

EASTER 1951

No. 103

THE  
DIAL



# The Dial

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As this Dial was prepared so soon after the Lent Term Dial the Regalia have been held over for the next issue.



## MAYTIME

The traveller arrives in Cambridge in that vague indeterminate period known as early summer, just when one's wondering if the great Robinson (K. J.) who plays for Loamshire will be the first amateur, whose grandfather was an ostler, to score a thousand runs before lunch . . .

Like all the best travellers, he spent Easter in Paris and he has left behind in the city of dreams what he calls the joys of spring, and he brings with him, as we hope, sunshine, the nightingale and dollars. He is coming to England with the express purpose of looking at those places where ancient craftsmen have plied their trades from *time immemorial*, and during the crossing—"calm as a millpond, my dear, without the millgirls" as he remarked to waiting reporters at Dover, who assured their papers he looked "fit and bronzed"—during the crossing, then, he had glanced through several works of literature dealing with the Real Cambridge. There was for instance the novel in which the head porter murders the divinity don with a butter-knife, and also the one which ends with the exquisite word-picture "After the race was over, the girls took to the water once again and sculled quietly home to haven in the mellow cool of the evening . . .". He had also read Grantchester, Eitschinke's Guide to Some University towns of Western Europe, and G. M. Trevelyan's Autobiography, so he considered he was prepared for what was waiting for him "unrolling," as he put it, "like an arabesque panorama of kaleidoscopic glitter."

The traveller found the Real Cambridge difficult to discover. Real Cambridge is never even slightly in existence except in summer: rosy cheeked girls in summer frocks, waterylem onade, cucumber sandwiches, punts and so on, I mean. The traveller however was an adaptable personality and having a beautifully Brideshead background, he soon carved a rather de luxe niche for himself in the honeyed groove of Cambridge society. Few of us who were up at that time are able to forget the sight of that slim thoughtful figure, a Balkan Sobranie between his sardonic lips, a volume of his own poetry clasped in his sensitive hands, striding contemptuously down King's Parade of an evening. His well-known article "In search of Cambridge" subtitled "Are willow trees?" appeared in the Undergraduate page of the Spectator—for, it must be remembered, he possessed a travelling studentship at Princeton—and he tells us what exactly *were* his impressions of the early days he spent among us. But it is in his letters written in green ink to his friend Zadigue then a demy of Magdalen, Oxford, that we get the truest picture of his conception of Cambridge life . . . "Ah! Summer," he writes, "a time for gloss,

not dross . . . I stroll about the backs with Rupert Brooke's shade watching over me . . . and is this not happiness? . . . I am writing this with my head leaning against the shallow stone basin of an old fountain, on whose broad ledge a leaden otter paws for ever a leaden salmon . . . and the mulberry trees . . . and the dancing . . ."

The last sentence, brief yet typical, is significant: for if it was in dancing of all manly sports that the Traveller excelled, it was in Mayweek that his brief sojourn in Cambridge received not only its consummation but its meaning.

Again—and I crave the reader's indulgence—let his own words tell part at least of the tale. Much of the wording of his letters to Zadigue reappears in the novel which he wrote in August in the Irish bog seat of one of his undergraduate friends . . .

"I have just finished the last tenuous dregs of champagne out of Diana's slipper, but instead of hastening back to the floor, where gay couples still dance across the crowded, polished parquet to the lilt now of a gavotte, now of a slow waltz . . . I feel I must put pen to paper in order to tell you, dear friend . . . that I cannot escape the conclusion that here and now the unreal world meets the real . . . Real Cambridge's mailed fist is clasped by the velvet glove . . . is it not terribly exciting (in the Coward sense) when what one dreams impinges onto what one seems? . . . Life, dear boy, is like a dance floor . . . outside in the garden are Chinese lanterns, let us watch them flicker, not destroy them: and the Buffet of Life is indeed stocked with the lobster and champagne that Byron called the only true feminine viands . . . and then there are the gardenias . . ."

So brief, and yet so true. The Traveller was incorrect in his facts of course: Mayballs in this College at any rate only began in 1912, a Cinderella ball held on a Saturday night, while the earliest instance of a Mayball in the modern sense of the word was in the 'nineties at King's . . . so they are not quite the last surviving memorial to a glittering past—a past which is supposed to have been all champagne and carnations and white ties—a past which has vanished with *les neiges d'antan* into a graceful limbo inhabited by Regrets, Edwardian beauties and that ubiquitous character of so many nurseries, the unctuous Mr. Manners. Dear fascinating, blush-making, but dignified Mr. Manners!

The economics, the history, the facts of the organisation of Mayballs were not known to the Traveller nor indeed are they to many others: to him as to those others, a Mayball is the scintillating apogee of a glittering crescendo: the Corinthian capital, almost the *raison*, of this most civilised of all societies. Mayballs like most worthwhile things, are paradoxical, in that they take place in June: they are sometimes known as the Dances of the Hours because people have to look at their watches very frequently in order to time their departure for Grantchester (by water naturally) enabling them to get there in time for breakfast. It would be interesting

sometime to follow up the line of reasoning suggesting that the honey Rupert Brooke had for tea was in fact marmalade for breakfast, and that the Church Clock had stopped at ten to three *in the morning*, just five hours before the Bard then inebriated, arrived for breakfast . . . there remains notwithstanding a good deal of glamour still attaching to the very word "Mayball": it has a Sitwellian grandeur, a hint of vanished elegance; it is a tapestry on which are embroidered dreams that come true or perhaps that pleasant state of merriment known as being "terribly gay my dear" that renders such a thing unnecessary . . . there are piles on piles of lolling roses, hibiscus, gardenias, a suggestion of rococo cupids and real Cupids as well, *everyone* even the odd rugger player, feels and looks at ease . . . while in the background, a soft band plays eternally the Merry Widow waltz . . . and of course it is all *utterly utterly* romantic. The night of the Mayball is perhaps the one night in the year when Time does not seem out of joint: when we are all patricians, when all the women are unspeakably beautiful, when epigrams and wine flow like water, when all the world talks in trills and cadences, when Terpsichore asserts her dominance over all her sisters: for neither Thespis nor Clio nor Euterpe, nor even Thalia have a place in this long languorous night of ease.

There are snags of course: a Mayball is to-day rather an artificial creation, but then hothouse plants *are* much pleasanter than hardy annuals, even if they do cost seven guineas. A Mayball would be quite quite ecstatic if it were given by some public spirited millionaire, some new benevolent Gatsby . . . then one could really mutter in moments of relaxation "Lord, what a lot of lovelies there are to-night," and murmur sweet nothings with the clearest of consciences, with the lightest of brows. In many colleges to-day, there is no demand for a Mayball from a new impecunious vintage of undergraduates: if poverty be, as Shaw suggested, the cardinal sin, then are we all wicked men to-day. If one glances down the considerations before a modern Ball Committee, it is found that they include not merely instructions for letting down the balloons at an appropriate moment: not merely organisation for coloured lights in Queens' Grove; not only the choosing of this band and the selecting of that champagne: the 1951 Mayball Committee has had for instance to insure the Ball in case of the inclemency of the weather true, but also in case of the outbreak of war. This is a sombre thought, and one that seems far removed from the rush and hush of purple and plush, the coruscating lilt of gay music, the colour, the splendour of exquisite frocks blending with exquisite women. But they will not be thinking, we shall not be thinking, of the sordid as we struggle with our Tripos-clouded brains to remember the steps of the Gay Gordons or attempt to listen to our partner as she instructs us as women will—how to do the Duchess of Edinburgh—but my dear, you *can't* go wrong if you just hold me tight . . . "

It is then in the Mayball that we find, as the Traveller found, the key to the kingdom, the centre of the web : during these hours of gladness—yes the words are the Traveller's again—when the crickets never go to sleep, when the lilies nod all night at Bacchus dancing the minuet, when the figures on Oscar's blue china seem to be with us again, smiling, bowing, gesticulating, it is then that the Past in her velvet breeches pushes the Present in her grey dirty mackintosh into the background. It does not matter that the first Queens' Mayball was the daughter not of Tradition but merely of the Edwardian era, a chandelier and not a candlelight creation : it does not matter that the Traveller writes a sensible article as all sensible young men do with careers to carve out, about Modern Dance in the Anglo Saxon countries. For nothing matters : amid the debris of broken champagne bottles, broken punt-poles, and torn dresses, amid the coagulation of memories and half-achieved aims, we shake our drunken heads without regret. We have seen, we say, the Real Cambridge : and our bedmakers make sympathetic noises, and talk about their husbands, as if we really needed something to make us sleep . . . They tell us to sleep it off.

