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Editor: **HARRIET SHAW WEAVER.**

Assistant Editor: **RICHARD ALDINGTON.**

Contributing Editor:

**DORA MARSDEN, B.A.**

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## THE NATURE OF HONOUR.

By DORA MARSDEN.

THAT an inquiry into the nature of Honour resolves itself, in the main, into a dissertation on the nature of Morals naturally results from the intimate relation which exists between the two. The question of Honour is involved in the question of Morals, of which it is a special case, Honour being the attempt to incorporate within the sphere of the Moral something of the lure and distinction which belongs to the Immoral. Morals are the modes of conduct common to a community at any given period of its history: they are customs pure and simple, changing as customs will from time to time, but only in obedience to impulses operating through the entire community. Every man falls in with the customs of his age the greater part of his active life. Even the least conventional is dominated by them: In what we eat, buy, wear, strive after, praise, blame, reject and welcome, members of a community—distinguished or insignificant—are alike or tending to make themselves so. Therefore, to set claim to being moral is as if one were to lay claim to being a water-consumer; to being immoral; an anti-water-consumer. One consumes water so often and in so many forms, voluntarily and involuntarily, that it is absurd to set store by any cut-and-dried attitude of mind in regard to its use. It is useful, if not exhilarating, and moral conduct is the same. It means a vast saving in mental energy and makes available without the pains of specific acquirement the consolidated experiences of masses of people throughout long periods of time. No one praises moral conduct greatly: and none but a word-intoxicated simpleton plumes himself on acting immorally. When a man hears himself called moral he knows that he is being accorded that minimum of praise which almost suggests blame. Nor would he feel himself made more comfortable by hearing himself called immoral. Quite the contrary. The situation, as presumably it exists, is one which neither moral nor immoral will meet, and it is to answer this subtle requirement

that "honour" is born. Honour is a device of the moralists to escape the consequences of morality: from sameness, monotony, mediocrity, being the name given to estimates of actions conducted in the conventional sphere, but conducted with such a degree of intensity as to constitute a distinction which is conferred on the sphere itself. Moral conduct being customary conduct, it is in its very intention destined to be mediocre. It is the "usual thing," and honour is conferred when the "usual thing" is done with such an intensity of energy as to sublimate its non-distinctiveness into distinction. Such conduct intensifies the degree to such an extent that it appears to create a difference in kind. It embellishes the normal to the height of the exceptional and its reward is "Honour." One could illustrate by the analogy of fashions in dress. The leader of fashions is one who, by the definition as it were, sets great store by fashion: but in order to be distinguished in the realm of fashion a leader must perforce intensify every fashion before she is accorded distinctive honours in her line. And as a leader of fashion is to the ordinarily fashionable, so is the "man of honour" to the ordinarily moral. In dress it would involve a good deal of thought and no little inconvenience to avoid being fairly in the fashion. Fashionable clothes must be bought because the wares most easy to come by are just those in fashion. One falls an easy and acquiescing victim to the dead weight of environment—and finds oneself in the fashion. But the superlatively fashionable must do quite differently from that. Much thought, time and comfort must be sacrificed before one can attain the dizzy pinnacle at which one is adjudged a leader and an adornment of fashion. A reputation of fashion is not won without some toil and exercise of pains. Nor is Honour. In both cases the efforts expended by the purchasers are the equivalents they are prepared to offer in exchange for—public repute and applause.

Why the public is ready to negotiate is clear: not only in exchange for its gracious good opinion, is action taken which assists the public interest, but more than all it secures the embellishment of its most useful traditions. It may even manage to establish a new record upon the best traditional model, within the tradition itself. It is not for nothing that in war, for instance, the best quality of human material—the freshest, hottest, and ripest are chosen. For these are the likeliest to spend themselves liberally in contributing new decorations to its roll of “splendid examples,” and so give the old tradition a new lease of life. Tradition renews its youth, if bathed in the fresh blood of the youngest and least restrained. The lives of the honour-intoxicated, is the only food tradition really thrives on: there exists an alternative—its life or theirs. When tradition has dragged its long-grown trail about for any length of time it would begin to decay were it not for the decorative intensifying examples of young spirit, free to be squandered—for Honour. Since then for Honour youth is willing to spend itself fully in the upkeep of tradition and since tradition is the people’s choicest spiritual fare, Honour for expenditure is the people’s obviously suitable exchange. So the “Rolls of Honour” swell and national pride expands and national safety appears a more secure thing. When the danger is past, the scrolls fade and grow faint: perhaps they will receive refurbishing now and then “lest we forget”—when really they have forgotten. So much for the Honour given to patriots: though every other kind of honour which the people put up for sale has a like history behind it: someone has proved he can be useful and is accordingly to be called a “good fellow.”

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It is clear honour is wholly concerned with external verdict: an affair compact entirely of “repute”: it is a matter of estimate: its existence is in no definite and permanent way dependent upon the quality of the deed which chances to secure it. The base upon which it rests, and to which all its seeming idiosyncracies must be referred in order to be made plain, is the opinion of the spectators concerning how a deed’s consequences will affect them in their interests. Compare, for instance, the epithet “Cossacks” to-day and “Cossacks” a year ago.

Honour is born of the people, who accord it in return for signal favours rendered, not for power and spirit primarily. One may have put into tasks, courage, daring, effort, accuracy, and all the powers of a strong soul, without creating an honourable reputation, or an honoured work. Quite the contrary, in fact: the work may be dishonoured and despised as the life-history of inventors, explorers, discoverers, and overcomers, in every field of activity could prove. The so-called standards of honour; the phrases “sense of honour” and “principles of honour,” are part of the invasion of the language, by a pseudo-scientific slang. What is called a sense of honour is a fine scent for neighbours’ approval and disapproval. The “man of honour” is one who will not allow himself to come short of the maintenance of other peoples’ good opinion for himself. He is the man who accords the opinions of his neighbours the foremost place in his estimation of values: they are his first concern. The “sense of honour” is a sentinel, advising a man of the nature of condition outside: it belongs to the armoury of fear and caution rather than that of adventurous exercise of power. Though it will often urge men to deeds of distinguished valour, it is prompted by fear rather than courage. The advocates of honour endeavour to put emphasis on the fact that a “sense of honour” is held to by preference: as undoubtedly and obviously it is; what they will not care to enlarge upon, are the motives which prompt the preference, or the nature of those things in relation to which the preference is made. A “sense of honour” counsels a preference for “esteem” rather than for the risks of prosecuting an egoistic interest. That is why “honour” and “self-sacrifice” are always sandwiched together. As a matter of fact “honour” and “self-sacrifice” are as self-indulgent as egoistic enterprise, but not so daring; they make evident in contrast to the more obviously egoistic

man’s activity, differences as to their estimation regarding the whereabouts of the sources of pleasure. Both sorts are in pursuit of self-satisfaction but the “man of honour” apprehends that such satisfactions as he can be happy with, must all be stamped with the people’s approval. Popular opinion is the sieve without filtering through which no line of activity is open to him. Which of course limits his sphere of activities enormously. Nine-tenths of the suggestible modes of action are forbidden him as dishonourable: sacrilegious. He has become the slave of a highly fickle and forgetful master. That he has become so, gives a gauge of his spiritual weight.

As to the “principles” of honour so-called,—these vary as the demands suggested by the varying needs of the people vary. “Principle” of course, is the forgivable bombast of the hard-driven advocates upon whom falls the difficult task of making extremely fickle and unstable requirements appear immutable and sacred.

There are no fixed standards of honour: since honour is esteem, the only stable “principle” upon which honour can be based is this: that the individual shall at all costs make his conduct such that it shall be thought well of at the time, by the majority of those among whom he lives. The one means of arriving at any “standard of honour” is to ask “Does the public approve”? If it does the act is honourable and honoured. Why does it approve? Because its turn has been served, either as regards its safety, its pleasure, or its profit.

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The transitoriness of honour: its puff-like qualities which allow the patriot whose early path was “roses, roses all the way” to find himself “going out alone in the rain to die,” or Crimean veterans limping out their last days in the workhouse, furnish the salutary illustration of the truth that a man may not set out to win honour by making himself the servant of the public interest and then expect to find himself in the end, not its servant but its master. Men who desire public honour the public holds at its mercy: and it keeps them in perpetual thrall: a breath can make or unmake that which is their moving impulse: their reputation. Their behaviour is what the public pleases: they can only hope to receive its gracious but intermittent favours by perpetually feeding it: and even then they are not sure of it. To *command* public favour and make it faithful is not in the rôle of the man of honour but of those of the napoleonic species—the only ones who can bring public opinion to heel. These win the power to command public favour because they have first flouted it—dared its censure—and proved themselves able to forego it and yet to prosper. Before they “arrive” they have risked what the man of honour never dared to risk—the public’s blatant censure. Their power over it dates from days when there stood nothing but their own wits and skill to deter the crowd from crushing them. When they have conquered it, honour—in the humbled garb of respect—comes licking their hands: it has been brought to heel as it never could be by the “man of honour,” who sets it up as more than master: as a god. It has been made a property—one’s own—by virtue of one’s small account of it.

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The character of one’s greatest pleasures is the key to the difference between the two attitudes of mind—the egoistic and the honourable. An inquiry into the nature of pleasure would reveal much that is at present baffling in the ways and woes of men. For the purposes of this present inquiry, pleasure may be defined as the sensation of expanding power, and gives satisfaction to desire in direct ratio with the amount of expansion it allows. Into the sphere in which men feel their abilities are best able to come by this, they will direct their energies. The extent to which one can pour oneself into a thing: the amount of oneself which a thing will take and the degree in which it will take it: the completeness with which one can wrap oneself about a thing in the fulness of one’s power: these considerations constitute the basis of pleasure. That “pleasures” are in disrepute is merely the judgment of pleasure on “pleasures.” Their disrepute grows out of the fact that the satisfaction they

give is brief and limited. The more one may become involved, the greater is the pleasure: whether in love or in work it is the same. The disappointment of "realisations" is the outcome of the mistake of looking to the wrong stage of a process for satisfaction, *i.e.*, when it is finished instead of when it is in progress. Satisfaction is a process not a state, evolving during the exercising of the means and not from the "end." Goethe pointed out the mistake of being so concerned about the end as to forget to rejoice by the way. The man who is dependent on honour is at this disadvantage as compared with him whose interest is in the action and not in the opinions regarding it. Moreover, dissatisfaction in an interest begins to show when it becomes clear that it will throw part of one's power back—rejected. Which explains why powerful men create napoleonic interests, *i.e.*, interests in which they are their own masters and prime-movers.

