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POLITICS BOOKS TRAVEL

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ANALYSIS

SELDOM has history witnessed such tuneless fiddling in the dead, nostalgic world of illusion, while the live world of present reality burns. Is other comment possible on the Commonwealth Conference? The two vital issues of the period were Mr. Khrushchev's offer to retire from Europe if America would do the same, and Britain's diminishing chance to enter effectively into Europe; the first was evaded by the Prime Minister, and the second was blethered and bungled by Sir David Eccles. So much for realities.

Then came the retreat into the world of illusion, where people pursuing such fundamentally different policies in world affairs as Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Nehru can meet in the forced festivity of a "family" reunion, and the youngest member can be persuaded with the easy sugar of flattery to swallow the bitter pill that he has not a hope on earth of quickly drawing the cash which is owing to him, and which provides his only real interest in the jejune proceedings. "This is a conference of statesmen representing all the members of the Commonwealth, countries conducting their own affairs in their own way . . . not always unanimous . . . we agreed on some things, disagreed on others . . . as a result each of our countries can develop its own policies in these matters." In the Prime Minister's well-rounded summary of the results the world of illusion became complete.

His final sentences were "We have a special relationship with the countries of Europe, which we hope to strengthen and extend. But on one thing we are all agreed—if there should at any time be a conflict between the calls upon us, there is no doubt where we stand; the Commonwealth comes first in our hearts and in our minds." Conservatism made a characteristic choice between illusion and reality. Thus the party was kept together at the expense of Britain and Europe.

All of this goes very well while the going is good. The gentle art of jollying along keep things going nicely as long as things are jolly. But the very skill of this ancient craft of bourgeois statesmanship rebounds with disastrous force upon the user when things go wrong. The consequent unpopularity is then in rough proportion to the previous humbug; the banquet of public disfavour eventually awaiting present statesmanship may well make the 18b experience a modest picnic.

Is "The Commonwealth" becoming a discreditable episode between the glories of the old Empire and the new Europe?

The simple facts are, that the Commonwealth has only been kept going at all during years of unparalleled world boom by the senior partner living on gifts and borrowed money, which he has shared as sparingly as possible with other members; in fact, he has milked some of the colonies very freely to contribute to his own free living in the days of their dependence, and now faces nemesis in the shape of the sterling balances in the days of their independence. The recent process of living on the backs of the colonies is now likely to be reversed by the new process of the colonies living on the back of the mother country, which cannot possibly support the burden for the good reason that, when all props are removed, she cannot in her present condition even stand on her own legs.

We do not believe the present condition of Britain is either characteristic or permanent — for we exist to prove the contrary; we merely state the current facts. If anyone doubts these facts let him take a first look at the figures of the last decade, to which Lord Bruce made a transient reference mentioned in our last issue; then take a look at the sterling balances, colonial and other (which now total £2,800 millions), in relation to our recent balance of payments position; and finally take a look at our current price level in relation to those of our most acute competitors.* Let him then ask himself whether a country thus burdened can support

RETAIL PRICE COMPARISONS

From the Annual Report of the O.E.E.C., published in April 1957, with the year 1953 as 100.

	France	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	U.K.	U.S.A.
1950	77.4	93.0	85.8	88.0	81.0	89.9
1953	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
end of 1956	103.1	106.0	111.2	109.0	114.0	103.2

itself, and many new countries in urgent need of development capital, by acquiring the necessary surplus of exports over imports in face of competition on world markets not only from European countries, but from America, Japan and other cheap labour Oriental countries, whose attack on our industrial position will soon be powerfully aided by the deliberate market-breaking dumping of Russia; not to mention any possibility of world recession following a relaxation of international tension, with consequent reduction of the armament boom and a return to more normal conditions. The fact is that the present talk of "Commonwealth" by both the Conservative and Labour parties is not only a wish dream, within which they withdraw from the real effort of entering and building Europe, but is often a dishonest humbug which, in the stress of recent times, has been maintained by some very dubious methods. The present Commonwealth has become a discreditable episode in Britain's transition from the glories of the old Empire to the glories of the new Europe.