It? what do they mean by it? One returns and thinks it over : what is a Mayball one asks, and how, and why? My Dears, there is no doubt about it : a Mayball is Civilisation, or rather what remains of it. When one sees a man in full evening dress and a girl with a full flowing organdie skirt floating—more or less—along King's Parade at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, *that* I suggest *is* civilisation, that is Culture, Culture with a capital K . . . Castiglione's Courtier, Lord Merlin, Lord Melbourne—they were not arrayed like one of these . . . and perhaps some painter, one of those with long hair and short purses—will immortalise the Mayball in a still life. In the catalogues of a future art gallery . . . *No. 123. Image with Flowers : by an unknown twentieth-century artist. The scene though Bacchanalian has a certain charm . . . one critic has described it as "a symbolic study typical of the decadent last years of European bourgeois civilisation"*. And what will be the figures in the picture? A white tie perhaps, slung round a champagne cork? Moonbeams, with moths flitting hither and thither over the water of the Cam, in which are reflected dancers who for some reason do not appear to be anywhere on the bank? A dictionary of aphorisms—to find the correct epigram for the correct moment? A punt-pole with a mortarboard on top and a cello playing to itself somewhere in an inappropriately golden middle distance? Why not indeed? Or simply the face of a beautiful girl peering anxiously into a gilded mirror of the René Clair variety, which in its turn reflects another mirror on the opposite wall, and so on and on into the corridors of eternity . . .? A Mayball is something different to everyone who attends it : its memory is what one makes it.

And our Traveller? What did he think of it all? One did not have much time, when the dance was on, when hearts were being

broken, when hearts were being won, to watch how he was getting on. No doubt he was the Life and Soul of his own little party of student observers . . . and didn't he write it all down in that play of his, unfinished and entitled a little obscurely, "Why not love Angelica?" We are shown the author's conception of the Idea, the "beingness" as well as the "doingness" of a Mayball: it has been suggested that this fragment, though its scene is very obviously a college room, may be in fact an *inverted* commentary on a Huntball, not a Mayball. I regard this as improbable.

I reproduce the original stage directions . . .

*The Scene is a room in the Immemorial or Lloyd George court, the air is balmy with perfume and outside the dawn may be seen breaking: there is a banal noise of merriment outside. The room is unique in its Waugh atmosphere: on the wall (left) is an impassioned Renoir, the picture rail is a frieze with, centre, Naphthalia stroking her favourite satyr while a death mask of James Agate hangs from the ceiling. ALEXIS enters with GEORGIANA\* in his arms. He is interestingly dressed with a blue carnation . . . Georgiana has a white one, in her hair, which looks almost green in some lights. She is terribly beautiful . . .*

SHE (*her eyes open*). My dear: the noise: the people . . . (*outside the orchestra can be plainly heard playing an amber coloured snowball*).

Could you turn on Debussy?

ALEXIS. Or Delibes? (*They both smile, as at some private joke.*)

SHE (*seriously*). Why are candelabras always champagne-coloured?

Doom should be watching us you know . . . I have that feeling: Doom should be standing there indistinctly dressed, as in all modern French plays . . . It's only Aloysius: he has indistinct pyjamas. (*Enter Right Aloysius, a nondescript poet.*)

ALOYSIUS. Who are the flowers waving to in the window . . . (*he goes out left, a willow in his hand*).

SHE. Of course, he's terribly clever.

ALEXIS (*murmurs*). Terribly. (*As he speaks a porcelain vase is tossed through the open lattice . . . it bounces on the floor and does not break . . . it is all quite quite ecstatic . . .*)

The play remains unfinished, since the traveller became interested in Illyrian lyric poets of the fourteenth century, on which he is now believed to be preparing a treatise . . . and when last heard of he was instructing the modern Yugoslav peasant how to strip a Willow. We however prefer with Cowper to rest neath England's sullen skies and fields without a flower to warmer whenever it was with all vines: let us draw a deep breath and begin to blow up balloons: and when we dance like the gods on the grass for the last time let the glass we turn down be empty, certainly, but stained with the purple dregs of nectar.

H. S. T.

\* Pronounced Georgana.

## THE QUEENS' MUSICK

If music be indeed the food of love, then how many of our contemporaries are doomed to remain forever bachelors? For we in Queens' have but one viola, and she so many suitors. We feel deep sympathy for King Hildebrand who declared that he "really needed a trumpeter for this but he has been turned into a set of chessmen, or something." Ours has been turned by some inverted Midas into a silver cornet. However good the player may be, this instrument has a very limited repertory; one can play "I'll walk beside you" with piano acc., or the "Lost Chord" if you spread yourself and provide a harmonium.

Those eternally youthful gentlemen who remain, seemingly eternally, in Cambridge by subtle devices such as the Diploma in Classical Archaeology, tell us that once upon a time, when they first came up, there was a Golden Age of Music in Queens'. The college was full of music-makers, efficient but self-effacing. Grim determined men blew their trumpets behind sported oaks at the top of "Y" Staircase, which was too far away for anyone to go and find out who they were. Oboeists lurked on "K" and, it is rumoured, they had instruments which actually had the same pitch as everything else. Queensmen played on their reeds by the river, Pan was out-blown by the splendid ensembles of flutes and piccolos. Drifting slowly down the water punt followed punt, bedecked with stuffs of green and white, and on these reclined blazered men from the Rugger Club singing of Fair Phyllis and the Sweet Turtle Dove.

This intense activity reaped its due reward in the termly concerts. They never had more than two flute solos in each, and recorder trios were strictly eschewed. The Male-voice Choir rendered, it is true, "Now is the Month of Maying" and "Dr. Foster", but had several other pieces as well. It had some tenors, who were outnumbered only by three to one by the basses. The orchestra did not have to play every time the convenient Brandenburg with no violin part. Indeed, at times it played music more nearly contemporary than that of the elegant and, it must be admitted, easy eighteenth century.

But these are times long past. Where are our oboeists now, our bassoon players, our trombonists, those who play the glockenspiel and chinese blocks? Where are those who sound trumpets and shawms and clashing cymbals? Why should Queens' have to borrow instrumentalists for practically every musical event, be it a Bats production, a May Week concert or even a cuppers parade?

We no longer have the Elizabethan Age with that fervour with which our predecessors of the 'thirties knelt to it. The eighteenth century has taken its place, Bunthorne's

" Convince 'em if you can  
That the reign of Good Queen Anne  
Was Culture's palmiest day "

has come true, and not even the publication of Boswell's London Journal has succeeded in dispelling the myth of gentility which surrounds the century. However, by Elizabethan, and to a lesser extent Georgian standards, no man was considered a gentleman unless he could play or sing. It seems strange that so many members of a Cambridge college should resort to gramophones and radios, when a resurgence of this earlier national attitude towards music is everywhere evident.

Can it be that our musicians are hiding their lights under bushels, or more appropriately, are scraping in silence? Perhaps they agree with Keats that tho' heard melodies are sweet, those unheard are sweeter. If so, it is a pity. Let them overcome their modest bashfulness, be brazen with their tubas, and beat their big drums out loud.

D. M. T.

## The BATS Lent Term Production THE REMEMBERED AIR

*Script by R. S. Glen*

*Music by Dr. J. Beament*

Last term's production by the "Bats" made history: it was the first time that one member of the college had written the entire script. Robert Glen is to be congratulated on setting a high standard in original writing, which, it is hoped future playwrights in the College will emulate. For his humour the author did not depend on the parochial, a too frequent feature of University Entertainment, nor did he rely on stock, sophisticated pseudo-Coward characters. Mr. Glen seemed equally at home in the satirical and in the purely fantastic vein; we enjoyed Athelred Ethelred's Stratfordian histrionics as much as we believed in Hildebrand's ostrich (a rather supercilious bird).

It was unfortunate that the Opera was slow in starting. This was due to a somewhat lengthy and uncertain musical introduction, whose purpose did not seem to be clear. It caused obvious embarrassment to the audience as well as to Grub—as a source of humour, knitting has its limitations, and we were forced to watch a particularly unconvincing effort at knit one, pearl one, drop one to the accompaniment of a dramatic tremolo in the strings. The backcloth provided by Peter Down, using as his sole instructions the somewhat uninspiring stage-direction, "A Place", gave us something to look at, and everyone who saw this production will agree that this was certainly worth looking at. One felt that one of Mr. Emmett's railway engines would make an entrance over the

bridge. As for the other scene—a Hyperborean Hill—several geographers and zoologists were seen to wince, but the uninitiated were quite convinced that, if hell actually does exist, then we would like its ante-room to look something like this ! It was a very suitable setting for the scene in which both music and script reached the highest standard. And it was in this scene that the players seemed most at their ease.

As the devil who “ would be a tip-top tempter ”, but for whom “ things always seemed to go wrong, just when he was doing so well ”, Nelson Meredith gave a convincing performance, with a fine sense of burlesque. It was obvious that he was enjoying his bungling machinations and that parish work would prove to be only a passing phase in his career. He would do well to gain greater mastery over his words and hands, since these seemed to intrude on an otherwise praiseworthy performance. For example, he might have made better use of the pince-nez which could have helped him to keep his hands occupied.