The statement that a man's honour is in his own keeping is a smooth gloss, it is certainly "up to him" to keep the favour of the crowd if he wants honour, and when he does keep it, it is by giving the crowd to understand that he is attempting that. Hence, for strong people, the honour of the crowd is a thing to be looked at askance, unless one is paying nothing for it. They realise that the crowd is exacting: it loves you because you persuade it that your life's energy is being devoted to its well-being, and it requires to be kept continually aware of the fact. And the devotion must be in the way it desires and not as you desire. The patriot wishes to "give" himself to his country: of course he does: it is the completest form of pleasure. But then the country is not concerned about this giving of a man's self: the only activity in relation to which one is able to do that is one over which he exercises exclusive authority. What the country wants of any man is just what *it* wants and not what the "patriot" would best love to expend: his powers. A country does not conceive itself the receptacle to receive anything which one considers one's best, but only for what *it* considers best for it. The sorrows of the disillusioned "patriot" and the "realisations" of the "man of honour" that his honour lies in other's keeping constitutes what they are pleased to conceive as the tragedy of the "noble," overtaken by the ingratitude of the "base." Certainly it represents the differences between fact and the fancies of the honour-ridden mind. It represents its "just" returns, for men try to win good opinion by obviously easy means, and, if successful, are assured of the quickest returns. One does not thereby say that the expenditure of a man's self—as much as it will allow him to expend—in the furtherance of a "cause" (*i.e.*, the kind of interest which every man of honour, at the outset, thinks he holds the reins over, only to find that it has run away with him), is itself devoid of effort: only that it is effort exercised under conditions which ease all the strain of difficulty. It is effort made to the sound of applause: a music involving a difference like that which the strains of a band make to the toilsomeness of a long march: conversely, acting *against* public opinion is like tramping along solitary, dusty roads in heat and weariness. But in the end the upkeep of the favourable conditions has to be heavily paid for; they demand a constant allegiance and the wealth of "sacrifice" must always be made to appear equal to its equivalent. In the long run it makes all the difference between one man's power and another's, whether at the outset one dares to chose the harder way. It is not a matter of toil, nor yet of endurance: both kinds must toil and endure. Where they differ is in regard to the weight they place upon the esteem of their fellows: in how long they can wait for it: how they set about minimising the crowd's powers to do them damage if they ignore it. It really furnishes another instance of the exercise of initiative and responsibility which we saw, created the difference between employers and employed in a lower sphere.

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There has been an attempt in a ramshackle philosophy to identify the Napoleons with the Heroes: successful exploiters of public opinion with public opinion's un-

questioning supporters—the men of honour. It is a confusion of "Runners of Hobbies" with "Leaders of Causes," the Masters of the people with Leaders of the People. (The last accurately should have been the "led" of the people, but let that pass.) The confusion makes itself obvious when it seeks an expression in terms of Morals, where the heterogeneous types endeavour to find refuge under the guise of "Master-morality." Whereas the entire success of delineation of the Napoleons—the unscrupulous men and of the "man of honour"—the scrupulous, depends upon the recognition of the clear-cut difference between the attitudes of the two.

It is a mistake to credit the "Great Unscrupulous" with a contemptuous regard for moral conduct. To believe that they despise or knowingly repudiate in their own lives apart from their strongest interest the "slave" morality of their age, credits them with a higher degree of comprehension than they possess. The sinister character of all-knowingness with which they are invested after the event are bogeys created out of animosities aroused before their success has had time to allot them an accredited place in the scheme of things.

In all sincerity the unscrupulous would tell the moral tale as piously as our Cliffords and Meyers. They "believe" in morality and fully recognise its usefulness in every sphere apart from the line of fulfilment of their own premier hobbies. They see the usefulness of moral conduct in others so clearly that if only success could be won that way they would themselves doubtless be quite moral. It is with reluctance that they permit their hearts to harden against the moral scruples which would block their own forth-right course. They do not make the mistake of pleading that their own conduct could be worked into a system and made into a morality—"master" or other.

They know their genius consists in their ability to seize on the exceptional: when the exceptional wears down into the usual, to win success they will be driven to abandon it for a new exception. They succeed just because others do the moral, *i.e.*, the usual thing while they do the exceptional.

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Naturally, therefore, the instinct of the Unscrupulous calls out as loudly as any other against the "immoralist," so-called. The immoralist introduces the element of uncertainty into things and is as trying and difficult to the Great Exploiters as an erratic and incalculable machine: he is a thing to be scotched as a foe to utility: the quality which the Unscrupulous are on the alert for in all their fellows.

So that there arises an intense and sincere body of feeling against the immoralist, in all quarters which generates a common desire to be rid of him. The difficulty of the successfully Unscrupulous in exploiting him added to the fear which he arouses in less powerful persons results in a general consensus of opinion which paves the way for those supernatural agencies which the preachers and teachers and authority in general invoke for his destruction and of which they make such effective and artistic use. The measure of wrath of the ordinary person reinforced by the anathemas of the Great, all directed against immoral conduct gives to each individual such a salutary notion of consequences that ordinarily they are adequate to put the immoral well under the ban.

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Impulses must be strong or intelligence weak before a stepping aside from the accustomed path is tried. These digressions occur mainly at the top and bottom of spiritual competence: with the unusually strong and unusually feeble-minded. Contempt for inability reinforced by a sense of outraged convenience mixes the pitch of disrepute reserved for the pettily immoral: whereas fear which execrates all the more loudly because it dare not despise is reserved for the egoistically immoral, while these are still uncrowned by signal success. When their necessary—if reluctant—immorality has exploited the crowd's morality to the point of being successful it is able to command the respect of those whose honour it never stooped to woo.

They can then set a new fashion if they so desire: the founders of religions and empires. Usually they content themselves with a few snips at the moral cloth, on the whole leaving customs very much what they were.

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The attitude of the Unscrupulous becomes clearer by halting to consider the meaning of Scrupulous. To be scrupulous means to be uneasy, doubtful, hesitating: etymologically, a scruple is a sharp jagged stone: a scrupulous person is one who treads gingerly on a path made jagged by considerations innumerable of doubt and fear and concern. The unscrupulous are such as are either so tenuous that their spiritual substance offers no body resistant enough for consideration of consequences to take hold of it, as is the case with the feeble-minded: or so tough and robust that it presents a hardness of surface which is more than able to defeat the jaggedness of the path. Now the effect of a strong interest always is so to harden the surface of contact to all considerations alien to itself (compare this war) that one gradually becomes immune to fear as well as to difficulty. Strong interests cancel all considerations and all fears, but they do not on that account belittle the effect of fears and difficulties on other people whose interests are feebler. To do so would be to deny one's own superiority: accordingly "scruples," fears, are recognised and loudly applauded since it is through their influence all round that he who is free from them is enabled to make headway by comparison. As a matter of fact, too much knowledge of motives tends away from success in action: or rather it tends to alter the kind of success striven after.

The play of intelligence creates a comedy which surpasses in interest the more usual game of acquisition of material. A superlatively great philosopher is provided with fun enough for a master-hobby merely in watching the blind-man's buff which the spectacle of things makes. In pressing forward to secure further acquisition of knowledge of motives rather than acquisition of goods he will often let the struggle for power through things slide. Moreover, too much knowledge tends to make one talk too much. Hence, the popularity of "modesty" amongst "worldly" people. To talk too much—to tell too much—is bad for certain kinds of successful action. It gives too much away. Analysing an opponent's case, for instance, throwing the tale of his weakness against him, is really fighting his case for him. It is putting one's intelligence at his service, and of this, in spite of pig-headedness he is likely to profit in some degree. Moreover a man with anything short of unlimited courage is hampered by seeing his own motives spread out too clearly. In short, Napoleons are not created out of their consciously adopted course of immorality: but out of a concentrated strength of

interest which enables them to override deep-grained custom in a limited area of activity, while at the same time they are able to rely on a corresponding inability of the majority of their fellows to do aught save tread warily—scrupulously—therein.

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The wide difference in the nature of the "success" which attends the two types—the Honourable and the Napoleonic—might have been expected to save philosophers from the mistake of confusing the two, and attempting to block out a so-called Master-morality especially applicable to both. Its failure to do so is probably due to a hypnotising shyness which appears to overtake those who philosophise on Morals, and of which the main result is to cause them to slur over and ignore the meaning of morals, *i.e.*, custom. They are, doubtless, the more inclined to do so on account of the fact that the identifying of morals with custom seems to rob their subject of its portentousness: its observance of its virtue, and its violence of its heinousness. But whatever the cause of their obvious malcomprehension of the nature of morals, one of its primary consequences has been to invest the different kinds of success which accrue to the "Honourable" and the "Egoistic" with a bewildering confusion. People are unable to comprehend why the "rewards" apparently all "go wrong," and they incline to attribute it to some inherent perversity in the scheme of things: the tricks of a devil so to speak. Yet comprehend morals and the relation of the Honourable and the Napoleonic to morals and the whole story will smoothly unravel itself. Morals are the steady calculable base of conduct which the Honourable serve in order to maintain this base in all its stability, but which, on the other hand, the Napoleonic contrive to make serve them. It is the old antithesis of Exploited and Exploiter: the Good (for morals), but dull: the Dangerous (for morals), but intelligent. The former are pleased—for a consideration—to constitute the ephemeral pieces in the Spectacle, the devising and engineering of which makes the amusement of the latter. The Honourable are the rockets which fly high—and flicker out—to the thrilled admiration of the crowd. (The flickering out is an important part of the Spectacle: only when they are ready to give their lives for the Cause are the would-be Honourable really it). The Napoleonic find their more prolonged thrill in organising the display letting the fireworks off. The aims and capabilities of the trio—Napoleonic, Honourable and Crowd—work in well together: it is even to be noticed that they are usually on very good terms with each other. Sinister? No! Non-self-awareness in the two parts and half-awareness in the third.

An inadequacy of intelligence all round, but of which inadequacy the differing degrees make up an impressive light and shade.

## VIEWS AND COMMENTS.

NOW that one may hear "freedom" applauded loudly in high places, one may speak a few words in mild reason about it and its friends—those loquacious "wee frees." The world is composed of these, plus the freedom resisters: The difference by which one may know them is that while both may shout "Freedom" on the ecstatic note, the resister will say "Freedom! And we are it," while the friends of freedom can merely say "Freedom! Ah, would that it were ours." Resisters keep their references to freedom for rare occasions when stirred to emotion by their own greatness, goodness and general self-satisfaction—as now. The friends of freedom, however, never cease from their crying: the wail after that freedom which is not theirs, is their meat by day and night: if one may be generous and call a smell of a roast—meat. Did one not know the sickening effects of satisfactions deferred, one could humorously jeer at these ineffectual desirers, who have come to regard the attitude of supplicants as a credit and an ornament. Instead of jeers, therefore, one accords them pity: whereon their pride is in being

pitiful. Their relation to "Freedom" is like that of some humble admirer who adores from afar, endowing the unfamiliar one with all the charms of the unknown, though wholly unconscious of their character: even of the qualities which make their charm for those familiar with their ways.

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It would not seem that the foregathering of supplicants would be able to offer many very great attractions: yet, oddly enough, the "cause of freedom" wins much capable youth to its flag. Misunderstanding must exist somewhere: a clamour which is the adult equivalent of the infantile howl, requiring no ability beyond lung-power and pertinacity, is not attractive in itself, yet "freedom" attracts, and nothing will suffice to shatter its attraction, until one can stand outside the "Cause" and weigh up its meaning. That alone, damages the veil. Strictly, "I am free to" means "My power is able to," and this meaning, in accuracy, is pertinent to every phase of "free" activity, whether of acquisition, domination, suppression or abandonment. "Being free"

is a matter of possession of power, therefore: why then has the "cause of freedom" resolved itself into an onslaught—into endlessly reproachful tirades—against the iniquities of the possessors of power? A most wasteful expenditure of energy on fruitless means? For at what do they aim? They want power, and instead of husbanding carefully what they have, while it grows from little to more, they spend their all in a reproachful demand for the favours of those already in power: in making claims for favours which they call "Rights."