The Danger of Britain's Exclusion From Europe

The most real question remaining after a prolonged record of hesitation and prevarication, is whether Britain will eventually be permitted entry into Europe at all? The universally courted leader of the early days may easily find himself at the end of a queue of applicants for admission in the latter days, when a most conservative combination of simple inertia, insular suspicion, neo-aristocratic arrogance and sheer spoilt-brat petulance has taken for granted the best of both worlds and ended by obtaining the advantages of neither. France and Germany are rapidly learning to get on together without the British intermediary, who was not long ago regarded as essential by both. The European market is being formed and the benefits of the participants will soon be evident. Those who have taken the plunge and brought in their colonies and their agriculture, may discover a boon in the actual working of that real market which will mitigate their sorrow at the reluctance of Britain to share it; they were seeking partners in adversity in a dark, menacing and uncertain future, but they may not be ready to seek competitors in a stable and established prosperity. "He who will not when he may, if he won't may stay away"; so rings the old nursery jingle with an age-old verity.

Even within the Establishment some of the shrewder members

recall that they have been caught like that before, and for the first time orthodox voices are now raised in warning at the prospect of exclusion. So Britain, the eagerly solicited leader of yesterday, must today hurry to catch up with the rear of the column, or fall out for good. Great are the blessings of the Establishment and sacred are all its mandarins; so let any impiety of "uneasy thoughts" be stilled.

The Dominions, and European Market; also Mr. Diefenbaker?

It is indeed difficult to discover what Britain and the Dominions do want; while the colonies, of course, have not yet had time to think beyond the first question of how much money can be squeezed from Britain to gild independence. Mr. Diefenbaker on his return to Canada from the Commonwealth Conference made the following statement to the press: "Canada would look benevolently on any British participation in plans for closer association in Europe providing—and he emphasised the word—that Commonwealth agricultural products were not excluded from the European market. Canada, he said, sold about $100 millions worth of agricultural goods to European countries each year, exclusive of Britain, and it would be serious to Canada if that valuable market were lost."

The same *Times* report of 8/7/57 indicated that Mr. Diefenbaker at the Commonwealth Conference "did not get very far with the question of the disposal of Canadian wheat, which is going to be a major problem for his government."

Here at last are signs of a new impetus towards sense, which has long seemed plain to plain people. For years past the Dominions have been asking from the mother country a market for the foodstuffs and the primary products which the British Isles are far too small to provide. Why, then, in the name of reason or sanity itself, should they be regarded as the main obstacles to entry into the large market they have long demanded, and at last have a real chance of obtaining? The statement of Mr. Diefenbaker seems fully conscious of this straight fact. At last we approach reason, for we cannot believe that a statesman of some realism would suggest that Britain and the Dominions can enter into the European market, unless Europe can enter into their markets. Such childish, best-of-both-worlds nonsense would surely be too far out of the real world for any responsible person to suggest it.

So for the moment, at least, we must happily regard Mr. Diefenbaker as a convert to full entry into the European market.

Mr. Menzies says the opposite.

Mr. Menzies, however, appeared to say exactly the opposite. According to the *Daily Express* of 10/7/57, Mr. Menzies stated : Australians were keeping a very watchful eye that agricultural goods should be excluded from the free trade area agreement." Yet in the same column Lord Beaverbrook's paper lamented the loss of Mr. Menzies, with the phrase that he " made evident his loss of faith in the Empire cause "; it is all very confusing, for according to Lord Beaverbrook the Empire cause has long been the obstruction of the European cause. But at least Mr. Menzies made one thing clear : he stated that " in his younger days he had hoped that the Empire countries ' as the oldest community of nations ' might have spoken with one powerful voice on world issues. But now such things as the Prime Ministers' Conference ended with an agreed communiqué and ' the rule is you now say nothing '." He added sadly : " it is best to know if there is any chance of agreement " before entering into any such thing as an Empire Economic Conference.

Mr. Menzies thus made clear to all what the Prime Minister's laboured circumlocution had already made clear to some : the Commonwealth Conference has become a nostalgic farce, it is divided on all major issues of the age and, therefore, is paralysed and inhibited from any effective action.

The only remaining importance of this dead dream is that it divides Britain from the living reality of Europe. The Establishment killed the Empire during their very own war, which also killed many fine men and many beautiful things. In reality, their only remaining task is to bury their dead; " let the dead bury their dead "— they too are dead, but they do not yet know it.