Though, as we have remarked, knitting has its limitations, John Townsend as Grub, the least sensible, if most wise, of the triplets had plenty of other tricks in his bag to keep the audience and the King amused—as well as the ace which won the hand of the Fair Rosamund. The sounds he conjured out of a recorder, evidently by rolling his eyes, were quite delightful—his dance at the end was not delightful nor was there much point in it. There must be some limit to fooling—and this merely held up an end which was in any case a little slow in coming. Douglas Collin as Garibald (which does not rhyme with Ocean Brine) was suitably romantic, and sang without any apparent visible strain. He could also be successfully amusing at the most unexpected moments. It is a pity that Michael Warner as Galantine (which does), the third, and last, of the triplets, tended to get sharp while singing, for his voice was full of warmth and resonance. His acting was somewhat restricted to uncontrolled gesticulation and an indiscriminate raising of the eyebrows.

Hildebrand was a questing king—but what he was questing for no one ever quite knew ; at one time it seemed that the only thing he really cared to find was a pen, at others it might have been the Fair Rosamund. But at last we were allowed to know that it was—a son : who finally turned out to be a daughter—or did he ? Anyway, it was all very confusing—and delightfully confusing since Michael Waters brought to this part a touch of real warmth and humanity.

In Anne Percival-Smith and Enid Hebley the “ Bats ” were fortunate in finding two charming ladies with excellent voices and engaging stage personalities. As Mandragora (and here and there the Fair Rosamund), Anne Percival-Smith gave the most polished performance of the evening. She seemed to find no difficulty in the part, and moved with grace and abandon on a stage which



always tends to restrict movement. Enid Hebley was a convincing Irish girl, wearing equally well her emerald-green dress and her island brogue.

Robert Glen's script was well served by the players, but Dr. James Beament's music was not so fortunate. The orchestra had to accompany the singers without being able to hear what was being sung, which led to great difficulties, and a certain lack of discipline seemed to indicate that they were under-rehearsed. This was a pity since the orchestration contained many touches of wit reflecting the sense of the lyrics. This was well brought out in a Quartet for two flutes and two Sopranos.

In charge of the whole production was Roderick Cook, who cannot be too highly praised for keeping under control so large and ambitious a venture. Throughout the Opera, timing and grouping showed that infinite care had been devoted to them, and there were many good details in the business—though the introduction of a throat syringe during the Sextet near the end of Act I was not really funny. I am sure that Mr. Cook would agree with me when I say a word of praise for the willing hands who gave many hours of hard work before and after the play, putting up and then removing the stage. Without their help, this production would not have been the success that it was.

One final word of criticism—why was the appearance of the programme so much akin to that of the previous term's *Morality Play*? Surely an extravaganza such as this, even if it has a moral, deserves something more gay and extravagant.

*M. G. S.*

## A MODERN FRENCH MYSTIC

The following "Pensées" are taken from the French of Simone Weil who died in London in November 1943 aged thirty-three. Like Pascal, she died, leaving only fragments of the magnum opus which would have embraced the whole of her thought. A brilliant philosopher she taught Philosophy in Paris before giving up her post to work unknown among the poorest of the workers in a Renault factory. This is but an incident in a life spent with the needy and for them. Perhaps then, it is not strange that even the most abstract of her reflections seem borne up on a wave of compassion. Behind the pitiless clarity of a style which is in the main French tradition there lies a warmth having its source in mysticism rather than philosophy. By birth and education moreover, the centre of her being lay at that point where the great tributaries of Judaism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity plunge into the Christian source of our civilisation. It would be hard to conceive a mind more capable of getting down to the bed-rock of European culture. In a world

where the principle of Relativity has slopped over from the scientific into the ethical sphere, Simone Weil believed that man has not only the ability but the duty to reach and embrace absolute values. It is not easy to decide which were most repugnant to her, Sartre, Schopenhauer or Christians who contented themselves with describing their religion as a "way of life". Perhaps the latter, for although she was never nearer than the fringe of the Christian Church, she was certainly never guilty herself of confusing its central truth, with the attendant consequences of the truth. At this time, when the cracks in Western culture are yawning too wide for putty to be any longer a remedy, Simone Weil teaches two lessons. That time spent passing sap from dry wood is wasted time and that the wise man waters the roots of the tree in his garden and hastens to gather in the fruits before the North wind forestalls him.

Two conceptions of Hell. The ordinary one (suffering without consolation). Mine (false beatitude, thinking oneself by error to be in Paradise).

Nothing can have for destination that which it has not got for origin. The contrary idea, the idea of progress—poison. The root which bore this fruit should be torn out.

It is not religion but revolution which is the opinion of the people.

To say that the world is of no worth, that this life is of no worth, and to cite evil as a proof, is absurd, for if they are worth nothing, of what does evil deprive them?

Belief in the existence of other beings as such is *love*.

Stars and fruit-trees in blossom. Complete permanence and extreme fragility equally give a sense of eternity.

The self is no more than the shadow cast by sin and error, which bar the light of God, and which I take for a being. Even if one could be as God, it would be better to be mud obeying God.

There is the whole gamut of distance between Creation and God. A distance where the love of God is impossible: matter, plants, animals. There, evil is so complete that it destroys itself; there is no longer evil: mirror of divine innocence. We are at the point where love is just barely possible. It is a great privilege, for love which unites is proportioned to distance. God has created a world which is, not the best possible, but embracing all degrees of good and evil. We are at the point where it is the worst possible. For beyond, is the degree where evil becomes innocence.

There exists a "deifugal" force. Otherwise everything would be God.

R. A. W.

## DR. LEAVIS AND THE TRIPOS

Dr. Leavis's latest publication takes the form of a long introductory essay to a reprint of John Stuart Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge\*. The general object of this reprint, writes Dr. Leavis, "represents an ambition to make Mill's *Bentham* and *Coleridge* current classics for the literary student." This, however, is not the "operative purpose" of Dr. Leavis's *Introduction*. "I have been concerned," he says, "to take a propagandist opportunity. I have been concerned to do something more by way of promoting that particular approach to the problem of liberal education which I outlined in *Education and the University*." On the other hand, it is intended primarily for the literary student making a critical study of the novels of George Eliot. With this particular student in mind, "I have been trying to suggest the kind of work—the approach, the development and the organization—that should, I think, replace that represented (to take an instance in front of me) by the prescription for 'special' study of the English novel over two or three Victorian decades—a usual kind of prescription that seems to me radically and wastefully misconceived."

This is not the place for a general criticism of Dr. Leavis's notions of what constitutes a liberal education. Nevertheless, since he has taken a "propagandist opportunity", it is necessary to notice certain details of his ideas on this subject. The main way in which he promotes his particular approach to this question is by delivering an attack on the Cambridge examination system. This attack is worth considering because it might be made to apply to any arts subject, and because there is a great deal that is superficially attractive about it. The gist of Dr. Leavis's assault is contained in two passages which appear early on in his *Introduction*.

. . . My point is that my preoccupation with vindicating the study of literature as—what it so rarely is—a real discipline (and one without which there can be no liberal education) carries with it, in the nature of things, a more exacting preoccupation with extra-literary studies than academic practice anywhere bears witness to . . .

And if we ask how anything better is to be arrived at, the answer is that nothing substantially better can, under a system that for guidance leaves the student, for the most part, to lectures, and reckons to test his quality by an end-of-course stand-and-deliver against the clock. Study under such a system inevitably tends to be an acquiring and arranging of cliché-material. The academic authorities believing in such a system will tend to take

\* *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*. With an introduction by F. R. Leavis. Chatto and Windus. 1950.

as their first-class man a type that may be described as the complete walking cliché—the man (it's often a woman) who unloads with such confident and accomplished ease in the examination-room because he has never really grappled with anything, and is uninhibited by any inkling of the difference between the retailing of his amassed externalities and the effort to think something out into a grasped and unified order that he has made his own. Those who like this type will recruit themselves from it, and will inevitably tend to dislike, and to undervalue as a student, the man who makes them uncomfortable by implicitly challenging their standards, their competence and their self-esteem : the system is disastrous and self-perpetuating. So the "academic mind" comes to deserve its depressing reputation.

This criticism will probably appear attractive, at first sight, to those who think that some knowledge of extra-literary studies is necessary for literary students, and to those who think that undergraduates should do more "grappling" and less acquiring of cliché material. But it will attract largely because Dr. Leavis has stated quite dogmatically—emphasising his point by twice using that wretched word *inevitably*—that under the present system no English student gains any knowledge of extra-literary subjects and no students can grapple. Not only is this not true, but Dr. Leavis has completely missed the point. The great beauty of the Cambridge system (as far as arts subjects are concerned) is that anybody with a really good mind can get through the Tripos standing on his head ; and he will have plenty of time left for grappling with his own or, perhaps, another subject. While it is true that the existing system tends to turn the second- or third-rate undergraduate into a cliché-gatherer, it is equally true that this class of student could not, whatever the system, go very deeply into any subject. If it was the general practice to elect only first-class men, or first-class men only because they had "firsts", to Fellowships, there would be a good deal to be said in favour of Dr. Leavis's attack. This, however, is not, in most colleges, the general practice. Dr. Leavis does not seem to realise that the very evils he wishes to avoid, and which he thinks are contained in the present system, would certainly be brought about if his own system was adopted. If English was turned into a "discipline", not only would the curriculum become overloaded and the undergraduate's freedom become sadly restricted, but every departure from the prescribed course would be frowned upon, and far greater importance would be attached to the results of whatever "examinations" took place.