Hear one of their most spirited on the subject "All men are entitled to that equality of opportunity, which enables them to be masters of their own lives, and free from rule by others . . . all men are called on to resist invasion of their equal rights . . ." and this, if duly carried out, we are told, "will kill monopoly." Doubtless! Here then is to be found the basis of reproach. Freedom lovers—those desiring a power, not theirs, believe they are "entitled" to the same. Probably the five virgins, whose lamps had no oil, thought they were entitled to the oil in their companions'. This matter of entitlement is the subtlest delusion ever conceived for the confusion of ineffectuals. What can entitle save power—competence? And what can others do to one's competence save ratify its relative effects by their acquiescence? The reproach of the advocates of freedom is that the powerful do not confer on them their power or use it in their interests. This, they believe themselves entitled to demand, and are injured when they are not gratified—these imaginary rights. Looking about for something to base them on, they have hit upon: Consensus of opinion, the opinion of the mob: that multitude of units with powers similar to their own. Consensus of opinion is a very useful thing: a good bludgeon in the hands of the simple, and an easy subject to exploit under the manipulation of the powerful. It frightens the already frightened: the frightful—those whom the freedom-lovers hope to scare off by it—know the very narrow limits of its horrific powers, since they are constantly making use of them for themselves. Consensus of opinion is not going to be of much service to the seekers after grounds of entitlement. On what then do they fall back? They fall back on bluster and the sentimental.

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An infant tries to get what it wants by howling vociferously for it. The fuss and inconvenience which it is thus able to make constitute its power. This power is competent, however, only on account of a prior competence: its hold on the affections of its guardians. Howling would receive very short shrift without that: a howling dog would very soon be put out of the way. Now the friends of freedom make bold to raise their clamour, almost wholly on the strength of its inconvenience, unbacked by a corresponding hold on the affections of those who have to put up with it, and under these circumstances the lot of the emancipators, so-called, speaks volumes for the patience and forbearance of the empowered. Perhaps there is a modicum of caution in this too—a faint apprehension that in spite of the evidence to the contrary, the clamour may not limit itself merely to the aggravation of sound: the wailers may have a more adequate competence in process of evolving. Certain it is, however, that the latter have been permitted to clamour for so long, unmolested, that the recognition of their "right" to do so has become one of the main planks of their platform. Any infringement of the "rights" of "free speech," or free assembly is now regarded as sacrilege against freedom. At any attempt to interfere with them there is no end of bluster; yet it is obvious that the bluster must be patently empty. A man stands on a stump on a public place, anathematizes the State, in so doing possibly rousing the wrath of most of his audience, as well as the suspicion of the officials of the State. Now his claim for "free" speech is this: the officials of the State against which he is haranguing, shall in the first place protect him from the anger of the populace, and in the second, shall refrain both from preventing him continuing his harangue, and from retaliating with any form of punishment on the count of its own vilification. It is,

of course obvious bluster, though, if one carries it off with an air, as one usually can in these word-sodden days, who shall say a word against it? Not we at any rate. Merely, to youths who are interesting and earnest, one would point out that to rely on power of this sort is to rely on the fifth-rate variety, which will let them in at one point or another. Based on a clever word-trick it will succeed here and there, and particularly so when nothing of importance depends on it: but when anything really vital is at stake, the swagger will crumble out and it will shrink to its accurate dimensions. It will then reveal how illusory its former triumphs were.

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For instance, when a State does allow the "right" of the various "frees," it is for reasons of interest—its own. Perhaps it realises that discontent, like a rash, is better out than in. It reveals its nature all the better. So, moreover, discontent is given the chance to run itself off in talk. And the stronger the State the more "liberty" it can allow: it need not shatter the first tiny little fist that shakes itself against it. To appear generous tactfully veils the fact how "just" it can be: and when a great State is just to its enemies they realise their lives are not their own: how little then their liberties. It would, therefore, ill accord with a body whose power is so overwhelming to be fussily sensitive in regard to the indiscretions of its wilder members. Free speech forsooth: *allowed* speech, and allowed on the balance of considerations which have nothing whatever to do with the fanciful "rights" of the permitted one. The only speech which could be "free," in the accurate sense, is that of the all-powerful ones: Napoleon might have spoken freely—but he had too much sense. The Kaiser might have accepted a tip in this direction with advantage. And any man who invested his entire interests in the "cause" could be quite "free" in one speech before he died—in his last. In brief speech, press, assembly, love, are all "free" when they have power enough behind them to foot the bill, when the consequences fall due.

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Apart, however, from the deluding assumptions based on the word "free" in the popular instance cited in the foregoing, it remains to be pointed out that the word is one of which the actual meaning forbids its being allowed to roam at large. It is meaningless unless limited by a qualification. It is worth while detailing the main features existent in the attitude of mind which makes use of the word "free." Rhetoric apart, when it is used spontaneously, it is always in relation to certain specific spheres of activity in which one considers oneself "free." One is not "free" as regards the "universe," but free in relation to this and that: where this and that represent specific circumstances which can be regarded as potential obstacles. The notion of an obstacle is a salient feature in the state of mind which makes use of the term "free." In the second place, but constituting a still more salient feature, is the notion of possession of power in a degree competent to make the obstacle of non-effect. And in the third there is the element of comparison between the present actual condition where power more than equates obstructions and another condition remembered or imagined in which the powers possessed were not adequate to the effective degree. Now it is because of the fact that any one of these features can be emphasised to the exclusion of the rest which explains the otherwise puzzling phenomenon which the presence of persons of spirit and intelligence in hopeless entanglement with one or other of the "Freedom" propagandas offers. It explains, moreover, the genesis of these highly differing propagandas. By the features which they chose to ignore or emphasise their relative spiritedness may be gauged. It is, for instance, by a rigorous ignoring of the first feature, *i.e.*, the particularity of application requisite to the meaning of "free," that the numerically strongest battalions of freedom-lovers are recruited. For, by ignoring it, they are enabled to make the meaningless abstraction of which the result is the concept "freedom" itself. They have poured out the precise meaning, and are left with

any empty vessel constructed out of the mere label—Freedom: which, like Mesopotamia is a word of good sound.

The sentimental, the gushers, the rhetoricians, orators of all sorts, hypocrites, hangers-on, every brand of human, provided they run easily to slop, rally to augment this goodly lot.

By ignoring the second feature—the actual possession of power as the condition of the “free”—those who are rallied to freedom’s cause by the aggrandisement of the “whine” are roped in. They are won by the prospect of apotheosizing “talky-talky”: by the big sound of Inherent Rights. The democrats, socialists, humanitarians, anarchists—embargoists of all sorts—row in this galley. This ignoring of the second feature leads naturally to a special emphasising of the third: the emphasis on “conditions.” Thus, the particularised character of obstacles which the first variety of freedom-lovers find it attractive to ignore, receives from this last class their entire attention.

A parentally-anxious removal of obstacles becomes the ideal of the modern saviours of society: in fact, the only articulate theory of modern social and political activity works out at just this. What are “democratic” leaders, the “emancipators,” concerned with but with their lists of “obstacles to be removed,” and the successful invoking of the assistance and assent of the more powerful in the job, for which the power of the masses is inadequate? The essential thing—power in oneself—is waved aside as tainted with the soulless harshness of feelingless drivers. These indulgent, freedom-loving, social grandmothers have not been satisfied with a mere sparing of the rod: they have persuaded the children that it is inhuman to use rods or harbour them. When, for instance, an effective rod appears—as now—in powerful hands, a mellow-tongued friend of freedom—that popular leader of popular causes, emancipator of the people, what not: Mr. Lloyd George tells the people how he has military authority for it that such a rod could only appear in the hands of one possessing the “Soul of the Devil”: the retort to which is, of course, “Mind of a Midge!”—argument of kind with kind.

D. M.

## TWO POETS.

By RICHARD ALDINGTON.

FOR the past two weeks I have been vainly endeavouring to compose some sort of review of two books of poetry which have recently come into my hands. War and reading histories of Prussia have damaged my mind to such an extent that I hardly hoped to be able to write intelligibly again; and I was afraid Mr. Rodker’s “Poems” and Miss Amy Lowell’s “Sword-Blades and Poppy Seed” would never receive my comments. Prussian artillery—we are told—is extremely dangerous, but its effects are comparatively slight beside those of Prussian history and biography; and I should like to warn all other innocent persons from the dangerous paths I have been pursuing. Not only is the history of Germany an inextricable confusion—being the history of fourteen kingdoms, thirty-seven principedoms and about five million duchies—but the effect of reading ignorant (stylistically speaking) translations of grotesque German historians is, as they say in the Brigade, “most agein’.” Which of the politicians who govern the countries of Europe really understands the history of his country? But, oh, why has no English politician really understood what is called in the Press “The Prussian Menace”? Was not the knowledge that the Hohenzollerns, ever since the days when they were Margraves of Brandenburg, were brigands and condottieri; that in the days of the “Great Elector,” Prussia’s standing army was second only to that of France; that the policy of Prussia has been always brutal, militarist and singularly mendacious (as witness Frederic, ironically called the “Great”); that Prussia bullied the other German States into unwilling submission to its hegemony, stole Schleswig-Holstein, crushed Austria and, as Swinburne

politely put it, “whored” France, all by a system of mediæval militarism—was not this knowledge, which can be obtained, or rather divined (for all history books are mostly written in the interests of Prussia) from history books, was not this knowledge sufficient to prepare our politicians and authors, whose plain duty it was to prepare for eventualities, not in a “Daily Mail”-Blatchford-Harrison way, but calmly and efficiently? But there is no use spouting; we have all been reading French and Italian, when we ought to have kept an eye on Prussian philosophy—it would have been a bore, but some of us would have been better prepared for what has happened. . . .

When one’s mind is filled with that sort of stuff, when the most bloody battles of the world are taking place a few miles away, it needs a certain amount of phlegm—which I frankly don’t possess—to be able to write precisely and dogmatically on the latest Anglo-American literary productions. But I have kept two French tags in my head—one from Taine and the other from a private correspondent—which seem to me to make excellent epigraphs for these two books, and to make a sort of peg for a criticism. The first (Taine’s) is “le laid est beau peut-être, mais le beau est plus beau.” And the second is “Ne laissons pas mourir la tradition des libres esprits.” Miss Lowell’s book of poems, I think, deserves to have the first on its title-page, because she obviously has not been content to observe merely the rusty tincans and corner-lots of life, but has tried to put down what she found to be “beautiful.” And Mr. Rodker, perhaps, deserves the other. At least, he is free of the tyranny of Academism; whether he is free from the tyranny of extreme revolution seems to me doubtful. But he is undoubtedly a person who cares more for rebellion in the arts than for anything else; whereas, Miss Lowell, though occasionally quite Celtic in her technique, cares primarily for beauty.

It is easy to see with which my artistic sympathies most lie.

Criticism in the end is merely an expression of personal sympathy. It is obvious to see this if you reflect on the criticisms which you have found most interesting to read—in almost every case they interest not because of their accurate judgments and “placings,” but because they expressed the critic’s particular sympathies. It is for this reason that I have put in this article all that stuff about Prussia, because it explains the drift of my sympathies at the moment of writing. And the two quotations show the same thing.

I am not quite conceited enough to believe that my literary sympathies at this moment are in themselves sufficient to interest anybody, but I believe them to be symptomatic of what a good many people are feeling now. I suppose it is all a matter of education and early influences, but, speaking for myself, I should say that the effect of the present war—the effect, I mean, on my taste in general—has been to confirm and stimulate my natural feeling for the Latin nations, for Latin art and for Latin literature. And—at least in European art—I have a corresponding dislike for non-Latin productions.