Common Government in Europe, or communism's victory?

When all this is said, of course it remains true that both British industry and British and Dominion farming, will receive some very severe jolts if they enter the European market in present conditions and without more ado, whether it be full entry into the Common Market or merely entry into the Free Trade Area. In the end we are driven back always to the same point; common market will not really work without common government. The six countries are

proceeding to their common market by very slow stages, with many a safeguard to prevent dislocation. It is reasonably certain that long before they have passed through the next fifteen years of slow and deliberate adjustment, world crisis will throw both them and us together, to swim in the sea of European Union or to sink in the morass of chaos. We shall be compelled then to govern or to go under.

The slow stages of the Common Market countries, and the doubts and hesitations of Britain and the Dominions, all really derive from the same basic cause; the considerable disparity in wages and conditions of labour throughout Europe. These difficulties cannot in the end be overcome — certainly can never be rapidly overcome — without common government. We simply must have power to act in the matter of levelling up wages in the worst paid areas, and procuring some similarity in conditions of labour throughout Europe; we must do at least enough to give comparable competitive conditions in comparable industries. European Government and European Trade Unions must work together to secure this. and we cannot begin the task effectively until we have European Government. All the delaying measures, and all the slowly working interlocking devices will break down in the end under the stress of events. Then we must have European Government and must act, or fail for ever; this means the victory of communism.

The exaggerated fears of British and Dominion farmers; do they really exist, if so, why?

It is the difference of wages, hours and conditions of labour which really deter both the British and Dominion farmers. These difficulties can only be overcome by the levelling-up process. Other troubles like the different types of holding do not really matter; the family farm of the continent has really far more to fear from our mechanised methods. Dangers to horticulture, by reasons of climatic differences, etc., are real, but relatively simple measures of organisation by common government can overcome them; the co-ordinating machinery worked out by the Food and Farming Council in 1950 should be adequate. But even now a glance at competitive costs will show that we should easily hold our own in our main grassland products, which should always be the backbone of British farming. On such matters it may be wiser not to shout too loudly our fear of competition, or others may be thrown into panic by fear of our competition and the movement to exclude Britain may

be strengthened. That argument is as valid for the Dominions as for Britain. We believe that in the matter of Dominion and British farming production a detailed examination would reveal a quite remarkable list of unfounded fears. The real trouble is really the force of inertia, just the old hoodoo of the Establishment. These things have long been Britain's curse, and now threaten to become her fatality.

Paradox of the new Europe: an embarassment of riches?

The nemesis of hesitation is now becoming clear. Those who are already bringing their colonies in, are becoming not too keen on the entry of competitive colonial products. Within Europe the vices of the old nationalism can rise again if leadership and plan are lacking. A hotchpotch of conflicting interests will replace the decision and order which alone can create the great and the enduring. The real way to build Europe is to decide in advance what Europe needs, and then deliberately to construct a viable economy. The necessary survey will almost certainly reveal that we have not poverty but an embarassment of riches, if all decide to come in. Conceive an economic entity which contains all Europe, all Africa, the British Dominions and all the overseas possessions of European countries; possibly too, indeed probably, most of South America applying to come in when the real prospects are revealed. It would, in fact, be an embarassment of riches: the area would contain more raw materials, more possibilities of food production than the whole population of Europe and the connected countries could normally consume in the immediate future; if nature were allowed to take its course without fear or inhibition, and all the natural members came into the community, we should have an imbalance of primary products. It does not take much thought to find powerful reasons for a speedy entry of the British Dominions if they are to enter at all; they should remember that if they hesitate too long, very many will be waiting to replace them. And every day that they delay, vested interests are created to oppose their entry.

Leadership and plan are necessary.

Can Europe rise above all these small manoeuvres of the old nationalism to embrace the great policy which alone can create a great state? It must be truly European because it must consider only the interests of Europe as a whole. What should that policy

be? We suggest that European statesmanship should first decide what Europe needs; the survey could be rapid because most of the figures and material necessary to decision are already available. Then we should deliberately construct an European state in economic equilibrium, composed as far as possible of similar peoples who are likely to work in harmony together; a true harmony by very reason of the fact that its elements are different, diverse in small things, even conflicting and, therefore, vital and creative, but in essence deeply related.