Dr. Leavis's suggestions for the kind of work that should be done by students engaged in a critical study of George Eliot's novels can be roughly summarised as a course of reading that would, at the end of the course, leave the student with a note-book bearing a striking resemblance to Professor Willey's *Nineteenth Century Studies*. The student's note-book, however, would be different from

Professor Willey's book in two important respects. It would be different mainly because the student's trail through the jungle of Victorian literature has been blazed by Dr. Leavis, whose method is to pick out the minds and books worthy of notice, by labelling the minds "disciplined" and the books "classical". John Stuart Mill's writings are recommended because they are pre-eminently the product of a disciplined mind (p. 9) and of a "pre-eminently disciplined thinker" (p. 14). Beatrice Webb is approved because Herbert Spencer "initiated her into the disciplined life of the mind" (p. 23). On the other hand, Coleridge is disapproved because his writings "cannot be said to be the products of a disciplined mind" (p. 9); and it "is not easy to do justice to" Matthew Arnold because "he represents no strict intellectual discipline" (p. 37). The student is advised to read Mill's *Autobiography* because it "is a classic that every cultivated person should have read," and because the "account of young Mill's early training . . . for which it is best known . . . [is] a *locus classicus* of great significance in any case." Similarly, Beatrice Webb's *My Apprenticeship* is described as "one of the classics of English literature;" partly because her account of her struggle to "find a vocation is a classical document of certain essential characteristics of human nature that have played an enormous part in history;" and partly because Dr. Leavis believes she hints that "a literary training, involving its proper discipline of intelligence . . . would be very relevant to the essential qualifications of psychologists and sociologists." The writings of Carlyle and Ruskin are apparently not classical: "Carlyle . . . can be summarized fairly briefly, voluminous as he is;" of Ruskin "it is fairly easy to say what his place and significance are". The qualities of *Praeterita*, however, "should have made it a current classic and . . . make it a document to be read with the *Autobiography* of Mill and *My Apprenticeship*."

The second respect in which the note-book of Dr. Leavis's student would be different from Professor Willey's book, is that it will be based on almost no reading of Victorian literature. Apart from the three autobiographies mentioned above, and, of course, Mill's *Bentham* and *Coleridge*, Dr. Leavis's student will only have read *Hard Times*, and "looked through" the third chapter of Macaulay's *History*. Curiously enough, he is also recommended to read two essays in Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions*: this is curious because the *raison d'être* of this republication of Mill's *Bentham* and *Coleridge* is that *Dissertations* and *Discussions* is unobtainable in addition to these books and essays, Dr. Leavis only recommends secondary works: no mention is made of Mill's *Liberty* or of *Culture and Anarchy*; while *Biographia Literaria* is explicitly, and *Sartor Resartus* and *Unto this Last* are implicitly, dismissed as unworthy of attention.

Of the thirty-eight pages of this *Introduction*, only eight are devoted to Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge. Of these

eight pages, not a single line is devoted to explanatory or critical or historical matter. Although Dr. Leavis quotes freely from the *Autobiography*, it is singularly ungracious of him to omit the one quotation which should always be prefaced to these essays. In this passage, written thirty years after the essays, Mill, having explained that his main purpose in writing these pieces was to dissociate himself from the narrow Benthamism of his youth, continues as follows :

In the first of these, while doing full justice to the merits of Bentham, I pointed out what I thought the errors and deficiencies of his philosophy. The substance of this criticism I still think perfectly just ; but I have sometimes doubted whether it was right to publish it at that time. I have often felt that Bentham's philosophy, as an instrument of progress, has been to some extent discredited before it had done its work, and that to lend a hand towards lowering its reputation was doing more harm than service to improvement. Now, however, when a counter-reaction appears to be setting in towards what is good in Benthamism, I can look with more satisfaction on this criticism of its defects, especially as I have myself balanced it by vindications of the fundamental principles of Bentham's philosophy, which are reprinted along with it in the same collection.† In the essay on Coleridge I attempted to characterize the European reaction against the negative philosophy of the eighteenth century : and here, if the effect only of this one paper were to be considered, I might be thought to have erred by giving undue prominence to the favourable side, as I had done in the case of Bentham to the unfavourable. In both cases, the impetus with which I had detached myself from what was untenable in the doctrines of Bentham and of the eighteenth century, may have carried me, though in appearance rather than reality, too far on the contrary side. But as far as relates to the article on Coleridge, my defence is, that I was writing for Radicals and Liberals, and it was my business to dwell most on that, in writers of a different school, from the knowledge of which, they might derive most improvement.‡

The omission of this passage shows how much Dr. Leavis understands his Mill. It is for this reason that he follows the popular current of the moment,§ seizes upon Mill's crisis of 1826 (marking the relevant passage in the *Autobiography locus classicus*), and moves on—as though that explains Mill's heresies, and as though that is all there is to be said about him. The avidity with which the moderns gobble up Mill's account of his early life, makes it hard to believe that the strikingly similar accounts of early life, contained

† i.e. in *Disertations and Discussions*.

‡ *Autobiography* (1st Ed.) pps. 218 and 219.

§ Cf. Basil Willey: *Nineteenth Century Studies*, and articles by K. W. Britton and R. V. Sampson in the issues of *The Cambridge Journal* for November, 1948, and January, 1950, respectively.

in Trollope's *Autobiography* and Gosse's *Father and Son*, can still be purchased at any bookseller. This failure to understand Mill also results in Dr. Leavis being completely uncritical about the essays on Bentham and Coleridge. For example, Dr. Leavis quotes the following passage from the essay on Bentham without comment : " Who before Bentham (whatever controversies might exist on points of detail) dared to speak disrespectfully, in express terms, of the British Constitution, or the English Law ? " Nowadays every schoolboy knows that Mill was wrong in this supposition, and would know that Dr. Leavis is wrong in thinking him to be right. If Dr. Leavis wants proof that there were men who spoke disrespectfully of the British Constitution in express terms before Bentham, he could do no better than read the recently published diary of Syllas Neville<sup>||</sup>—although it is to be feared that this perusal would result in believing that *nobody* spoke respectfully of the Constitution between 1767 and 1776.

No one will quarrel with Dr. Leavis's ambition to make Mill's essays current classics with literary students. Indeed, since these essays are readily available again, it is to be hoped that they will reach a wide public. Undergraduates reading for Part II of the Historical Tripos (to whom these essays have been recommended for some time) will be particularly grateful to Dr. Leavis for their republication. In the main themes of his *Introduction*, however, Dr. Leavis is by no means above criticism. His way of promoting his " particular approach to the problem of liberal education " is, to say the least, controversial. His suggestions for the " kind of work " that should be done by students engaged on a critical study of George Eliot's novels is open to serious objections. His use of an introduction to historical texts as an occasion to mount an irrelevant hobby horse is deplorable. And, lastly, his neglect of the texts to which he is supposed to be giving an introduction not only calls for reproach, but considerably reduces the value of this edition.

N. A. N.

## CAVEAT EMPTOR

From time to time, I receive from well-intentioned and amicable shopkeepers a small brochure in which they offer to repair my shoes for a pound or give my clothes one of their noted spongings for a handful of half-crowns. These kindly offers I am forced to refuse : but when, on those all too infrequent occasions, I receive, from my favourite publisher, Mr. Demy Octavo, a catalogue of the books which he has the honour of presenting to an unappreciative public, I am sorely tempted to throw discretion out of the window and send for a consignment of his latest delights.

<sup>||</sup> *The Diary of Syllas Neville* (1767-1788). Edited by B. Cozens-Hardy. O.U.P. 1950.

What appeals to me particularly are his comments on his numerous progeny : comments written for the reader who likes to have a slight, though inaccurate, idea of what he is buying. Sometimes, I suspect that Mr. Octavo's comments are more entertaining than the book they advertise ; I suppose this is less than surprising, really, in the case of " Annals and Antiquities of Rajas'han ; or the Central and Western Rajput States of India." But, in the eyes of Mr. Octavo, all his books are equal and he approaches them in a spirit of absolute impartiality : believing that every one of them is packed full from cover to cover with fascinations which must grip and hold the imagination ; and this unswerving faith is not a little moving.

The first page, headed " books of general interest," by which is meant of course, of more than usually general interest, offers for our delight, a volume entitled " The History of Nature " by Carl Friederich von Weizsäcker (who, Octavo obligingly adds, is well-known for establishing the Kant-Laplace nebular theory—he does not say well-known among whom—but presumably in the circles where those subjects are eagerly discussed Weizsäcker is a familiar if unpronounceable name). Having dealt with the Kant-Laplace theory, Weizsäcker is now eager to get down to fundamentals—" whether the material world has limits in space and whether science can carry us beyond pure knowledge in the field of ethics ". Octavo continues : " the answers he suggests, are clear and simple ". Now this will come as no surprise to the circles (already referred to) who are familiar with Weizsäcker's work and remember well enough how he dealt summarily with Kant-Laplace. The rest of us can only be grateful that after two thousand years someone has undertaken to deal with these fundamental questions once for all, so that we can move on to something really useful—an extension of Kant-Laplace, for example.