Now, I am not going to say that a book, like Mr. Rodker’s, whose tradition is so clearly Slavonic, is a book produced by the spread of Prussian ideals—though I think it might be argued that this is so. I am not going to say this, because I would have to write many articles and engage in a great deal of labour to prove my point. For this reason, instead of looking on Mr. Rodker as a Slav indirectly and perfectly unconsciously acted on by Prussian theories of art (I refer, of course, to the Prussian mania for abstractions), I am content to look upon him as a revolutionary. Indeed, though I personally detest his kind of art, and have no use for a man who can write lines like:

“white perfection, black and immobile”;

yet I shall be extremely sorry if Mr. Rodker does not get the money and support that he wants for his theatrical experiments. He is perfectly justified in demanding the right to experiment, at least; and however un-Latin he may be, I hereby promise to come to his first night and to buy my seat. . . .

But he is all vagueness and useless reaction to primitivism, all woody edges, and, lastly, he is careless of æsthetic effect. Like all beginners in vers libre, he tends to write his lines too short, the effect on the reader being unpleasantly jerky. If Mr. Rodker would write some poems in the style of Paul Fort—as Miss Lowell has done—the extraordinary limpidity and ease of this form (bordering on the facile, I admit), he would see, I think, what I mean. On the other hand, if he is rather careless of style, and if his work is unable to bear close technical severity, we must give him at least the praise due to his merits. He has attempted—in the rather prevailing and certainly commendable fashion—to give some sort of poetic form to his impressions of modern life. He does this by all sorts of half-instinctive and sometimes puerile dodges—vague sentences, suggestions, violent contrasts, rows of dots, single words printed in columns thus—but, thank Heaven, he avoids the American newspaper headline type and the “idéograph,” both inexpressible puerilities of discontented mediocrity.

Now, I think everyone who has read my articles here, will know of my sympathies with the tradition of Greek poetry. I find that tradition in Miss Lowell's work, for her tradition is French, which is Latin, which is Greek (with a difference). I have no doubt that—so uncritical are the times—if her work and Mr. Rodker's fall into the hands of the same reviewer they will be treated as belonging to the same school. As I have indicated, they are at the antipodes. Miss Lowell's work has at least a strong tendency towards the “hard edges” and precision, which are so dear to the Hellenic tradition. She is logical and common-sensical, where Mr. Rodker is illogical and nonsensical. (For, be it spoken humbly, I hold it to be both illogical and nonsensical to speak of “white perfection, black and immobile.” It is a primary notice for both logic and common-sense that what is black is not, and cannot be, white. I know Mr. Rodker didn't mean to suggest that it was, but his words easily bear that interpretation).

Miss Lowell's creative tradition is, then, Latin; but, unhappily, her critical tradition—in that most difficult branch known as self-criticism—is not Latin at all. Both she and Mr. Rodker permit themselves to publish poems over which they will presently gnash their teeth at the thought of there being published. I have said so many nasty things about Mr. Rodker's really interesting little book that I will only “go for” Miss Lowell in this particular respect. The poem—so-called of “The Great Adventure of Max Break,” is a very sorry performance, I do not envy Miss Lowell its authorship, of course, I admit that if I possessed the original manuscript of “The Eve of St. Agnes” I should be tempted to do the same sort of thing or one better myself. Miss Lowell has added a line and jiggered the rhymes of the Spenserian stanza: result, horror. Besides this unfortunate essay in the style of John Keats, she has a Masefield-Morrison story of “Sword Blades and Poppy Seeds,” and another little story called “The Shadows.” Now, Miss Lowell may be many things, but she is not a fool. And there is nothing foolish about these narrative poems. The fundamental idea, the plot of each is excellent and original; a good deal of the detail is both beautiful and well-placed. But the cadence—that infallible key to the value of poetry—the cadence is very often neither original nor beautiful. Cadence, which is primarily the expression of individual emotion, may be ruined by inadequate technique as well as by insufficient emotion. But I think Miss Lowell has, amongst other things, a distinct future as a writer of narrative poems. If I might do so without appearing offensive, I would beg Miss Lowell to take any of these three poems and write it in simple prose. And—granted the emotion—I believe she could make them all three beautiful poems, if she wrote them either in rhymed prose (like “In a Castle”) or in rhymed vers libre, rather like Mr. Hueffer's “Heaven” and his poem on the Belgians.

Miss Lowell's short vers libre poems are sometimes extremely good. She has—besides her Gallic training—a natural gift of eloquence, a sense of rhythm, a sensitive appreciation of beauty, irony, and a facility in coining

new images. She is very fertile, and I firmly believe that no one can be a good poet whose brain is not teeming with new ideas and new forms. It is impossible for a person so gifted not to write very excellently sometimes and always readably. Not to waste space in quotations, I would mention these short poems as especially beautiful, “Miscast I,” “Miscast II,” “Music in a Garden,” “The Taxi,” “The Tree of Scarlet Berries,” and for irony “The Epitaph of a Young Poet.”

At this moment when I was coming back to Mr. Rodker to give some quotations of his work, I find that I have left his book in the train, and it is now too late to get another copy. However, THE EGOIST has had the great pleasure of printing some of his work, and I hope most of the readers of this will recollect his poetry sufficiently to be able to illustrate my remarks from their memory of his work. This is particularly unfortunate, as I wanted to quote one poem in full—the second poem of the book—which struck me as extremely good though a little in the style of the late 'nineties:—

“And down go the dead things ever  
Down to the sea.”

I am afraid that my discursiveness on the subject of Prussia and the Hellenic tradition have rather cut me down for space, but before ending this cursory survey, I want to call attention to Miss Lowell's essays, in the form of poetry which has been employed by Paul Fort. Her poem, “In a Castle,” though perhaps inspired by Fort's “Henri III.,” is an admirable piece of work. Its peculiar atmosphere impresses me more than that of any modern poem I have read for a long time. And no one need worry about Paul Fort's having been first; Miss Lowell has made the form her own. Of the other two poems in this manner, “The Forsaken,” is good, but slightly uninteresting in matter, while “The Basket” is as good or better than “In a Castle.” I would recommend all young poets to study these poems attentively; I think they open up considerable chances for development in English. I am not a bit ashamed to confess that I have myself imitated Miss Lowell in this, and produced a couple of works in the same style.

To illustrate these remarks, I will quote part of “In a Castle”:

“Over the yawning chimney hangs the fog. Drip—hiss—drip—hiss—fall the raindrops on the oaken log which burns and steams, and smokes the ceiling beams. Drip—hiss—the rain never stops.

“The wide state bed shivers beneath its velvet coverlet. Above, dim, in the smoke, a tarnished coronet gleams dully. Overhead, hammers and chinks the rain. Fearfully wails the wind down distant corridors, and there comes the swish and sigh of rushes lifted off the floors. The arras blows sideways out from the wall, and then falls back again.

“It is my lady's key, confided with much cunning, whisperingly. He enters on a sob of wind, which gutters the candles almost to swaling. The fire flutters and drops. Drip—hiss—the rain never stops. He shuts the door. The rushes fall again to stillness along the floor. Outside, the wind goes wailing.”

Well, in spite of the “swaling” and the little touch of Keats (devil take him!) and the slight bit of Fort, I still consider that a most admirable induction to a most admirable poem, and if I had written it I should have felt certain of a place in the anthologies, at least, and I should have continued writing with considerably more *élan* than I do now.

## THE SONGS OF MALDOROR.

By THE COMTE DE LAUTREAMONT.

I. (continued)

“I HAVE not finished my chapter. Let us make use of the last flickerings of the lamp; there is hardly any more oil. Let each of us finish his work . . .”

The child cried out:

“O, if God would only let us live.”

“Fair angel, come to me; you shall wander in the fields from morning until evening; you shall do no work.”

My magnificent palace is built with walls of silver, with columns of gold and with portals of diamonds. You shall go to sleep when you wish to the sound of heavenly music. And when the sun climbs high with blinding light in the morning, and when the lark carries her song far out of sight into the sky, you shall still linger on your couch. And when you tire of that you shall walk upon the most sumptuous carpets, and you shall constantly be bathed in an atmosphere of fragrant flowers."

"It is time that body and spirit sleep. Stand, mother, upon your strong ankles. Let your tired fingers drop the needle from your heavy work."

"Oh, how happy your life will be! I will give you a magic ring; when you turn the ruby, you will become invisible like the princes in the fairy tales."

"Put your needle and thread away in the cupboard, and I will arrange my papers."

"When you turn it back again you will reappear once more, as nature meant you to be, O young magician, because I love you and long to make you happy."

"Go away, whoever you are; do not grasp me by the shoulders."

"My son, do not go to sleep yet cradled in the dreams of childhood; you have not said your prayers, and your clothes are not carefully folded on the chair. . . kneel down. Eternal Creator of the worlds, you show your inexhaustible goodness even in the smallest things."

"Do you not love clear streams where thousands of little fishes glide away—red, blue and silver? You shall catch them with a net, so beautiful, that they shall swim into it of their own will. You shall see brilliant pebbles from the surface, more polished than marble."

"Mother, see these claws; I am frightened; but my conscience is calm for I have nothing with which to reproach myself."

"You see us, prostrate at your feet, crushed by the thought of your greatness. If any proud fancies creep into our imagination, we will cast them out with the saliva of disdain, and make you the irremissible sacrifice."

"You shall bathe there with little girls, who will clasp you in their arms. When you come from your bath, they will twine wreaths about you—roses and carnations. They have transparent butterfly wings, and long waving hair, which floats about their lovely foreheads."

"Even though your palace is more beautiful than crystal, I shall not leave this house to follow you. I believe that you are an impostor. It is not good to desert ones parents. I am not an ungrateful son. And your little girls are not as beautiful as my mother's eyes."

"All our life is spent in songs to your glory. It has been so until now; it will always be so, even until the moment when we receive the command from you to leave this earth."

"They will obey your least sign and will think of nothing but your pleasure. If you want a bird which never alights, they will bring it to you. If you should wish the chariot of snow, which carries you to the sun in the twinkling of an eye, they would bring it to you. What would they not bring you? They would even bring you the winged stag who is as tall as a tower. He is hidden in the moon, and from his tail little birds of all kinds hang from ribbons of silk. Listen to me . . . listen to me."

"Do what you will, but I do not want to interrupt my prayer to summon help. Although your body vanish, when I try to drive it away, be sure of this—I am not afraid of you."

"Nothing is wonderful to me, if it be not as a flame, breathed from a pure heart."

"Think of what I have said or you will repent of it later."

"Father in heaven, avert the evil which may fall upon our house."

"Will you not go, evil spirit?"

"Save this dear wife who has comforted me in my sorrows . . ."

"Since you reject me, I shall make you weep and grind your teeth, like a hanged man."

"And this dear boy whose lips scarcely part to the kisses of the dawn of life."

"Mother, he is strangling me . . . father, help me . . . I cannot breathe . . . your blessing:

A great ironical cry rises in the air. See how the eagles, stunned, drop from the high clouds, turning upon themselves, literally thunderstruck by the columns of air."

"His heart has stopped beating . . . and she, too, is dead along with the fruit of her body . . . my wife . . . my son . . . I remember a long time ago I was a husband and a father."

## MORE WAR POETRY.

### I.

IN my last article I ventured to suggest that the effect of a certain anthology of war poetry might not altogether be lost on the German sense of humour. Such a criticism cannot be levelled at "Songs and Sonnets for England in War Time," which, I am told, represents Mr. John Lane's selection of fifty soul-stirring ditties for England in this war. Here, if anywhere, is a book of Britannia wares, which no one but a true blue-blood Briton could appreciate. The cover proclaims the fact. Red-hued, it presents to us the Goddess of our Isle, brandishing in right hand a huge sword (to the imminent peril of her haughty Athenian crest), and in her left the balances of Justice, so tiny that the most confirmed adherent to the doctrine of the "will to Power" need not cavil. Two lion-headed tobacco canisters, or, perhaps, tea canisters, support the glorious apparition. Are we disheartened at the outset? The answer is, emphatically in the negative.