It is really certain that in Europe, Africa, the British Dominions and in the other European possessions or associated countries, where European peoples predominate or have developed a substantial position, we should find at least as much as we require to make a viable economic unit which could become the richest state on earth, with a population sufficiently homogeneous to feel the full creative inspiration of a greater nationhood. South America, too, by preference would certainly in the end be eager to adhere to that community, though it may well be in the world interest that South America should enter an independent development which would make her the natural link between North America and Europe-Africa. In short, the European peoples within their own family can easily solve their problems; they can do far more, for they become the decisive force of this earth, the Third Force that can hold the balance of the world as we saw it and described it a long ten years ago.

Let America take over some European colonies which are now becoming a burden to European countries, and thus solve the problem of her own surplus production.

Granted the will to be great, the only real remaining question will be an embarassment of riches; we do not need all that. Far be it from us to starve America, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude, and whose enduring friendship we shall always seek by reason of that gratitude and of the common interest we hold in resistance to world communism. So America must not go short. We must also remember that once the armament boom is relaxed, and military aid, foreign aid and all the other devices for getting rid of her surplus production are no longer available, America in her present form will not have an idea in the world what to do with it. A well governed European state on the other hand will

not be faced with this difficulty, because a well directed policy of European Socialism will strike a balance between production and consumption by a progressive raising of the standard of life, through the equal increase of wages and shortening of hours in comparable industries, as science increases the means to produce. But it will probably take the Americans some time to catch up with the modern answer to Marx, and, in the meantime, they will have to find some outlet for such surplus values as they find are neither consumable nor dumpable. Let us therefore fully admit America's thesis that we Europeans in the senility of our Imperial epoch, before the European renaissance, made a bit of a mess of some of our old colonial positions. America long forced the pace in freeing colonies and in the supply of finance for their independent development. Let America take over most of the coloured colonies, and other extra-European positions which we shall not really need at all in the new economy; at present they have ceased to be an asset and are likely to become an intolerable financial burden to the individual nations of Europe, while in the development of their potential wealth they would even be an embarassment to the economy of a United Europe which may be over rich in raw materials and primary products. To America, on the other hand, they would be a convenient means of relieving both an economic and an emotional surplus. *

The logical division of labour would be that America should take over the developing black state in the centre of Africa, while Europe should develop all areas suitable for white immigration; certain problems of immigration, emigration and general transfer of populations must in the end be faced, but it could be put through without the slightest hardship with the vast resources available. The central area of Africa is potentially very rich, and for generations could relieve the American raw material problem as well as her emotional impulses.

The Algerian bridge between Europe and Africa is essential

What Europeans require would be the equally great raw material resources of the natural white lands of South, East and South-West Africa together with the oil and other raw materials of the com-

* We might, also, export Mr. Bevan to help them. His recent speeches, since the bankruptcy of the old nationalisation plans, appear to contain only one remaining flicker of thought — the desirability of milking dry the struggling British people for the enrichment of his colourful fellow travellers in the antediluvian socialism of every clime.

paratively vacant lands of the Sahara and other northern regions.

We should also require in one form or another a reliable bridge between Europe and Africa, and some firm assurance of a good life for the very large number of Frenchmen who have there made their home and, in so doing, have made that country's fortune. (M. Mollet's question whether India would have been treated in the same way if the same proportion of English to Indian population had lived there, is unanswerable, for, in that case, the number of Englishmen living in India would have been roughly equal to the number living in England.)

We need that bridge in North Africa both on grounds of economics and of justice, and all Europe should support that claim (as we long ago pointed out, it always made much more sense than Suez). Otherwise nothing exists in reality, apart from passion and fantasy, to inhibit the development of our previous good relations with the sister Arab peoples, which would immediately be restored by a policy of friendship, mutual interest in economic problems and mutual politics in face of communism. A logical pattern of world solution is already visible to the clear eye, and only awaits the awakened will of Europe to implement it.

It is sometimes necessary to mitigate the shock of new ideas with an occasional levity, but we write with complete seriousness. The stark fact is that nothing prevents solution of all our problems except the will of Europe. That will is now lacking, or is corrupted by a temporary ease and a long enduring folly. Let Europe find her will, and the great world will follow. That is our task. It is not small, but it is possible.