Although Mr. Octavo naturally feels most at ease in the cosmos, he does not despise less ambitious subjects. In " The Structure of Poetry," Miss Elizabeth Sewell " deals with language as five fields of relations " which are, of course, " Logic, Number, Language, Dream and Nightmare," which are acted on, naturally enough, by " Order " and, in a similar way, " Disorder." Curiously enough, as a result, " a new understanding of poetry emerges." Moreover, " the commonplaces of literary criticism and psychology are missing from this work," which presents " something akin to logic." This is high praise from Mr. Octavo, who has long since abandoned hope of finding logic in literary criticism, and counts himself (and us) very lucky to find something akin to it. Finally, he declares that " the independent thought and the valid results give this work of original and creative scholarship a *quality of suppressed excitement.*" It is hardly surprising that Miss Sewell is excited : having investigated Logic, Number, Dream, Language and Nightmare, small wonder surely if she were bubbling over



with ecstasy. Why, you may ask, should she suppress her feelings? but reflection tells us that Octavo, kindest and most wise of men, is responsible: out of deference for those who deal with subjects superficially less emotional—"The Dynamics of Business Cycles", say,—he has had to be very strict with Miss Sewell,

MR. DEMY OCTAVO COMPLIMENTS MISS ELIZABETH SEWELL ON THE VIVACITY OF "THE STRUCTURE OF POETRY" BUT BEGS THAT SHE SUPPRESS HER EXCITEMENT.

In dealing with Mr. Jaspers, author of a popular family book, "The Perennial Scope of Philosophy", Octavo is back in the cosmos again. Mr. Jaspers has cleared up the problem of "intellectual and moral instability" before many of us have had time to realise that there actually is one. "Man has been uprooted," he explains, "having become aware that he exists in what is but a historically determined and changing situation, it is as if the foundation of being has been shattered. We have been able to see things as they really are and that is why the foundations of life quake beneath our feet." I feel sure that I am echoing Octavo's views when I say that we should not let Mr. Jaspers' obvious gift for metaphor blind us to the value of his conclusions.

But Mr. Octavo has an effective remedy for the quivering foundations of modern life; as he says, "in our present confusions, we can learn much from the astringent clarity of Aristotle's thought." This must be a rebuke to those among us who commonly believe that Aristotle enjoyed all our confusions and possessed some entirely his own. The work that Octavo has particularly in mind is "the short and brilliant 'De Anima,' in the medieval Latin with the Thomist commentary." The most striking quality is perhaps "the dispassionate tranquillity, together with the precise clarity and honest plainness of a style which mirrors the calm yet ever eager mind of a philosopher-saint." Were he alive Octavo could not speak more glowingly of him.

Dr. Karen Horney, however, who sees the neurotic process as a special form of human development, has no time for philosopher-saints. She believes that "under inner stress, a person becomes alienated from his real self and builds up a false-ideal self, based on pride, but harassed by doubts, self-contempt and self-hate." She knows how to deal with "emotional attitudes like domination, self-effacement, dependency or resignation." In fact "she is concerned to liberate the forces which lead to true self-realisation."

One might suppose that Demy Octavo, having ushered in these books with his usual degree of enthusiasm, would be content to ignore the more specialised works; But it is not so: and he has never spoken more wisely or more generously than in his comment on the last book in the catalogue; he says: "For anyone who wishes to understand the Malay character and way of life, some knowledge of Malay proverbial sayings is indispensable."

W. W.

## THE SPACE BETWEEN : A FABLE

The imagination of a boy is healthy and the mature imagination of a man is healthy ; but there is a space of life in between in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided and the ambition thick-sighted . . .

KEATS : Preface to *Endymion*.

David was lying by the edge of the stream watching the minnows being superior to the sticklebacks for having such a ridiculous name. The stream had decided to be busy that morning for the sky was blue and the sun bright and the air full of an eager freshness and skylarks and it was a day to be very lazy, like David, or very busy. But as he lay stretched out on the warm grass watching the current swirl and slide the clear water over the gravel a cloud passed over the sun and the surface of the stream darkened. He no longer looked through the water but at a reflection which appeared on it. It was a face, young and friendly.

"Hullo," said David.

"Hullo," said the face. David had seen the face before but never really noticed it nor looked at it with the curiosity which he did now. "Who are you?" he said.

"That is for you to find out," answered the face. "When you have done so I shall see you again." Then the cloud passed and sunbeams probed through the quiet water and the reflection had gone.

David wondered about the face ; not about what it had said or what it had meant because he did not understand that at all, but he was vaguely intrigued by the surprise and strangeness of the moment which was quite unlike anything he had known before. However he did not think about it for long because he had a journey to make. He had heard people talk about the journey, how easy it was to get lost, what difficulties there were to be met with before you arrived but when he asked, what's difficult about it? they had always sent him to play at the stream. So he had no cause to be frightened especially as the wood through which the first part of his journey lay was something new and exciting. He left the meadows and set off towards the trees.

The track through the wood was grassy and easy to follow at first but after a time David found the bushes becoming thicker and the path less distinct until it suddenly disappeared altogether in a grove of small hazel trees and he was lost. But he was not frightened, only puzzled for before he had always had someone to show him where to go. It was the first time he had been lost and he could not be expected to know that it was the sort of wood which could

only be crossed by losing the way. He made a guess at the direction from which he had come and pushed through the hazel trees hoping to discover the path again. He did not find the path but the hazel trees thinned out and he saw in front of him a glade. The brightness of the stretch of fresh grass, unshaded by any overhead branches dazzled him for the moment and he did not at first see a small chapel which stood against the dark trees on the far side of the open space. But when his eyes had accustomed themselves to the glare, he saw it and was delighted. "How lucky to find this place just as I was afraid I was really lost", he thought and ran across the grass to the chapel. The door of the chapel was open and inside were calm, white walls and dark, gleaming pews and that peculiar warm silence which lingers in country churches. The front pews were filled with worshippers and a benign but blessedly short-sighted priest came forward to greet David, a stranger.

"You have come to join us?" he asked.

"I am not sure," said David. "I have lost myself and I am looking for the right way."

"This is the right way," said the priest.

"Oh, I am very glad I have found it again," said David. And the priest told him that now he knew where he was (David did not know but he did not like to contradict) he must guard against losing the way again by prayer (so David prayed), by self-denial (David gave his sweets for the collection box), and by love of others and forgetfulness of self (David was very kind to the other worshippers who liked him). It was very pleasant in the chapel and David felt a warm satisfaction at being in the right way. But he felt also that he wanted to go out in the wood again and so when the priest was too far away to notice what he was doing he slipped out of the door.

Out in the glade he heard a sound of voices talking angrily. They seemed to come from behind the chapel and he saw a small path leading through the trees in that direction. "That's odd", he thought, "the priest told me that the path ended at the chapel"; and he set out to explore. The noise grew louder as he approached and going into the wood he could make out among the shadows a crowd of little men rushing about among the trees. They all had butterfly nets and were dashing around trying to capture some thin, grey creatures, rather like ferrets, which scuttled along the ground and up the trees. One little man with beady eyes and a bow tie had just caught one and was yelling at a thin man in spectacles; "But look! This just shows that the empirical treatment of subconscious phenomena results in a vicious emphasis on psychological traits . . ." "You don't seem acquainted with Schulingrand on that point," interrupted Spectacles witheringly, pulling another grey creature out of his coat pocket. It was a rather old, scraggy creature and looked as if it was caught a long time ago and had not been fed properly. Before David could hear

what was the answer to this he was nearly knocked over by an elderly man wearing a gown and mortarboard who had just trapped a particularly elusive creature. "At last," panted the old man, "caught a Final Causation. I must go and show it to Bradon who trapped a very fine Universal only yesterday," and he trotted off. David was quite bewildered but he did not like to show it especially as it seemed wrong not to be terribly interested in what was going on as everybody else was. He found a little man who was having a rest from chasing and asked him what it was all about. The man removed his cigarette holder and looked at him contemptuously.

"You sweet young thing," he said. "Where have you come from?"

"The chapel," said David.

"You cherub," said the man and replaced his cigarette holder. David was embarrassed. He felt he should make some protest against this sneer and tell the man how good the chapel was and how he had liked it but a small crowd had gathered and David was afraid of making himself look foolish. But the unpleasantness of the man made him uneasy for he had not met with contempt before and for long afterwards he wished he had spoken out. He was ashamed of himself and unconsciously he blamed the chapel for being the cause of his shame. But he was still bewildered and he asked again what was happening.

"Well, really," said the man, "if you are not interested in Ideas I do not know what you are doing here."

"Are the grey creatures Ideas?" asked David.

"Of course," replied the man.

"But what do you do when you have caught them?" asked David.

"What an absurdly naïve question," said the man and dashed off, butterfly net billowing behind him.