Most of the reviewers seem to have been so awed by this, by the firm (not to say, haughty) demeanour of the Introduction, which proclaims the poet as "prophet, champion and consoler," and by the unashamed "Alphabetical List of Authors," that they sought no further. Let me not follow their example.

I open these pages at random (how can one tackle such a vast and heaving sea of poetry?), and I find the following:—

#### "TO FRANCE.

"Those who have stood for thy cause when the dark was around thee,

Those who have pierced through the shadows and shining have found thee,

Those who have held to their faith in thy courage and power,

Thy spirit, thy honour, thy strength of a terrible hour."

There are fourteen lines of this, and the "Westminster Gazette" printed it! Doubtless France ought to feel grateful.

On the next page my eye is caught idly by the name of Stephen Phillips. We have all heard of Stephen Phillips. Mr. Phillips is evidently a foreigner who is trying desperately to write English, and not succeeding.

"There is a hush before the thunder-jar

When white the steeples against purple stand:

There is a hush when night with star on star

Goes ashen on the summer like a brand."

This last line puzzles me sorely. I am tempted to offer a reward to anyone who can undecipher its meaning.

"Stillness more fraught than any thunder-roll,

Dawn European with a redder wing."

Is this Greek or Hebrew, or is Mr. Phillips simply "having us?"

The random method does not seem to work. I turn back to the Alphabetical List of Authors for consolation, and discover the name of Thomas Hardy. Mr. Hardy wrote "Jude the Obscure" and "Tess" and "The Trampwoman's Tragedy." This is how he lets himself go now:—

"What of the faith and fire within us

Men who march away

Ere the barn-cocks say

Night is growing gray,

To hazards whence no tears can win us?"



Pause for emotion. Poor devils—think of soldiers marching to such a tune as this!

“Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye  
That a man may try  
And write such inane driveltry?”

I abandon Mr. Hardy without regrets, and resume my weary skirmish through these pages. Now and then certain fragments assail me:

“Lived in days of old a nation:  
Stark and sturdy, valiant hearted,  
Rich in honest, kindly manhood,  
Rich in tender womanhood.”

Twelve stanzas elapse.

“Hierarchies of priests before him  
Moved through ponderous William Archer,  
Headed by the Archimandrite  
Of the far-famed ‘Daily News.’”

Two more pages and we emerge to the triumphant conclusion:

“Can we crush this Idol? Never  
Doubt it! for a mightier Godhead,  
Ancient, awful, fights on our side,  
And its name is Nemesis.”

Q.E.D.

Truly it is said:

“Deep beneath the fallen years,  
Slain by glittering foemen’s spears,  
With empty hands and a brow uncrowned  
To our native land our hearts we turn  
By snares encompassed round.”

Some of these snares, however, are scarcely of German contriving. And although England may cry—

“I summon to battle from plain and hill  
From woodland and fen and dale,  
From my reeking towns and my greyhound downs,  
My men to be cast in the scale.”

Some will never answer that call until they discover why every town must be “reeking” and what are really “greyhound downs.” Also, though England may go—

“Forth, then, to front the peril of the deep  
With smiling lips and in your eyes the light,  
Steadfast and confident, of those who keep  
Their storied scutcheon bright.”

A few unregenerate and unennobled individuals may wonder how long it will be before verse writers cease calling the German Ocean “the deep,” and whether a “storied scutcheon” is an adequate description of a knighthood obtained through subscription to the Secret Party Funds.

Such blemishes are what endear the hearts of all of us to England. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, whose poem is nearly the last here, voices this sentiment very well. Mr. Kipling, by the way, has written “If,” which is a great favourite of Kaiser Wilhelm’s:

“If you can talk with crowds nor lose your virtue  
(Oh, nursemaids!)  
Or walk with kings nor lose the common touch  
(‘He touched me for a shilling’);  
If neither foes nor tumty friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much  
(‘scrap of paper’)  
If tumpty tumpty tumpty tumty tumty,  
With tumty tumty tumty tumty tum,” etc., etc., etc.

Here Mr. Kipling modestly contents himself with sweetly questioning

“Who dies if England live?”

My answer to that question—if I were Czar or Press Censor—would be, “All the poets of England who have acquired a popular reputation.”

But the “poet doth remain,” as William Watson has it, and “with clarion call he rouses the sleeping soul of Empire” in Rome, Carthage, Venice, or England.

In Athens, China, or France, the poet, having no sleeping soul of Empire to rouse, devotes himself to mere poetry.

## II.

Besides the books I have already dealt with, there are other volumes of war poetry on the market. There is, for example, “Remember Louvain!” which is published by Messrs. Methuen. In this yellow-hued concoction, Milton is made to write on the Sack of Louvain, and Wordsworth on General Leman. The titles are changed, that is all. Why the text should have been kept sacrosanct I cannot explain. I respectfully suggest to E. V. Lucas, who is editor of this compilation, that he introduce in the next edition a few skilfully interpolated references to “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” in the text of the “Happy Warrior,” and make John of Gaunt exclaim:—

“We do not seek the fight, but if it happens,  
We have, by jingo, ships and men and money.  
Come the three corners of the world in arms  
And we shall shock them.”

“Lord God of Battles” (Cope and Fenwick, 1/- net) is in every way the antithesis of this. The cover is sober brown, and the title is due to Mr. Horatio Bottomley. The paper is good. There is a judicious mingling of new and old.

Among the moderns, I pause to cull the following:—

“Husbands and brothers draw your swords to fight  
Beneath this banner to defend your right;  
Think of the hearts that for your glory sigh,  
Think of the angel leaning from the sky.”

“The Angel” is doubtless a euphemism for the Taube aeroplane, irreverently styled by Thomas Atkins, “The Bird.”

Here is something—what shall I say?—more Parliamentary, more impressive in its delivery:—

“Has ever weakness won esteem,  
Or counts it as a prized ally?  
They who have read in history deem  
It ranks among the slavish fry,  
Whose claim to live justiciary fates deny.”

Mark the periwigged manner, the debating club adjective. German culture, look to your laurels! Where is Bernhardt now?

“The grandeur of her deeds recall;  
Look on her face so kindly fair;  
This Britain! and were she to fall,  
Mankind would breathe a rarer air,  
(Whoa! Stop, Pegasus!)  
The nations miss a light of leading rare.”

“Mr. Meredith, K.C., was observed to display strong signs of emotion as he brought his peroration to a close. In a voice almost stifled —”

The next page provides us with contrast.

## “HAPPY ENGLAND.

“Now each man’s mind all Europe is;  
Courage and fear in dread array  
Daze every heart; O grave and wise,  
Abide in hope the judgment day.”

Courage and fear; dread array; grave and wise; judgment day—this writer must have dipped his pen in a watering-pot, and taken a cold shower bath before sitting down to his desk.

“Remember happy England; keep  
For her bright cause thy latest breath.  
Her peace that long had lulled asleep  
May now exact the sleep of death.”

Precisely. Mr. De la Mare has written the most deadly war poem that I have ever read.

We are lifted from this by the dithyrambic “Farm Hand” (not by Mr. Frost).

"Time's mists! From hearts like this where the Divine  
Inviolable fire has dumbly burned,  
Their honour soared! Finding no kindred spark  
To leap from heart to heart—a running fire,  
Theirs had been but a torch in the lonely night—  
The flaming war-cry of a great desire—  
A moment lifted—swiftly overturned."

Shade of Philoxenus!

We are hurled straightway from this to the awe-inspiring:

"Smite England, to the tramp of marching men—  
The rhythmic heart-beat of a world in pain—  
Smite, hip and thigh, with flashing steel, and then  
Unfurl thy peaceful banners once again.  
The Lord of Iron and blood no more  
Shall shroud God's sky with diabolic gloom."

And to the even more awe-inspiring:

"Where is the field I must play the man on?  
O welcome there, their steel or can-non.  
Immortal beauty is death with duty,  
If under her banner I fall for her honor."

And to the most awe-inspiring of all:

"You spied for the Day, you lied for the Day,  
And woke the Day's red spleen.  
Monster who asked God's aid divine,  
Then strewed His seas with the ghastly mine,  
Not all the waters of the Rhine  
Can wash thy foul hands clean."

As Coleridge said long ago: "The Rhine washes Cologne; but who washes the Rhine?" "Waking the Day's red spleen" must indeed be a difficult operation. I should like to see the Kaiser attempting it.

We have come a long way past popular novelists, "highbrow" novelists, modernist clerics, Jesuit priests, and the rest. But the Bath railway porter makes up for all. "Poem? Yessir. One penny. Thank ye, sir."

To turn to the ancients:

"If you be fearful, then must we be bold,  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er."

Neither can I salve a bad poet o'er.

"First pledge our Queen this solemn night,  
Then drink to England, every guest;  
That man's the best Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best."

Hark to the great trumpet tongue of the Victorian Era!

"Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named."

With what charming modesty you refer to yourself, my lord. But someone else wrote:

"The lunatic, the lover and the poet  
Are in imagination all compact."

The next is a mere echo:

"Not care to live while English homes  
Nestle in English trees,  
And England's trident sceptre roams  
Her territorial seas."

Oh, scented soap, chocolate boxes, the village smithy (under the spreading chestnut tree), and all the rest!

The last is awful:

"O Peace! and dost thou (*dost thou*) with thy presence  
bless

The dwellings of this war-tumtiddle Isle  
Soothing with tumty brow our tum distress  
Making the tumty kingdom *brightly* (yes, brightly)  
smile?

Complete my joy—let not my first wish fail,  
Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be."

Rose-coloured lamp shades, bit of providential gauze that drifts across a naked lady's thighs, naughty anecdote whispered under the breath, cockney nosing in Shakespeare and finding him "awfully spicy: nice bit of O.T.," nauseating sniffer and pryer: John Keats.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

## CHINA.

By F. T. S.

MY rapid sketch of China would not be complete if I did not have you glance for a moment at her religions. We are the oldest civilised nation of history, and we have preserved ourselves as a nation these hundreds of years. No other ancient nation has done that. Yet we have made no progress in our religious thought; indeed, we have retrograded in many respects.

Confucianism, with its unsurpassed ethics and intellectual grandeur, has undoubtedly done much to preserve China. These Sacred Books of Confucius are free from everything indecent, and when you consider how our nation reverences these works and how little the morality of the land exhibits this fact, you cannot help but wonder. One reason why these works are so firmly grafted to the people is because all examinations for the civil service are based upon these books. The employment of the same examinations through the successive ages has unified the Chinese mind to a marvellous degree.

But in spite of the excellency of Confucianism there has sprung up a bewildering variety of religions and superstitions. It is impossible to describe them all. There exist strange contradictions, which would appear to you as very amusing, but which seem to us as very natural. This incongruity may be partly explained by considering the Chinese attitude in general toward the gods. He believes that it is better to believe that gods exist than not to, because if you do not you may be subjected to the wrath of the gods, if, perchance, there be any; but if there are no gods, then there is no harm done.

It will give you a headache when you try to relate the three great religions of China: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Buddhism swallowed Taoism, Taoism swallowed Confucianism, but at last Confucianism swallowed both Taoism and Buddhism. Now these three religions are one, as we say. A Chinese can belong to all three if he can afford it, otherwise he must be content with two, or even one, of these spiritual life insurances. Furthermore, since we are not sure that we have a soul, and care little whether we have or not, you perhaps wonder why we take the trouble to adhere to any religion at all. I myself can only explain it on the ground that a little religion is a good thing to have around.