Inflation's basic cause: Government responsible

Inflation rots the state. Steady work, thrift and all the solid virtues make way for easy money and the spiv. The result is not only the sacrifice of the old whose lifetime of hard work has accumulated savings or earned a pension, which vanishes under the evil magic of inflation; the conditions of life which it creates equally demoralise the young. Sound money must be the basis of a sound state, and the failure to face this fact is a prime symptom of decadence.

It is the Government which is responsible; make no mistake about it. the fault is in the men who rule and nowhere else. When a Chancellor says, "If a nation pays itself seven per cent. more for

doing no more work, as happened last year, price increases will follow as night follows upon day," he speaks a plain truth. When he adds that no action by Government can change it—" No system of controls can stop that process "—he speaks an equally plain untruth. The Government either directly or through the Bank of England controls the volume of money; if that volume does not increase in relation to total produtcion a general inflation cannot take place. No one who knows the A.B.C. of the subject can deny this. *

In fact, the Government has directly caused inflation by the manner in which they have financed the nationalised industries and other means. In his next speech of July 13th the Chancellor contradicted his speech of July 10th; for in his first speech he claimed that Government could not check inflation and in his second speech he admitted that it could. He then stated, in effect, that Government was unwilling to use its power to stop inflation for fear of creating unemployment; at least that is intelligible and true, while his previous speech that Government could not check inflation was untrue. When we reach this point the problem is at least fairly stated.

The gap in Keynes, and the wage-price mechanism.

It was always one of the fatal gaps in the Keynes theory—and that monetary technique alone has so far saved capitalist society from disaster—that full employment under that system cannot occur without inflation. Sir Oswald Mosley, Mr. John Strachey and other young socialists drew attention to the matter some thirty years ago, and proposed their own crude remedy of the period. In the new

* In classic quantity theory the only other factor which can create an inflation besides an increase in the supply of money against a constant or more slowly increasing supply of goods, is an increase in the velocity of money, particularly in a recurrent fear of inflation. It is noteworthy that Mr. Wincott, who is a respectable authority on these matters, writing in the " Financial Times " since the above was written, stated that " our monetary supply today, relative to the gross national product — which is the only yardstick that really matters—is smaller than it has been since 1927 " (9-7-57). He ascribes this apparent breakdown of monetary facts, also, to the treatment of the nationalised industries by the Government. We can, at any rate, agree that this inflation must be stopped. There is not the slightest doubt that a Government with the will can find a way.

The Prime Minister also made his contribution to thought on this problem (27-7-57). He said his first lesson was derived from Alice in Wonderland. From his other remarks on the subject it appears also to have been his last.

post-war conditions after the loss of most of Britain's foreign assets and many traditional export markets, a further complication has been added which was then latent but temporarily obscured: full employment is impossible in a small island economy, which, in relation to competitors with larger markets, is abnormally dependent on export markets; at least it is impossible in the long run.

A full employment economy in such conditions creates a disproportionate demand for imports which throws the balance of payments into disequilibrium as we showed in our July issue; then the full employment is checked by the means which are available to Government—and were used last year—or a crash of the Exchange is sooner or later inevitable.

To these problems we have given two answers. (1) Wage-price mechanism. (2) Europe a Nation. The wage price mechanism, which rests on the dynamic and continuing leadership of Government in economic matters, cannot work indefinitely in a restricted island economy, but can only work as a final solution within an area large enough to be viable in the modern world; which, in fact, contains its own foodstuffs and raw materials and, also, its own markets. In the end we shall only be able to live at all in the island under an almost complete siege economy. Economic freedom, enjoying the leadership but not suffering the repressive control of Government, is only possible in a great area. That is why the final economic solution is impossible without the policy of Europe a Nation; we need both a Government with power to act and an area large enough for action. The Conservative Party in Government not only fails to act but also rejects the means of action, by discarding Europe in favour of its nostalgic illusions. The Labour Party's attempt to act within the confines of a small island dependent on the dogfight of world markets, over which they have no shadow of control, will lead it first to a siege economy with the most tyrannous methods of Government control, and finally to the biggest smash in economic history. If we be mistaken in the essence of the matter, let the men of the old world answer us, either in print or, better still, on the platform in open debate.

Holiday thoughts

A statesman who *can* relax makes sense, but a statesman who can *only* relax makes nonsense.

