godunov," at Covent Garden earlier this year, displays these qualities to perfection in an aria from Verdi's "*Don Carlo*" (H.M.V. DB 21007). A great deal of nonsense has been written on the subject of *bel canto*, but those who wish to discover the true nature of this vocal style will learn more by listening to Ebe Stignani's recording of arias from Ponchielli's "*La Gioconda*" and Giordano's "*Fedora*" (Col. LX 1253) than by reading any book on the subject. Finally, of interest to all Wagnerites, comes a notable

performance by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna State Opera Chorus, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, of the *Church Scene* and *Homage to Sachs* from "*Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*" (Col. LX 1258).

REVIEWS

"A Short History of Western Philosophy in the Middle Ages," by S. J. CURTIS, M.A., Ph.D., 15/-. *Macdonald & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.*, 19, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

DR. CURTIS'S BOOK satisfies the perennial need for a work which gives the main lines of mediaeval philosophical thought, and the contributions to it of the major figures, in a clear and easily understandable way. The author states in his preface that the book is a simple introduction to the history of the philosophy of the Middle Ages, intended not only for undergraduates but also for students in University extension classes, and members of a wider public who may have been deterred by the scarcity of English translations of the works of mediaeval philosophers and of commentaries upon them. Presumably modesty deters him from another claim which he might well have made—that this book should awaken interest also in the reader who knows nothing of philosophy, and stimulate him to read more widely in that subject.

Mediaeval philosophy is often looked upon as mere unnecessary speculation upon irrelevant detail; as hair-splitting; as quibbling logic-chopping. Dr. Curtis successfully tries to show the men of the Middle Ages as human personalities, and their ideas as having had an influence upon the moral and philosophical outlook of subsequent ages. Necessarily, he makes great reference in this connection to St. Thomas Aquinas, devoting some 70 out of 267 pages of text to a summary of St. Thomas' thought. Much space is also given to the great Universals controversy (which Aquinas did most to resolve), its main figures, postulates and history. The book covers the period from the fall of the Western Empire in 476 to the latter

part of the fifteenth century, though St. Augustine and the pseudo-Dionysius, whose work is earlier, are included in the survey because of their influence on later thought. Dr. Curtis notes especially the influence, much more extensive than might be supposed, of Dionysius on St. Thomas Aquinas, whose most important secondary authority Dionysius was. A brief and very lucid account of the rise of the Universities and grammar schools is included, because of the influence of these institutions on the general intellectual outlook of the time.

The book lays some stress on the general influence of Aristotelian thinking on the intellects of the later Middle Ages, especially on Albert the Great and Aquinas, and detects also an occasional undercurrent of Platonism in the latter, which emerges in cases of clash between Church doctrine and Aristotelianism. A chapter on Arabian philosophy is also included, and whilst Dr. Curtis notes the obvious debt of Arabic (and of contemporary Jewish) thought to Aristotle, he does not mention the fact that all the Arabian philosophers were also doctors. Indeed, very little is made throughout the book of the connection between medicine and philosophy, or between philosophy, astrology and astronomy in the Middle Ages, though perhaps it was felt that there was no room for such a digression in a purely historical survey. No major philosopher is omitted from the book, and a great many minor ones are included whose contribution to original thought might be considered negligible (though one was sorry to see no mention made of Michael Scot).

The printing is good, and the book is well laid out generally, in which Messrs. Macdonald are to be complimented. The index seems a sufficiently full one, and there is appended an extremely useful chronological chart of the dates of all but a few of the thinkers mentioned. This, together with Dr. Curtis's admirable short biographies in the text, his equally admirable summaries of the chief ideas of each man, and his clear style, should readily fix in the reader's mind the sequence of men and ideas. It is, in short, a book which combines readability with learning in a very high degree.

C.K.

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