This union of beliefs in China has so mixed up the gods that no one seems to know just what and how much each god's authority really is. This state of affairs has allowed all kinds of superstition to creep in contrary to the truly great teaching of Confucius. It is claimed that China exceeds every civilised nation in existence in respect to the varieties of her superstition. Wealthy merchants and learned scholars are not ashamed to be seen, on days set apart for that service, worshipping the fox, the hedgehog, the snake, and I must not fail to add for the benefit of my American audience, the common, every-day, good-for-soup rat. Sometimes purely imaginary animals are asked for some blessing, just as if this imaginary being had it in his power to bestow gifts.

Our gods may even be reviled without evil effects. We can curse them when they fail us. A god was once tried in court, found guilty, and was punished by being struck 500 blows. The poor old divinity could not withstand this attack; he cracked and broke, and finally sank into a pile of dust. Another time the people begged for rain. No rain came. Then the people dragged the rain-god out of the temple and placed him in the hottest place they could find, in order to prove to him that it was really quite warm and that rain was needed. A god can be deceived. A common method is to sacrifice one's own head, by thrusting it through a hole in the table provided for that purpose. The sedate old god from his perch above can look down upon this head sticking through the table, and is beautifully fooled. Then the man withdraws his head, and enjoys the blessing which he has sought.

The worship of the Grand Prophet is an interesting custom. This divinity is a spirit who is at home in his

temple once a year. This god's official business is to inform and advise all who come unto him with the regulation requests and prayers. After the worshipper is through with his request, he interprets the first words he hears within or outside of the temple as the reply of the prophet. Supposing the chance words, "My clock is out of order," comes to his ears. If he were asking advice on his marriage, he would probably interpret it this way: "My prospective wife will be a bad house-keeper; nothing will be in order; everything will be like the clock—always in disorder. Therefore I'll get a new girl on the string."

My cousin once had a funny time when she sought the prophet for information regarding her engagement. Her parents knew nothing of this, but the neighbours did, and they stationed their children at the temple to say disagreeable things when she came out. They did as directed, and yelled at her, when she was through praying, this expression which is horrible to a Chinese woman: "Husband dies, wife lives; and husband lives, wife dies." She rushed home sorrowfully, and did what any American girl would do: she told her mother. Her mother promptly advised her to break the engagement, as nothing was in store for her but trouble. My cousin consented to do this. But later her brother came home, and upon hearing the prophecy, "Husband dies, wife lives," shouted out "That's a dandy omen. You couldn't get a better one. I'll explain it. You see these neighbours are trying to prophesy trouble for her by saying that either she or her husband will die. Now I'll explain what it really means.

"I'll explain the first part of the prophecy, 'Husband lives, wife dies.' If this should happen there could be no widow, because she has lived to the end of her life—and that is all which any of us can expect. Of course, there may be a widower in this instance, but there can be no widow, since she, the former wife, is dead. The other half of the prophecy is, 'The wife lives, the husband dies.' We will reason as we did before. The husband dies, hence there is no widower, as you can readily see. There may be a widow, but we are not considering that now, as it was satisfactorily settled by the other half of the prophecy. We have proved that there can be no widow since *she* is dead, and no widower since *he* is dead; so we conclude that these two will lead long and happy lives and die together—an end to be desired." You Americans do not, perhaps, approve of such reasoning. To a Chinese, however, the whole thing is quite logical; and since the product of such fallacious reasoning satisfies him and adds to his happiness, why should you point out the errors in his thinking processes?

There are many other interesting superstitions which I cannot dwell upon. This incoherent mass of religions and superstitions is hindering China's progress, and I hope that new religion, Christianity, which is persistently forcing itself upon us, will in a few years cover our whole empire. With the death of the old and worthless, with the coming of the new and powerful, China may some day become a rival of your great nation.

Confucianism has produced the present China, and this religion will preserve its identity through the coming centuries unless some outside influence makes itself felt. There must be reformation. A great many high officials of our nation think that reform is unnecessary. Some of us entertain different notions. After hearing what I have said you, too, are convinced that a new order of things should be established in China. By many foreigners who have studied our nation and the character of our people, reform is considered impossible. The very age of Chinese customs, the reverence for the old, the suspicion with which new things are viewed, are a few of the great deterrents, but not unconquerable obstacles.

Can China be reformed from within herself? Some of our statesmen say that she can. They base their assertions on such a custom as this: When a people grow discontented in their province, a committee is sent to instruct them by moral precepts. Of course, as you may imagine, this does no good. A failure means a second moral visit, and the whole thing ends in nothing. Such is the result of moral precepts.

Example seems to be equally fruitless. A governor of a province attempted to prohibit the use of opium. He pushed his work most vigorously, yet he failed because his subordinates would not honestly discharge their duties. And so it is all through China: they have one method of procedure in respect to reform, and no more. Our proverb, "Rotten wood cannot be carved," applies to our nation. It must be wholly cut away, and new material grafted upon the old stock. China can never be reformed from within.

Some imagine that China can be reformed by diplomacy, that is, by taking her into the "sisterhood of nations." The leading nations have had representatives in our national capital, Peking, for thirty years, and what good have they done? Others say that China needs unrestricted trade, and the brotherhood of man. Yet you cannot blame us for not throwing our doors wide open when you yourselves have established your Chinese immigration laws to restrict our intermingling with you. Commerce means money gain, and the desire for money leads to making nations hostile. The great trading nations of antiquity were not the best nations but the worst.

You say, too, that we need culture and Western science. We Chinese have had culture for hundreds, nay thousands, of years. It cannot reform us. Science we are undoubtedly in need of. But will it exert an advantageous moral influence over my nation, Chinese character being what it is? Residence in your land for years has made me see these things, but I want to say that I remain still a devoted subject to my fatherland. Railroads, telegraph, and a strong currency system will regenerate China, I hear on all sides. It is not so. These institutions would give rise to new abuses. You Americans have your railroad scandals, your postal scandals, all kinds of scandals. What would be the result of your modern industrial aids in China while her national character remains the same? Would the ballot box be effectual in reducing China's internal suffering and correcting the mismanagement of her government?

No, these institutions developed by your Western civilisation will not raise China to a place among you. To reform my nation you must reach and purify the springs of character. What China needs is righteousness: it is absolutely necessary that she have a knowledge of God and a new conception of man, as well as the relation of man to God. She needs a new life in every individual soul, in the family, in society. The many needs of China are reduced to a single need. It will be met permanently, completely, only by Christian civilisation.

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#### EDITORIAL.

Letters, &c., intended for the Editor should be addressed to Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.

#### PUBLICATION.

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## FIGHTING PARIS.

OCTOBER 15.—This morning out early on some errands. Then to the Avenue de la Motte Plequet and the Cirque de Paris where the Belgian refugees are being looked after, to take some clothes. On the way I met with several wounded soldiers, and noticed especially three walking together, two of them tall, handsome young Turcos, and all three lame and looking painfully ill. The bandaged toes of one stuck through his slit boot, the second wore a slipper on one foot, and the third hobbled on a stick. Here an arm or hand was additionally damaged. Soldier-driven motors passed, filled with woollen clothing; another showed a Red Cross and Union Jack. Napoleon's tomb seemed to attract numerous visitors bent on seeing the flags that had been taken from the Germans. The neighbourhood had become a centre of some animation, and the last *invalides*, centenarians both, had emerged into the open after a seclusion dating back at least to the 1902 Exhibition. The approach to the Cirque was crowded with refugees, odd police, soldiers, nurses, and the curious. The S. V.'s, who have returned from Vichy, where they had taken refuge during the recent scare, tell me the wounded under treatment there amounted to thousands. I hear the writer, Alexandre Mercereau, has been through several battles and has emerged therefrom unscratched. Our friend, Mr. R., who was at the retreat from Charleroi, writes, he has not slept on a bed for two months.

OCTOBER 17.—To B. At the Gare Montparnasse there was an arrival of waggons bringing wounded, which attracted the usual attention from idle crowds. The first to arrive were military ambulances, horse-drawn and springless, and containing stretchers. These were followed by a heterogeneous collection of commandeered delivery waggons, bearing the names of drapery stores, pianoforte manufacturers, funeral purveyors, florists, etc. They were so piled up with poor, damaged human flesh that the horses had some difficulty in pulling them up the hill, and the carts had to be pushed up by police and such able military who happened to be about, civilians not being allowed within a certain zone. The somewhat restive horses backed one of the carts into the crowd and the poor wounded were nearly all turned out on to the pavement. At the corner a market was being held, and a woman in the crowd took advantage of the delay to buy fruit, which she thrust into a pair of bandaged hands. Most of these pitiful victims seemed to be Turcos. Dozens of carts followed each other in rapid succession during the few minutes I was there, and must have unloaded some hundreds of maimed.—The things one hears! One does not know whether they are worse than those one sees: "Haven't the German commanders any pity? Yet they, too, are husbands, fathers." Answer: "It wouldn't be any good if they had, for they fear the Kaiser's boot. Ah, he is an awful brute, a terror, a tyrant." Referring to an accident to a train conveying wounded, which ran off the rails and some of whose carriages fell into the Marne, it was remarked: "And, sad to say, only the French wounded were drowned, for the carriages containing Germans escaped." Answer: "What a pity." This from people who are not savages but overflowing with good nature. They had kind, honest faces, and helped me and my luggage into the compartment with the greatest politeness. If I had said to them that there were nine German officers in one hospital in Berlin at this hour, whose eyes have been scratched out (in Belgium, presumably, while they lay wounded) these good people would have said, "Served them right." What a world!—The liars journalists can be is proved by the following example. A writer, in some paper or other, was describing the ruins of Montmirail and the destruction of the Rochefoucauld Château. Now, there are two Montmirails, one in the north, where the battle took place, the other in the south, in the department of Sarthe, and it is at the latter that the Rochefoucaulds have their château . . . but the journalist had seen its ruins and deplored them! In fact, all descriptions of battlefields must be read with caution, for access to them is very difficult and prohibited to the public.—Belgian

refugees are to be seen everywhere carrying their canvas bags and bundles. One poor man I saw was clinging to a lady's umbrella, the most precious of the possessions he had managed to save in his flight. There were half a dozen Belgian peasants in a post office this morning asking for change for some Belgian notes, which was refused. One only spoke French, and that, imperfectly. They had arrived the night before, had received hospitality at a police station, and were leaving again at noon for some distant southern destination. This invasion of foreign working-hands on the French labour market will bring trouble some time or other—(Mme. de Thèbes foresaw it).—Mr. V. was telling me that a watch has to be kept on the English soldiers "loose" in Paris. Sometimes those whose duty it is to make a search are apt to stray, too, and then they also have to be sought for! The men assigned for this supervision have their quarters in his barracks. They belong to Scottish regiments, go about in couples, and speak good French, as he found on offering to interpret for them!