David stood for a moment thinking, that he had begun to understand why the people at home had told him the journey would be difficult. What were these men doing? Could they really be serious about it? But his attention was caught by two men who were bending over a creature they had trapped. They were arguing about it and one of the men held a scalpel and a bottle of chloroform poised over it.

"No, no," said the other man who was a poet, "it's no good probing it and cutting it up and analysing it; that won't tell you anything at all. You must see that it has a beauty of its own."

"I don't see that at all," said the first man. "It looks scruffy to me—and it has fleas. It's sentimental drivel to call it beautiful!"

The poet sighed. "It only needs an acorn of sympathy to see that ugly things can be beautiful!" The other man beckoned to David and whispered, "What he means by sympathy is imagination. He just imagines everything." David nodded. "But scientists have more sense," the man added applying the chloroform.

The poet smiled at David. "Do you see the sky?" he asked. David looked up and between the high branches he saw the clear, blue sky. He had not noticed it since he left the glade and it brought back to his mind the quiet chapel and the organ music. He felt happy again for the first time since he had started exploring.

"It's more beautiful than ideas, you know," said the poet.

"That's true," said David.

"Yes," said the poet. "Beauty is truth. None of the others here notice it." It seemed to David that the poet had more sense and kindness than anyone he had met in this part of the wood so he asked him if he could show him the right way.

"Have you ever been in love?" asked the poet.

"No," said David.

"A pity, it would have been easier perhaps if you had; but there's the way," and the poet pointed to a leafy path leading away through tall beeches.

David took the path which after a time broadened out into a small clearing where the way was blocked by a lot of people who were all extremely busy doing things. David tried to make his way through them but it was difficult and suddenly an aggressive man stopped him and asked him what he was loafing about for.

"I am looking for the right way," said David. "I have come from the chapel and met the people chasing Ideas and the poet and now I have come here. What are you doing?"

"We're living," said the man brusquely. "We have not time to throw away on chapels or Ideas or poetry. Everyone's got to live you know. Here, get on this," and he gave David a bicycle and told him to ride. David did so, but though he pedalled hard he found he was not getting anywhere. The bicycle did not move. So he stopped pedalling but immediately the aggressive man rushed up to him.

"What've you stopped for?"

"I am not getting anywhere."

"Cheeky young flipper! Keep the wheels of industry turning and stop thinking or you won't get any lunch." So David went on pedalling, largely because everyone else was also busily doing things which seemed equally pointless. But he disliked the aggressive man and became very bored with pedalling and longed for the chapel and the poet and even the people chasing ideas who though rather odd did seem more sensible than these busybodies. So he waited for a good moment and then slipped off the bicycle and dashed away through the crowd and into the wood until the pursuing shouts of "irresponsible," "escapist," and "enemy to the workers" had died away behind him.

He sat down wearily on a tree stump in a quiet part of the wood and wondered. The journey was much more difficult than he had ever expected. Who were right? The worshippers in the chapel? The people chasing ideas—and how did they know which ones to

chase when there were so many? The poet? The scientist? The workers? And had they nothing to do with one another as it seemed? And why should he bother to decide anyway? Wasn't it quiet and pleasant in this part of the wood by himself? He would have liked to go back to the chapel which was familiar and offered a haven in his restlessness. But it was a long way back now and he did not feel sufficiently sure of himself to prefer it with resolution against the Idea-chasers, the Poet, the Scientist or the Workers. He wished he could have felt sure, and envied the other worshippers who did not seem to know about the difficulties he had found. Perhaps he would go back later, but not now. He felt it might just be laziness preventing him but even so he refused to pretend to anything which he did not wholeheartedly believe to be right. It was this determination which was to bring David safely out of the wood but he did not know that then. It only made him feel more worried because it brought him to reject, together with the chapel, the other ways of life which he had seen. There was something unsatisfactory about all of them.

But though the questions seemed unanswerable he suddenly realised that it was a certain achievement ever to have asked them. At one time he had been very self-assured and definite about things not realising that the questions existed at all. But now, though the questions troubled him, and he did not yet know the answers, he did at least know that the right way was not easy or straightforward. He remembered the poet who had understood and had helped him; he had learnt the value of sympathy from the poet. He had been told about it in the chapel too and the priest was kindly but he had not fully understood because he had not then met with unkindliness. But thinking it over he realised that the priest and the poet had shown him something more worthwhile than any of the others and he thought that he would try to be as they were. He would like other people to feel towards him as he did towards them. This was vague and clumsy in David's mind and at heart a selfish feeling but it was the first time he had ever tried to account for his own behaviour and to understand himself. Then to be like the priest and the poet, thought David, I must try and understand other people; and at last he realised that the journey had been difficult largely just because he had been so busy considering himself, and what people thought about him and whether he was looking foolish or out of place; and that he had hardly once considered what other people were themselves thinking or feeling and how they had probably made much the same journey themselves at one time, and had been worried by the same questions and found the answers as difficult.

While he had been thinking he had got up from the tree stump and been walking along a path busy with his thoughts but now he looked up and to his delight he discovered he was out of the wood. Meadowland lay in front of him but the countryside was richer

than that on the other side of the wood and he saw it with a fresh joy from being so long among the tress and the half-light. He saw people working in the fields and was glad to see them and went to talk to them eager to find out how they had journeyed. But as he was going to them across the meadow he saw the stream. It was the same stream but much broader and more peaceful. He ran to the bank and looked at the water ; and he was looking at the face.

“Hullo,” said David.

“Hullo,” said the face.

“I am glad to have found you again,” said David, “because I know who you are now.”

“You don’t,” said the face. “But you are beginning to know.”

*C. T.-W.*

## HUMOUR IN LAW

The humour of law is not locked in the breasts of judges. Nobody tries to be funny. But a science which is concerned exclusively with the peculiar things that people do can rarely be dull. Unless a case has some peculiar twist which puts it beyond the range of normally accepted conventions there would not be any cause for bringing it before a court. It follows that the twist must often be a humorous one. We can read, for instance, the case of the highwayman, who in about 1725 filed a bill in Equity for an account against his partner. The case recites an oral partnership between the defendant and the plaintiff, who was “skilled in dealing with several sorts of commodities,” and that the parties had “proceeded jointly in the said dealings with good success on Hounslow Heath, where they dealt with a gentleman for a gold watch.” Further recitals show that the parties had at Finchley “dealt with several gentleman for divers watches, rings, swords, canes, hats, cloaks, horses, bridles, saddles and other things to the value of £200 and upward” and how there was a gentleman at Blackheath, who had several things to dispose of, which the defendant represented “might be had for little or no money, in case they could prevail on the said gentleman to part with the said things.” The bill was dismissed as scandalous and impertinent. For the sake of record it should be added that the plaintiff, Everett, was executed at Tyburn in 1730 and the defendant, Joseph Williams at Maidstone in 1727.

Other peculiarities arise from the nature of the English legal system, which has always developed empirically from case to case. One consequence of this practical approach is that everything submitted to the court has to be proved. Judges are presumed to know nothing except the law. Nevertheless some facts recur so

often that their Lordships officially announce that they can now be assumed to be aware of them and that in future these particular facts need not be proved. They have accordingly recognised judicially that Oxford and Cambridge Universities are educational establishments, that a cat is a domestic animal and that the value of money has depreciated since the reign of Richard II. They have also deigned to notice judicially that rain falls. The headnote of a case reported in 1845 records that it was held that "the court will take judicial notice that rain falls, and after a lapse of time, in the absence of evidence that none has fallen, will presume that there has been rain."

A great deal of innocent amusement can also be derived from the working of the Real Property laws by anyone with a malicious sense of humour and no proprietary interests. Imagine the consternation of the gentleman who grants a perpetually renewable lease when he discovers afterwards that such a lease is converted by statute into a term of 2000 years. One can sympathise with the man who, in order to evade technical rules concerning perpetuity, made a gift by will to take effect 21 years after the death of the last survivor of all persons living at the time of his death. This limitation, not unreasonably, was held void for uncertainty. On the other hand another gentleman who made a similar disposition by will to all his descendants living 20 years after the death of the last survivor of the descendants of Queen Victoria living at the time of his own death, was given the reluctant support of the courts. Another very gallant effort to subvert the course of justice was made at the end of the eighteenth century by a certain Mr. Thellusson, a man of great wealth. Taking great care to keep well within the law he directed that the income from his lands should be accumulated at compound interest during the lives of his sons and grandsons living at his death and at the end of their lives to be distributed among his male descendants. At the time it was calculated that the accumulation would endure for about 80 years and that it would produce approximately 100 million pounds. The courts held the will to be valid but Parliament intervened with an enactment to prevent what was called "posthumous avarice".