EUROPEAN

BRITAIN LOSES EUROPE*

by BERTRAM PEEL

LAST YEAR'S tussle in the Middle East may conveniently be regarded as a jockeying for position, not in preparation for a nuclear war but rather for an economic or commercial conflict. The strategic and political conclusions which forced themselves upon us immediately after Suez are already out of date, but the commercial tension in the background is about to flare into a full scale economic war, and in fact has already begun.

Who is fighting this war, and what is the immediate cause of it? In the sense that all men are concerned with self preservation, every nation, power bloc and pressure group is involved. What provides the impetus is the European Common Market, a new idea which has been developing quietly for well over a year and has now emerged as a neatly packaged article to the joy of some and the consternation of many. In the following pages we shall consider in turn how different interests feel about this historic new treaty (and the Euratom plan that goes with it), and examine certain future possibilities in world trade. Mention will be made of world inflation and the shortage of capital, new trading tendencies by Commonwealth countries, a certain Mr. Cohen, the decline of Keynes, the Russian view, Britain's position and other matters.

The above title may cause an eyebrow to be raised. In what sense did Britain ever possess Europe? Well, at one time Britain was master of the world, holding for a while undisputed command of markets, amassing a great fortune by trading and financial activity; but as the nineteenth century progressed, others adopted

* Companion article to Europe Awaits Britain by the same author published in our March issue.

our technique and beat us, so eventually Britain lost the world as its trading realm. That was in 1914-1918. After that we had Empire Preference, which stuck in the gullet but was rather necessary; others adopted this technique too, and beat us again, so for a number of reasons—e.g., greed, hatred, cowardice, petty-mindedness, incompetence and irresponsibility — we forgot the Empire and eliminated these other people, meanwhile losing the Empire and acquiring an enormous overdraft and several charitable hand-outs. That was in 1939-1945. Now, among all the nations of Europe that lay panting in the dust, Britain stood the only chance of taking the lead in that continent. But we repeatedly failed to assume our new rôle, and so retarded the recovery of us all. Thus it was only a matter of time before our friends across the Channel acted on their own and worked out their Common Market and Euratom treaties. We had the opportunity of entering into full membership with these new arrangements on our own terms, and in this way preparing for our virtual leadership of Europe; instead we have prevaricated, and in the last six months those who care have watched the sad process of Britain losing Europe and the chance to participate in the great Euro-African idea which the new treaties contain in elementary form.

First, let it be noted that Germany and France have both actually approved ratification of the Common Market and Euratom — a marvellous achievement involving the virtues of fortitude and patience. On July 5, the Bundestag passed the treaties with a rider that they would not be binding until agreed by others of The Six. Germany also stated that in the event of her reunification she must have the right to re-examine her membership; with German reunification once again to the fore the wonder is that the Bundestag were prepared to make any decision at all. On July 6 the Assemblée Nationale voted for ratification after five days of apathetic debate and one day of lively clashes during which M. Mendes-France (of E.D.C. memory) pronounced that the treaties were a leap in the dark. There is little doubt that ratification will follow in France and in other countries, well in time for the treaties to take effect next January 1; the Benelux treaty of economic union was recently given final form and is covered for in the Common Market treaty, and Italy, the remaining member of the Market, is certain to approve ratification. Not until ratification is actually accomplished will negotiations be commenced on the Free Trade scheme which brings

in another 11 countries and is so far the extent of the U.K.'s commitment, if such it can be called.

The Common Market programme will not be rigid even in its first stages, but by July 1958 the six countries should be submitting their lists of customs freed goods and strategic goods. In principle, the treaty will be implemented in three stages each of four years' duration, but the last date for the complete elimination of customs barriers is given as far ahead as 1973. By that date at the outside —probably in half the time if the plan is really going to work—the Market will have a council, a court of justice, a parliamentary consultative assembly, a monetary committee, an investment bank and fund for professional training; there will be a common trading policy and a common tariff to outside countries, and joint development of European territories in Africa.