OCTOBER 21.—I am told the war has not made the change in the usual course of life in Germany that it has in France. Thus, the comic papers are published as before. One of these contained a drawing, showing one of our kilted heroes taken prisoner by German soldiers, who exclaimed, "Hullo! a suffragette." And here is a true story about an English soldier who happened to be in a trench with some Frenchmen. One day a letter was brought to one of the French soldiers telling him he had become a father. Thereupon congratulations and festivities and distribution of dainties in honour of the event. Some German shells came to disturb the gaieties. When the little shower was over, the usual count was made of the survivors, and the Englishman popped out, in a beautiful insular accent, "*Et le père de Monsieur bébé?*" Ever since the phrase has become a catch in that particular section, and every now and again, and especially after there has been trouble, someone anxiously inquires, "*Et le père de Monsieur bébé?*"

I suppose England has heard about the German intellectuals' manifesto in reply to accusations of atrocities. In reply to this there has been a great hue and cry after all German art, intellect, science and art at large. No Wagner, French composers instead, etc., etc. (What of Röntgen? Is it quite patriotic of English and French surgeons to make use of his rays? But we have already had occasion to say that these campaigns sadden many people.) The fact that an announced Wagner season at Milan will be replaced by a Saint Saëns season is commented upon with relish, and M. Saint Saëns himself, not content with this triumph over his German "competitor," writes articles against German music and on the possibilities of teaching a child the piano without allowing it to soil its fingers on German notes. What miserable perversions patriotism is subjected to! (M. Saint Saëns forgets the number of times his works and those of other French musicians have been executed in Germany.)

This evening I asked a good woman after her presumably missing brother. "He has been found," she replied, "and is in hospital, but he does not say whether he is ill or wounded, for he is so stupid, he thinks it is dishonourable to be wounded."

OCTOBER 24.—There are some people, few in France, but some nevertheless, whom the war seems not to disturb any more than a thunderstorm is potent to flutter the petals of a violet growing well protected in the forest undergrowth. They are not necessarily selfish people, or overwhelmed with prosperity, but just people whose lives are so self-centred that they are immune to any outside events not directly affecting them. To them the war is but news in the morning paper. It appeals to them only through print. Perhaps they buy a picture postcard for country cousins (westwards), for, can one believe it? there are picture postcards of the war. An excellent one I have found represents a little group of soldiers intently crossing a field with long strides, holding their bayonnetted guns before them like insects preceded by their feelers. I do not

believe it is a faked picture—for it has every symptom of authenticity—as are, of course, the majority of pictures in the illustrated papers. Another shows a door at Senlis on which a German soldier has written in his Gothic lettering in white chalk: “*Gute Leute; bitte schönen; 3/15 Husaren.*” This has been translated into French and English (the two languages follow each other about everywhere—the *Petit Parisien* publishes a few columns of news in English each day): “Good people, to be well heated” (instead of treated).

OCTOBER 25.—Talking about atrocities (though they ought not to be talked about): C. G. was telling me that a writer (H. S.) who has just returned from the front, invalided, had told him savagery was as prevalent in one army as in another. And here we have the plain truth, probably. With the French and the English it may be simply a case of retaliation—let us hope so. But to justify charges against the Germans I will add that I have heard (on good authority—not through newspapers) that there are two hospitals at L . . . n full of lads who have been emasculated.—A kindly post brings us “Swollen-Headed William.” Nothing as good has appeared here yet. Jean Weber has been drawing scenes of monstrous torture, but all the best wit seems to have been commandeered. Last evening we heard the first notes of music since the mobilisation (except for the patriotic songs hawkers sing in the courtyards to sell their wares). Our united patriotism could not prevent our enjoying that Hun, Schumann. If these melodies could have reached them would they have been successful in disarming the armed at the front, yonder? A story is told of some German soldiers in a trench who, at the close of a day’s fight, softly started playing on their band. But the sound irritated the enemy on the other side, and though tired, they took their rifles up again and shot until they had silenced the too humane melody.

OCTOBER 26.—Paris just now is like a world’s show. In a ten minutes’ walk you can see uniforms from Belgium, from England, from Africa—not to speak of the different French uniforms. There were two handsome Arabs just out from hospital in a tram we took. They were on their way to Lyon, their regimental quarters. One of them limped badly from a wound in the knee, the other had been hurt in the face. One had been wounded in the battle of the Aisne, the other in the Marne, miles away from each other, and they had met in hospital at Cherbourg. They had a few hours to spend in Paris, and had asked a man and his wife—Sunday bourgeois—to be so good as to show them the Eiffel Tower. On the way the principal monuments were pointed out to them. When we passed some “Tommies” taking a Sunday stroll, one of the Arabs said, with a grimace, “They are good, those.” They showed us a letter from home, the notepaper of which bore the name of a drapery establishment in some Algerian town, “Le Monde Élégant,” and concluded with, “Embraces from your sister and brother-in-law.” Asked if they had brought back any tokens, one of them said he had secured a helmet and some German bayonets, but had, “of course,” lost them when he fell. We left them limping towards the terrace of the Trocadero for a good view of that tower, which is such a thorn in our Parisian flesh, and in a few minutes they would ride back to the station having, perhaps, seen Paris for the first and last time. And their guides would have spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon.—The latest saying: when a French and an English soldier alight at a station, the Frenchman asks for some wine to drink, the Englishman for some water to wash with.

OCTOBER 26.—All German and Austrian adherents to the Société des Gens de Lettres have been struck off the lists, while Félix Weingaertner has been excluded from some musical association.—The following paragraph, printed in italics, appears every evening in “*La Liberté*,” at the head of the “Echo’s” columns, as a gentle hint to the French Deputies, whose indemnity amounts to 15,000 francs a year: “The Canadian members of Parliament are giving a third of their indemnity to societies of assistance to the wounded.”

M. Fernand Divoire is compiling a bulletin specially devised to supply news to authors in the fighting ranks.

OCTOBER 27.—How absurd now seem all the precautions we were taking against German invasion a month ago! Some persons buried their valuables in the garden, others dug a hole for them in the cellar, a gentleman of our acquaintance sealed them within hermetic masonry, which he had made secretly with his own hands, to avoid denunciation. He put his gun in with his plate. We, I remember, spent a whole night making order in our affairs as though our last day were at hand. We now laugh over the earnestness with which we accomplished these solemn duties!

There is a monotony in horror, and our daily life has become horribly monotonous. News, conversation, anxiety, vary but in degree—the fundamental theme is the same, from morning to night, wounds, deaths, nursing, Germans, military tactics. The talk you overhear, the talk you take part in, revolves incessantly around these pivots. The concierge has no news from her sons—the one in hospital, the other fighting; your maid is preoccupied because she has had no letter from her husband for a week or so; out of doors you hear descriptions of wounds, of tetanos, gangrene, amputations, hemorrhages—the whole scale of physical suffering is run over. This one died of a wounded finger, this other will be lamed for life, not because the shrapnel wounded him seriously but because the shock sent him stumbling into a ditch. To whoever has one dear in the fighting ranks there is a vast selection of reasons for apprehension: he may be killed, he may die in atrocious suffering, alone, neglected, overlooked, or among strangers; he may contract some chronic complaint—every instant, of those who are not already in mourning, is tormented by a recapitulation of the dangers incurred on the field of battle. There are those who are in perpetual anxiety for special individuals; there are those who suffer collectively, so to speak, I know a couple who, without having suffered personally, so far, take the situation to heart to the point of hardly eating, wearing their shabbiest clothes, replacing their watch-chains by leather straps, and generally assuming an attitude of the profoundest melancholy. On the other hand, there are those whom existing circumstances no more disturb than wind sweeping over the water disturbs the fish below. To others, it is as an expiation, all its consequences seeming to pierce their sensibilities like arrows in the body of the martyr.

OCTOBER 28.—Our first really wintry day: grey and London-like. The “*Petit Parisien*” (which translates the official bulletins for its “English friends”) contains 288 advertisements for missing relatives. As the majority of these are collective the number of anxious individuals may be safely multiplied twice or even three times. One advertisement is significant of the difficulty for combatants to reach their families through the post. It reads: “The captain of the 8th Company of the 46th Territorials, informs relatives, that all his men are well.”—The Commander-in-Chief has been obliged to issue a notice, forbidding officers’ wives from accompanying their husbands to the front, under penalty of severe punishment to the incriminated officers. Here is a pretty story: A soldier’s letter strayed, addressed to a lady in Paris, it reached a lady of the same name in Lyon. The soldier asked his sister not to send him any more money, but chocolate, instead, “to share among his comrades.” When the forwarded letter eventually reached her it bore the words, “Opened by mistake; the chocolate has been sent.”—Spent the afternoon at B.—Among the pretty trees, weeping tears of gold, still bloomed many brilliantly-hued dahlias. “Why didn’t you bring back a bunch?” said H. S. C. “A bouquet, now?” Who can pick flowers and carry bouquets at present? I cannot. For whom are the blossoms they sell in the streets?

OCTOBER 31.—Visited the hospital in the Avenue des Champs Élysées, conducted entirely by women, all the surgeons being English lady doctors, with Miss Garrett Anderson, M.D., at their head. It has been organised in a building about to have been

opened as an hotel. Outside stood a motor containing invalided Highlanders about to be taken for a drive. Another lamed man was limping through the hall leaning on attendants. The whole establishment is admirably comfortable, nevertheless, it is not by any means full, and I am told no further patients are expected for some time, the military government of Paris not wishing wounded to be sent to the capital, with the consequence that the far inferior provincial hospitals are overcrowded.—“There’s nobody so courageous on the battlefield as the priests,” said a little wounded soldier who had been picked up by one: “*there’s the devil inside them.*”—To add to my list of authors and artists under the colours: Nicholas Beauvain, the poet; Poulbot, the draughtsman (author of that drawing showing a tiny kid staring at an unhappy sentinel and asking him: “Have you a rendez-vous that you stand there like that?”); MacOrlan, the humourist; Dominique Bounand, the *chansonnier montmartrois*.

NOVEMBER 1.—That unlucky word *melenite*—to the use of which explosive the French army owes much of its success, the French shells containing considerably larger quantities of it than the German—has again come out in a confusion in my last letter (p. 406). The fact the existing postal services do not allow me to go over proofs, that typewriters are most recalcitrant instruments, and that these columns offer somewhat monotonous and bewildering work to a proof-reader, will explain and excuse—I hope—many little blunders.—The writer André du Fresnois, contributor to “*La Revue Critique des Idées et des Livres*,” has been classed “missing.”

NOVEMBER 2.—*Jour des Morts*, actually rainless, for in peace time this day is invariably wet. The name of “Lord Loris,” on whom the late jockey, Alec Carter, rode many a successful race, follows his rider’s on the “roll of honour.” But they were not allowed to meet death together.—General Joffre is reported to say, in describing his tactics with the enemy: “I nibble at them.”—A woman tells me there has been no news from her brother, a married man, ever since he left for the war, nearly three months ago. Another told me her son had received no letter for weeks, then suddenly, one day, the *vaguemestre* brought him thirty-two.

NOVEMBER 3.—An English soldier waiting for a train in the Metro., as he might have done in the Tube, was a quaint sight. It finds its equivalent among minor curiosities in the playing by a band (presumably not German! for there is not supposed to be a German left in the city) of “God Save the King” in a Paris courtyard.—A woman presented a Belgian halfpenny in a baker’s shop this morning. The baker’s wife refused the coin. In five minutes the shop was surrounded by a hostile crowd, in ten the police had difficulty in preventing pillage, and all day the baker was the object of the mob’s scorn and threats. Some brought campstools and sat outside to jeer at her.—Fighting authors: M. Binet Valmer, the novelist, though of Swiss nationality, is in the French ranks; André Warnod is a prisoner. Guy Charles Cros writes from the north (on a little rag of paper suggesting it has been scribbled by a camp-fire): “All is well in spite of the somewhat serious fatigues we are undergoing, though willingly. Patience: victory is at the end of the effort, but each must give all his strength.”

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA.