Finally, to depart from the purely factual sphere, it is worth mentioning that many of the idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of the law have been very effectively exploited as a source of humour by A. P. Herbert in a series of fictitious cases published under the title of "Uncommon Law". His favourite butt is the marriage laws. With regard to the divorce laws he points out that in order to "preserve the institution of marriage and the purity of the home" it is essential that one party commits adultery. Physical fidelity is the vital element of the marriage bond. He wonders also by what process of reasoning it has been possible for judges to reach the conclusion that although there was sufficient evidence that 'A' had committed misconduct with 'B' yet there was not enough



evidence to show that ' B ' had committed misconduct with ' A '. With less bitterness in another case, Sir Alan Herbert, demonstrated completely to his own satisfaction that marriage is a contract void under the gaming acts and yet in another, that a cow, invested with all the dignity of a Bill of Exchange can be quite validly negotiable.

The conclusion is inescapable. " Go to the law with slow foot but hasten from it with eagle's wings."

*C. L.*

## BERTRAM 'S PHILOSOPHY

He stood, with legs apart, in front of the empty fireplace. His hair fell into his eyes and from time to time he negligently brushed it back over his bony forehead—but in vain for after a few minutes it flopped back again over his prominent brow. Glaring under his bushy eyebrows, Bertram gesticulated madly.

" The Philosophy of Life," he stated emphatically, " is Truth and Beauty ; and by Truth and Beauty I don't just mean Freedom from falsehood and how lovely the trees are in Autumn, but an innermost feeling that one is in tune with the momentum of the world to-day." He stopped gesticulating and pointed a dramatic finger at me. I felt embarrassed, sitting there on his sofa, and wriggled uncomfortably, wishing that Bertram wouldn't stare at me as if I was the cause of all the falsehood and ugliness which seemed to spoil his life. I realised from previous experience that it was useless to try and defend myself—in fact I knew that I wasn't expected to speak. A few sympathetic words were all that were required and a raising of eyebrows at the right moments which could in no way impair the flow of his rhetoric. Bertram over-powered me and I was conscious the whole time that most of what he said was for mere effect. I shook myself into attention as Bertram prepared for a fresh dramatic outburst.

" Look at you, Clarence ! " he accused. " Why, my dear sir, you go through life as if you were bored with your very existence. Your world is governed by Jennifer's Social Diary and the more sensational articles in the Spectator. You don't even," and here he leaned forward, hovering over me like some bird of prey, " you don't even consider what life means."

I nodded my head brightly, and then, realizing his accusation, shook it in an ashamed manner. The fact was I was absolutely petrified with the cold. The temperature in Bertram's room must have been about three degrees below freezing point. Outside it was snowing steadily and long icicles were forming under the window-ledges. Bertram seemed immune to the cold, and anyway his constant flow of conversation and frequent gesticulations must have helped to warm him. But I, sitting on that ghastly sofa,

denied even the privilege of warming myself either in speech or gesticulation, I was forced to huddle into a corner and hope for a speedy escape.

Bertram resumed his stance in front of the comfortless grate. He had a pleased smile on his face, for he had told me that I hadn't even considered what life meant and I had agreed. He laughed genially and I realised that a joke was about to be put forth for my entertainment—an obscure joke, but still a joke. I prepared myself and at the same time wondered what was the best cure for frostbite. My preparations for Bertram's jokes were always the same. I took a deep breath and allowed it to escape in shuddering jerks which represented suppressed laughter. Following this routine, I bared my gums and, taking a deep breath, prepared for action.

"Oscar Wilde", Bertram said, "even you must have heard of him. Well it seems that Oscar once said—'The Philosophy of Life ——'." I was however doomed never to hear dear Oscar's witty saying, for it was here I started to let my breath go and to shudder with seemingly suppressed mirth. Unfortunately, about halfway through my merriment, I coughed and sneezed at the same time. This coupled with my mirth proved too much for the sofa and I disappeared to the accompaniment of ominous groans and twangings.

Shaking with hysterical laughter, I extricated myself from the melee of stuffing and broken springs. At length I recovered and turned to find that Bertram was not amused. He was livid.

"Look at my sofa!" he screamed. "Look what you've done." I made some inane apologies, but I felt so ill that I quickly left. Returning to my room, I shivered for about an hour and, going to bed, rapidly relapsed into a coma. I was moved to a hospital where I was treated for exposure. Realising that I had not long to live, the authorities sent for my nearest and dearest. Bertram was the first to come. Through the haze of semi-consciousness, I heard Bertram say: "Extraordinary thing. I was with Clarence the afternoon he was taken ill. He seemed all right then. In fact we had a heated discussion on the Philosophy of Life."

Discussion! Heated! It was too much. I groaned faintly and, turning my face to the wall I quietly passed away. About a week after my death, I passed Bertram's rooms and, having nothing in particular to do, I floated in to see how he was. It was still snowing and I wasn't really surprised to see an empty grate. Bertram was, as usual, in front of the fireplace, gesticulating. I hovered over his head and looked at his victim.

"The Philosophy of Life, as I see it," Bertram was saying, "is Truth and Beauty." I looked at the youngster cowering on the mended sofa and, taking note of his dazed expression, I picked up a heavy brass ornament from the mantelpiece and killed Bertram.

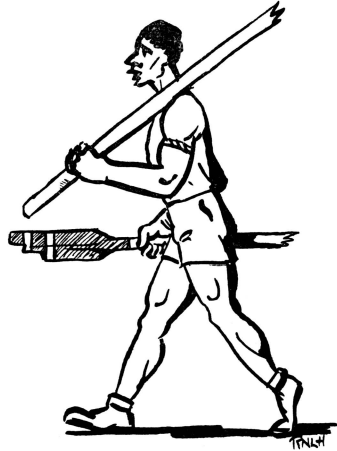
It was rather foolish of me really, for at the moment Bertram is with me holding forth on the Philosophy of Death.

*J. H. K. T.*

## A REVIEW OF COLLEGE SPORT

A term of cloud and rain. Of mud-caked rigger balls, of hockey balls black before five minutes have elapsed ; of golf balls sluggishly rolling over the sodden greens. Perhaps the wetbobs were better off after all . . .

Or were they better off? Truth to say, the BOAT CLUB had what may be charitably called an 'off' season. The four boats entered for the Fairbairn could not maintain last year's successes and the end of the Lents saw the majority of the college boats in need of an extensive re-varnish on the stern. Individual honours, however, came to the Club, for R. C. Wright stroked the winning Trial VIII and has been spare man for the Blue Boat.



Pride of place this term must go to the ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL team. Results in the League were satisfactory, if not outstanding, for the college was placed third, but it was to the Cuppers that everyone looked. On paper a strong side could be fielded, including R. Cowan who gained his International cap against Wales, G. W. Hall who played centre-forward in the drawn University match, and E. W. N. Jackson who had been laid up last term after an operation. Added to these were N. Marshall, a 1945 Blue, and two Falcons, R. C. Peagram and P. Jones, and the best of the League side and it seemed likely that, given a chance to settle down, the team would do well. And so it turned out. Disposing of Peterhouse, Trinity, St Cath's and St John's the team faced Emmanuel at Grange Road in the Final. A colourful procession preceded the match, but sad to tell, it was to a dead march that it returned down Sidgwick Avenue, for an opportunist goal by Laybourne gave Emmanuel a 1-0 victory, just when we were re-lighting our pipes and settling down to a seemingly inevitable period of extra time. So the Soccer season came to a most satisfactory end. A good spirit was reflected throughout the Club and the 2nd XI, under the enthusiastic captaincy of D. R. Melville, had a particularly happy season.

Next year's captain is J. L. Bretherton, and it is interesting to note that it was his father who led Queens' to a Cuppers victory in the 'twenties. Like father like son?

The Gods who arrange the RUGGER Cuppers draw seem to have a singularly one-track mind for we were drawn for the third year in succession against Downing. The College led by six points to nil at the interval but afterwards the pack seemed to tire a little and the superior weight and fire of the Downing eight enabled them eventually to run out winners by eleven points to six. In the League the College finished better than at one time seemed likely, and, far from descending to 'bottomless perdition', actually rose two places in the table. D. A. Quine played for the Varsity on occasion, although handicapped by a recurrent knee injury, whilst T. E. Richardson, J. G. Clarke, M. Phillips, and D. Stone have all played for the LX Club, and M. Emerson twice for Durham in the County Championship.

The CRICKET CLUB has been active only in the minds of its members thinking back to last season and looking forward to this and to the subsequent tour in Somerset. The odd member has been seen whirling his arm in the cloisters or practising a leg glide with his umbrella, and he has had much opportunity for this during the term. The freshmen include D. Barker, a left-hander who has played for Hampshire 2nd XI, and J. S. Guthrie, last year's captain of the Eton XI, who also gained his half-blue this term for Eton Fives.



The HOCKEY CLUB has met with mixed fortune this term. The 1st XI did well in the League, winning seven and drawing one of their eight games, and thus gained promotion to Div. 1. With E. N. Button and R. Braams playing in the Varsity match and N. C. Wright and J. A. Skues turning out regularly for the Wanderers it might have been expected that the team would fare well in the Cuppers but illness deprived the team of two sound players, and Clare, taking their chances and working the ball well, won the match and incidentally went on to take the cup, beating Trinity Hall in the Final 4-1.