Many feel that, in view of the French economic position at the moment, the whole idea is completely unrealistic. Among such critics in this country are those who await the collapse of France while Britain muddles through "by sheer grit." They deceive themselves; France, with all her crises both political and monetary, is much sounder at base than Great Britain and a number of other countries. She has an ever-rising productivity, immense resources, plenty of room, an advanced technology, she produces a very large proportion of her food and possesses a welfare state directed firmly towards the children and the family. France, in short, can feel a great deal more confident about her economic future than we have cause to. The similarity between our two countries lies in the balance of payments problem, high public expenditure and inflation, coupled with a lack of capital for oversea development. Instinctively the French (and the other five Messina powers) seem to have realised that what is at fault is their system of trading and internal machinery, or rather, its inability to meet the new commercial situation. With world inflation, universal shortage of capital, and two virtually self-contained giants on either side of a confused central bloc, the grouping of industrialised countries with undeveloped territories in some insulated trading unit, is the logical step to take.

Bloc-forming is not new in Europe. The Schumann Plan and the Coal and Steel Community were followed by Benelux; now we have the Six-Nation schemes and intermittent discussion of a Nordic Customs Union. Elsewhere it has been suggested that the Baghdad Pact nations form a Common Market, and a kind of E.P.U. system has been put forward for Latin America; if the latter ever comes to

anything it could have major repercussions on the trade of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, etc., with Europe.

Having considered certain implications of the Common Market as an idea, it may be appropriate to see what the free traders think of this bloc-forming. Of course, when the new European structures were first mooted, they were among the first to support them. Down would come the barriers, they said, the City of London would once again become the world's financial centre, it would not be long before trade with China and Russia would assume normalcy and the way be clear for world-wide free trade once more. In the *Financial Times* an outburst of letters occurred on Free Trade versus Imperial Preference, each side blaming the other for the pre-war crash; the editor was kind enough to print two long letters from the writer explaining what was happening on the continent, and these had a certain success. Subsequently the free traders have quietened down, having realised that the Common Market is not what they thought.

Even so, there are some enterprising characters who still hope to benefit from the new arrangements. One such is Dr. Benjamin Cohen of Jermyn Street, W.1, who has been advertising in a New York paper as follows: "With the advent of the Free Trade Area, London offers great opportunities. Form your own company now. Companies domiciled and if required, profitably managed." According to the *Evening Standard* City column, Dr. Cohen will register any £100 company in London for anyone in the U.S.A. or Europe, for 100 dollars, the latter to be paid in transferable sterling or dollars. Dr. Cohen apparently "made a lot of money" in Pondicherry just after the war where he imported gold and diamonds. He also holds the Order of the British Empire. The *Evening Standard,* a Beaverbrook journal, doubtless finds it hard to reconcile the last piece of information with the gentleman's instinctive reaction to the words "free trade," and in fact the news item successfully underpegs Lord Beaverbrook's opposition to the U.K. entering the Free Trade Area. He is undoubtedly right to suspect our half-hearted entry into the European economy as the Government now proposes, but to his loyal alternative one can only answer "what Empire, what capital?"

As if to show the City that they mean well, H.M. Government have now relaxed a few dollar imports and started up dollar holidays. After their victory in Paris over the China Trade embargo lists, the thing has become a craze with the Prime Minister getting

down to brass tacks with Anglo-Russian trade and the *Daily Express* playing "first across" on an approved motor trip to Moscow. All in the cause of relaxing tension, but if we are to return to the jungle and take up our pre-war stance, will the free traders tell us what they propose to do about Germany and Japan, who assuredly will not cease to expand merely for the sake of Birmingham or Oldham; or about India who will run neck and neck with China for the Eastern markets; or about America who shows certain signs of retiring quietly into her self-contained economy from which she will later flood the markets; or Russia who, having punctured our armaments boom, is already undercutting by the simple technique of quoting 10 per cent. below the lowest non-communist tender?

The time has come to think in a broad way. The Keynesians may think they know the answer to the pre-war anomalies, but has it not occurred to them that the Marxists are becoming just a little too smug? Do they forget Mr. Kruschev's strange vow about a year ago that he would show the West the meaning of economic competition? The French journal *Realités* recently created a stir in France with an excellent special issue devoted to the new ideas coming to fruition in various sectors of human activity. In particular it stressed how the old style capitalism had given way to Keynesian planning and thus confounded Marxian prophecy. The writer has not been trained in the Keynesian system, which somehow seems to postulate a simultaneous answer to internal and external money problems for all countries, but he cannot help suspecting that even Keynes must give way to something else if the Marxian prophecy is really to be confounded. That "something" looks very much like the bloc system previously mentioned, and for us it means some kind of closed system joining up Africa, the Commonwealth and Europe, which, insulated from world trading cycles, would be untroubled by the results of inflationary pressures and slumps. As has been remarked in *The European* many times, in such a system a wage-price mechanism can automatically be operated; the present French crisis is, in fact, due to France having operated such a system for some time regardless of the effect on the balance of payments. Once again, instinctively (and reliably, since she is logical), France sees what needs to be done.