## ART AND DRAMA.

### THE THEATRE AND ARMAGEDDON.

THE very youthful pro-Craig letter recently appearing in THE EGOIST recalls me to a task of whose existence and nature I have already given hints. I feel that I ought to add to my mystic and metaphysical explanations of Drama a mathematical and mechanical explanation of the drama and the theatre. If we are to have a wonderful form of creative dramatic effect, and more than one person is to produce it, then clearly we

must have not only a definite statement of the basic laws or principles governing its production, but a careful consideration of the best methods of applying such laws or principles, for the guidance of all who are to take part in producing it. Besides “the art” of the theatre there is the science of the theatre. Besides the electric current there is the wireless apparatus for its absorption and transmission. The science is as old as the theatre itself, but its existence is apt to be overlooked by persons to whom the “art” (as certain æsthetic activities are called) is more than rubies. Before an advance can be made it must be rescued from æsthetics, reconstructed in its own light, and thereafter linked with, and transformed by Art. Let us adjust the magnets scientifically, and the electric currents will exert the greatest force on and through them. As I said, the man who reconstructs the science will perform a notable work. In pursuit of his aim to regulate the sequence of events he will pass from the ultimate effect to the nature of the thing producing it. He will determine the simplest and most efficient means of attaining the production, the kind of materials composing the complicated body engaged in the absorption and transmission of the first thing, how such materials are formed and how to unite them to fulfil the function of the body. In doing so he will provide a formula from which all the phenomena of the theatre may be deduced, and establish a sound basis for theory and experiment. In fact, he will offer more than one person a guide to the construction of a fine instrument, whose strings are so adapted to the varied requirements of the creative hand as to have many individualised ways of vibrating.

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The time is ripe for this mathematical explanation. Quite a number of reformers in the theatre are seeking to utilize some common spirit underlying external forms, without connecting it with any theoretical ideas or formulating a basic theory upon which a highly sensitised and efficient instrument of expression might be constructed. My own experience of a certain type of present-day production has conducted me to an emotional world, wherein I have found a number of men all alike using some kind of emotional fluid, which they, without knowing its precise nature or the laws governing its application, believe to be capable of placing the theatre on the border of a great ideal event. Of course, it is not unusual to find, in each age, a number of men engaged in simultaneous discovery. Descartes and Fermat, Stokes and Seidel, Newton and Leibnitz, Darwin and Wallace, are instances. But we find that the history of these discoveries is largely the history of the disputes as to whom the credit of the discoveries belongs. Yet the great thing about a general discovery should be the discovery itself, not the identity of the men who made it; and the inspiring thing should be the unity of interest among all those who have made or participated in, the discovery. For it is only by perceiving a number of men working independently at the formation of similar ideas that we are able to apply the law of similarity to extract the final idea, just as the sight of Wagner, Craig, Reinhardt and others, all alike, busy in an emotional world, enabled me to verify my guess that Drama first existed fundamentally in the motions of a fluid world, and put me on the track of a transforming law. If this unity is obscured the significance of the great event may be missed and its realization seriously delayed. And it might easily be obscured by a zealous contributor exalting his contribution and crying “Ware thieves!”

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However, the unity has been seen, and the shouting of Messrs. Envy, Hatred, Malice and All-Uncharitableness may go on. It will make no difference. There are abundant signs that the temple is coming. For one thing, the war threatens the commercial theatre. In vain the latter wraps itself in the Union Jack, sticks recruiting ribbons in its hair, assumes a military strut and bawls “It’s a long, long way to Tipperary.” The public does not want its faked domestic and talk plays and spectacle for spectacle’s sake. Drowsy “Drake” did not stir it, “Bluff

King Hal" made it weep, "The Great Adventure" fills it with gas, and the sugary "Little Minister," with some wooden soldiers thrown in, leaves it icy cold. It wants just red-hot war and Mr. Atkins, and not Atkins in any form. If it flocked to see "Tommy Atkins," drawn by the title and a real machine gun in the last act, it would not cross the road to see "In the Ranks." And this simply because the hero, Ned Drayton, enlists because he is poor. Nowadays, stage heroes must enlist because they are patriotic. Lacking the right sort of war play and Atkins to suit the public, the commercial manager is eking out a wretched living by holding forth for sale revivals and cheap new pieces in stock scenery and faked dresses. And, with a further view to the securing of his own financial salvation, he is paying 25 per cent of the salary list. Thus, big-priced actors are receiving a mere pittance, others are enlisting, others, again, starving. Serve them right. If actors will not refuse to be exploited by dishonest tradesmen, let them suffer. Perhaps suffering will make them less stupid and ignorant. One day they may come to regard themselves truly as high priests and custodians of a spiritual power as great as that in the hands of the Church. Then they will demand to be set as free to follow their great ideal as the servants of the Church. I think one effect of the war will be to hasten this enlightenment. Another effect will be the killing of domestic and discussion plays and the creating of a demand for movement and colour. First will come a glut of glorified Kinema-colour, then the right sort of motion play. I have lately read two of the latter—one by Mr. John Rodker, the other by Miss A. D. Defries—which raise my hope very high indeed. Mr. Rodker's qualifications for a motion-playwright may be found in his book of poems. Anyone who reads the "Descent into Hell" must admit that it reveals a remarkable sense of the dramatic value of time and silence. A few words rise from the abyss. They sink again as eternal happenings become too deep for words. This way lies the exclusion of words, altogether.

HUNTLY CARTER.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—*While quite willing to publish letters under noms de plume, we make it a condition of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.*—ED.

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### MORE LIGHT FOR MR. CARTER.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

Mr. Huntly Carter seems to be correctly informed of my identity. By all means, "the young Russian gentleman."

Very well, then. Being young, I shall be considerate toward the aged and the infirm. Being Russian, I shall take pity on all that need pity. Being a gentleman, I shall not stoop to the ways of a man of the market place, nor even to the uncouth arrogance that we nowadays associate with German *Kultur*.

When a man speaks of "the pitiless path of logic" and announces in the same breath, at the very beginning of a purely controversial letter, his intention of "strangling" his opponent, there is evidently something wrong with that man's logic. Because logic, precisely when it is most pitiless, is too dispassionate a thing to speak in terms of blatant abuse.

I do not propose to "strangle" Mr. Carter. I do not even mind admitting my benevolent purpose of leaving him two legs to stand upon, half as many perhaps as he has had before (I may be pardoned in thinking) but better ones; such a transformation comes with increased knowledge.

I propose to take up, point by point, the matters upon which he presumes to take issue with me, not that I might prove how far he has from "strangled" me, but in order to release the hold that Mr. Carter has upon his own throat.

First, Mr. Carter objects to my partial quotation. It is true that on occasions this does injustice. I have a right to my opinion that in this case it makes no material difference. Mr. Carter has the right to think otherwise. In my letter I did not fail to mention "The Mask" of July, as the source of my information so that anyone who cared enough could read the document in its length. In my desire to be fair to Mr. Carter in connection with his Reinhardt book I said: "To do Mr. Carter justice, he explains in this letter (to Mr. Craig) that the book was written two years ago, at a time when he 'was feeling bitter with everyone and everything,' and that owing to some

difficulty with his publisher certain additional illustrations and letterpress which would have partly rectified the wrong have been wilfully left out." Mr. Carter complains of this partial quotation about his bitterness. Had I chosen to be unkind deliberately I would have also quoted the sentence which immediately followed it: "In consequence, expressions crept into the book which, now that my mood has changed, I do not approve." This rather disposes of his statement that "the mood I experienced at the time of writing my book did not affect my judgment or accuracy." Certainly, it is enough to make one think so. I will gladly, however, for the sake of the more important issues under consideration, give the writer the benefit of any doubt as to whether it is an apology or an explanation. Though I personally think it an apologetic explanation, the fact is of no actual importance in relation to the two main points of my letter.

It is necessary to give the quotation from Mr. Carter's original article again, since it contains both points in question: ". . . it was Germany in the person of Wagner who (*sic*) made the modern discovery of the mystic form of drama and bequeathed it to Craig, Reinhardt and others." Again, I repeat with large emphasis that not only did Wagner "bequeath" nothing to Craig, but that the two are fundamentally opposed to each other. Before I proceed with my explanation, I must eliminate Reinhardt out of the discussion lest I fall into those loose ways of thinking which cause Mr. Carter to speak of "Wagner, Max Reinhardt and Mr. Craig," and immediately afterward to refer to "both"—who are "both," Mr. Carter, is it Wagner and Reinhardt, Reinhardt and Craig, or Wagner and Craig? One objects to this indiscriminate grouping of names. Does Mr. Carter really suppose that the "mystic-form of drama," or the mystic idea in any form can be bequeathed to a person without a suggestion of inherent mysticism in his make-up; that in short, that which he himself calls "the thing behind the form" does not count? If therefore, Wagner had bequeathed "the mystic-form of drama" to Reinhardt it never could have taken deep root in him, as Reinhardt is not naturally a mystic.

This question of mysticism, that is, "the thing behind the form," is very important. Mr. Craig's interest in William Blake is significant because Blake is not "a man of the theatre"; significant, because it establishes the fact of a spiritual kinship, unhyphenated by any other interest. They meet, not as "mystic-dramatists," but simply as individual mystics, whose arts are quite different. By this meeting Mr. Craig has enriched his own latent mysticism, but being "a man of the theatre," this quality quite naturally forms an integral part of his art, regardless of Wagner or of anyone else. His book, "The Art of the Theatre," he dedicates to Blake, and he has otherwise acknowledged his debt to him, whom he calls "the ever-living genius of the greatest of English artists." Surely Mr. Craig ought to know the influences which inspired him, and if he got his artistic tradition from Wagner, is it not rather odd that in his "word of acknowledgment," in "Towards a New Theatre," he should express his debt to Da Vinci, Blake, Whitman, Yeats, Piranesi, and some thirty other people, including his father and mother, and his boy Teddy, and yet make no mention of so important a figure as Wagner?

What then could be the object of Mr. Craig in omitting Wagner, to whom he owes such a tremendous debt, as Mr. Carter would have us believe? It is for quite a different reason than the one that some will imagine, and we have it on p. 123 of his "Art of the Theatre." Read well what he says: "Let me repeat again, that it is not only the writer whose work is useless in the theatre. It is the musician's work which is useless there, and it is the painter's work which is useless there. All three are utterly useless. Let them keep to their preserves, let them keep to their kingdoms, and let those of the theatre return to theirs. Only when these last are once more reunited there shall spring so great an art, and one so universally beloved, that I prophesy that a new religion will be found contained in it. That religion will preach us more, but it will reveal. It will not show us the definite images which the sculptor and the painter show. It will unveil thought to our eyes, silently—by movements—in visions."

A musician in the theatre! This is obviously why Mr. Craig objects to Wagner. Think what a confusion a Wagner production must present to his mind—the lyrical libretto, the voice, the acting, and the paintings all vying with each other; but, in general, being *subordinated to the music*.

Mr. Craig's own words have proven my two contentions: (1) Wagner and Craig are fundamentally opposed to each other; (2) Craig wishes to separate the arts. (To "disentangle" the dramatic art from the others, with which it has become involved, is the expression he used in a personal conversation with me once).

So that what Mr. Carter chooses to call "pale-faced nonsense" emanates from Mr. Craig himself; I therefore leave my critic to settle it with Mr. Craig; moreover, since I hold a letter from Mr. Craig approving of my letter in THE EGOIST.

As to Mr. Carter's intricate dissertation upon the motor-car, I do not propose to go into it. I presume Mr. Carter knows a great deal about the motor-car. I will not attempt to compete with him in this branch of knowledge, being indeed ignorant of its first rudiments. Still, I must admit that his statement about Wagner, Reinhardt, and Craig working "according to the principles of the gear box," interests even me. By all means, let us hear more about the gear box.

JOHN COUNORS.

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