A very active term at Fenners saw the ATHLETIC CLUB retain its place among the first six in Div. 1, and it might have done even better had not injuries and the 'flu' epidemic deprived the team of three of its most valuable members at the last moment. In the University Sports Queens' men were prominent in the Field Events where J. G. Clarke took the Discus with 116 ft. 5 ins, A. C. L. Wood the Long Jump with 21 ft. 7 ins, and B. L. Callaway the Javelin. The President, E. Collins, ran a 2 min. 1.3 sec. half-mile to take third place and subsequently he and Clarke were



PHALACROCORAX ARTISTOTELIS ARTISTOTELIS?

*Photograph John Upcott*

This bird, seen in Queens' in December, 1950, is almost certainly an immature shag rather than a cormorant. The last certainly identified shag was found in October, 1948, walking out of the Leys School cricket pavilion, and the Rev. E. A. Armstrong was able to count its tail feathers.

elected to the Achilles Club, whilst Wood and Callaway were selected to represent Cambridge against Oxford at the White City, and took 4th and 2nd place in their events respectively.

The SQUASH team, promoted last term to Div. II, has had a hard job defending its new position and it is possible that when the final tables are compiled the team will have to return to the more placid atmosphere of Div. III. The Cuppers saw the team beat Trinity Hall 4-1 in the first round and then succumb to a strong King's team in the second. Individual success went to G. W. T. Atkins, who besides playing Racquets and Real Tennis for the University, gained International Squash honours and won his match against Ireland.

The BADMINTON CLUB fared but moderately, winning two out of five League matches and losing 3-0 to Cath's in the first round of the Cuppers, but the TABLE TENNIS CLUB had a successful term. The 2nd team gained promotion to Div. I, whilst the newly raised 4th team missed promotion by one point. In the Cuppers the Singles and Doubles teams both reached the semi-final, to be beaten 4-5 and 3-2 by Trinity and Christ's respectively.



College SWIMMING has been non-existent this term as the Leys School Baths have been under repair, and the RIFLE CLUB has been inactive, although individuals have played an appreciable part in University Clubs. The Small Bore VIII, which beat Oxford in a breath-taking match by one point, included two Queens' men, H. W. Symons, the captain, and P. W. Taylor who achieved the joint highest score in the match with 98 points out of a possible 100.

This term five members of the BOXING CLUB have boxed on occasion for the University. Of these A. G. Ouseley-Smith and G. J. Streetly were invited to box in the Oxford match, but Ouseley-Smith had the singular misfortune to break his leg and so missed his Blue, and Streetly had his eye opened in the first round of the Oxford match and had to retire, when he appeared to be out-boxing his opponent.

The GOLFING SOCIETY have played two foursomes this term, losing to Downing 3-0 off handicap, but defeating Emmanuel 2-1. R. A. Hope has played regularly for the University and has been invited to play against Oxford at Rye.

Hope has proved the most versatile athlete in the College this year, for in addition to his Golfing success he has played Ice-Hockey for the Varsity and took part in the Ski match against

Oxford. In the Ice-Hockey match the first line consisted entirely of McGill University and Queens' men—R. E. Parsons, H. A. Hampson and R. A. Hope, whilst A. Mathewson, rapidly becoming the 'Fergie' of Ice-Hockey, was again business and baggage manager.

In the UNIVERSITY SKI race Parsons, Hope, and S. Parkinson participated in a decisive Cambridge win, and Parkinson later came 2nd to Boyaygis in the British Open Ski Championships.

In the realms of JUDOKYA P. Turner, now a Green Belt, again took part in the University match and gained a throw and hold down in under the permitted five minutes to contribute to a Cambridge 4-3 victory. And another Queens' man to gain recognition in a more awe-inspiring sport, at least in name, is D. Harris, who has been invited to fight Sabre against Oxford in the University Fencing match.

Lest such terrifying sports should discourage the layman let us add that there is one sport in which all can participate and where all grades of skill can find satisfaction.

A short walk across the road and down the steps of the 'Anchor' leads one into a punt and here everyone can take the exercise, from the man who is happy to punt from the well of the boat and who suffers from acute vertigo if perched on the extreme end of the platform, to the expert, exemplified in Mr. Hart, whose effortless and harmonious propulsion excites admiration from Queens' to Magdalene.

Or if these exertions are too strenuous one can always halt at the bottom of the steps and exercise one's elbow, sitting on a bench in the sun, and talk of one's revision programme for the Tripos. Happy Days.



*D. A. P.*

## COLLEGE SOCIETIES

Despite the unfortunate experience of the History Society, where only two members turned up to one intended meeting, the college societies have had a successful term. The ST MARGARET SOCIETY has recently had two excellent organ recitals by Peter Gannon, when the music played ranged from an early seventeenth-century German suite to some modern English liturgical Preludes. Mozart's Fantasia in F minor for a "mechanical organ", Schumann's Sketch for pedal piano, and two pieces by Gabriel Pierné were also included. In both these recitals David Rees played an unaccompanied work for the flute.

In our last issue, it was suggested that the ST. BERNARD SOCIETY was taking a new lease of liveliness, but the single debate of this term, when the House preferred to reign in Hell rather than serve in Heaven, hardly seems to have justified the prophecy. Beer was the life-blood of the St. Bernard; now, alas, that is as water in its veins, and it is doubtful if anything less than a transfusion of champagne will restore the sparkle to its speaking.

There have been three meetings of the QUEENS' BENCH. The first was the now traditional moot, this time upon defamation. Mr. Armitage, puisne judge of the Court of Queens' Bench for the evening, gave judgment for the appellants represented by Messrs. Mathewson and Leach. In the middle of the term Professor Lauterpacht, K.C., spoke upon "Idealism and Realism in International Law and Politics", a meeting to which the History Society was invited. At the end of term the Bench had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bradley, who spoke on the Borstal system, for which he is Chief Prison Commissioner. The annual dinner after Tripos in June will complete the Society's activities and the success of the year, due largely to the enthusiasm of the President, K. Maddocks, and to Mr. Armitage's active support, augurs well for the future.

The HISTORY SOCIETY has heard two interesting papers, one by K. R. Read on "Bolingbroke", who appeared as a more considerable thinker than had previously been supposed, and one by J. R. Williams on "Englishmen and the Continent in the Eighth Century", showing that, in those days, we travelled with a more edifying purpose. The highlight of the term, however, was a talk on "Champ Clerk" by that superb historian, Mr. Edward Welbourne of Emmanuel. The Secretary writes: "This talk was like a magic carpet, on which we were carried far both in space and in time. The Society lurked up the back stairs of the White House, peeped through the keyhole of No. 10 Downing Street, and hid behind a tree in the Middle West of about 1860, while a member of a quasi-Presbyterian sect of Muggletonian Seventh-Day Adventists shot his brother-in-law in the back, after prayer and reconciliation." The last talk of the term, which an



unprecedented number of members attended, was by the Chief Constable of the Borough, Mr. B. N. Bebbington, on the "History of Scotland Yard", a subject which lent itself to much contemporary, and fascinating, anecdote. Regretfully, the Society decided that, after two annual dinners in six months, it could not hold a third on Ascension Day, and agreed to a sherry party instead.

The MEDICAL SOCIETY'S meetings were well supported this term, and three interesting papers were read. The President, R. O. Selby, spoke on "Some Aspects of the History of Medicine", reminding the Society of some great physicians of the Old World; Dr. Gumpert gave a talk on Clinical Medicine with many amusing anecdotes, and Mr. Bull reminded his audience of bygone years when they admired Peter Rabbit—an animal, incidentally, now excrated as vermin.

The ECONOMICS GROUP was addressed by Mr. Dennison, Mr. Reddaway, J. D. Pole and Mrs. Robinson. To the last meeting the Secretary, Mr J. E. Vaizey in a moment of aberration invited several hundred people: most of them came, and so heated an atmosphere was created that D. A. Brunt's matches exploded.

The KANGAROOS enjoyed their hockey match with C.U. Women, despite the non-appearance of players from Girton, who were deterred, perhaps, by the weather. O. B. Poplewell, who was playing umpire, refused to blow the final whistle until his side had scored the winning goal. The Kangaroos dinner-dance took place, by coincidence, on Australia Day.



The CHERUBS' termly dinner, at which Mr. Garth Moore of Corpus was the principal guest, was also memorable for the appearance of N. A. Neville in cummerbund and fez. Another enjoyable meeting took the form of dinner at the English Speaking Union, before a visit to the Marx Brothers at the Arts Cinema. A hockey fixture with the Natives of Jesus was arranged, but subsequently cancelled owing to an insufficiency of players on both sides. Mr. Gilbert

Harding attended a Cherubs' cocktail party at which he presented the Secretary, J. L. M. Denham, with a pair of Cherub club-stockings and a bow tie. It is hoped to invite as guests for the Easter term's dinner both Mr. Harding and Mr. Potter, the celebrated Lifeman.

From this account of rich and varied activity, it is clearly apparent that the College Societies are not merely overflows or tributaries of the University Societies, as some malicious persons suggest, but add very considerably to the enjoyment of college life. *F. J.S.W.*

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METCALFE & CO. LIMITED  
CAMBRIDGE