If, as suggested, the bloc schemes typified in the Common Market and Euratom, really do answer Marxist critics of the Western system, we should expect to see a certain party line develop. This is actually so. Taking their lead from the Soviet rival All-Europe scheme of

last March, the communists have consistently voted against the treaties, but noticeably without conviction as yet. By not openly attacking the plans, they have avoided their certain success, and have waited for Europe to bring itself once more to a confused standstill with the 1930 Left-overs calling for the brotherhood of man. However, the Messina countries have turned out to be much too determined in their Europeanism, and Britain has luckily failed to do Russia's work for her this time. It was only on June 22, when Britain had shown herself powerless to sabotage the Common Market ratification, that a Warsaw Conference (through news agency Tass) denounced the Rome Treaty in round terms as being "injurious to other forms of economic co-operation profitable to the interests of all European countries." If our hypothesis is correct and the new European economy develops well, we may expect a full-scale verbal attack for certain, because a truly reviving Europe is the one thing that could save us from the next American crash and Marxist triumph. Is G.A.T.T. really the only other alternative? Unfortunately, like U.N.O. and diluted Empire Preference, this agreement merely pretends that things are not what they are.

Returning to the Commonwealth, one has the impression that, even more than on previous occasions, the last Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was a very proper affair with everybody firmly strengthening bonds which, by design, are supposed to grow looser every year. Mr. Macmillan may well declare on such an occasion that the Commonwealth comes first, but it has to be admitted that even the trade loyalties are becoming quite weak now. Australia has successfully negotiated a new agreement with Japan which gives most-favoured-nation treatment to both sides, allows duty-free entry of Australia's wool into Japan, also her wheat, and if the sale of these two Australian commodities in Japan increases to the extent it is hoped, we may look for a vast flood of Japanese textiles, salmon, toys, steel and even cars into the Australian market. Hitherto, Japan has been the only country whose products pay the full entry tariff; and only three months ago a lower margin of preference for British goods took effect on more than 800 items. Further, not six weeks ago the N.S.W. Minister of Housing said in Paris that there were vast possibilities for France in the Australian market, that French products were received with enthusiasm out there, that hampering restrictions had now been lifted, and France should send out more young men who know how to sell. Next, New Zealand is known to have been fishing for trade agreements throughout the

East for some time, and just before the recent Commonwealth Conference a New Zealand trade mission in London informed the British Government that "consideration would have to be given to the review of tariff preferences enjoyed by Britain . . . to reduce costs in New Zealand, and enable her to seek new markets and expand supplementary markets." This was but an echo of a previous speech by the N.Z. Minister of Finance.

On the other hand, Canada's Mr. Diefenbaker formed a somewhat ineffectual rallying point for Empire men with his plan for a Commonwealth Trade Conference; he is, of course, at present seriously concerned with the increasing imbalance of the country's U.S.-oriented trade and the country's wheat surplus. But it is completely unreasonable to expect any appreciable shift in the Canade-U.S. trade pattern; Canada now shares in a North American way of life in every sense, and it is foolish to pretend otherwise.

South Africa is a very different possibility. The U.K. is South Africa's biggest single supplier and at the same time her best customer, despite the fact that Britain has no preference there. As the Union's Economic Minister recently observed: "While the Union has been a strong opponent of the post-war tendency to turn to barter and trade agreements, the U.K. and the Union have built up a mutually advantageous trade on sheer merit and the good value of our products." South Africa is the one country in the Commonwealth that has been completely loyal in every way, and we must hope that in the field of commerce, at any rate, hysteria will not influence the U.K. Government to "throw South Africa out of the Commonwealth."

Now, as regards sterling and capital, the following exchange in the Commons on June 4 is worth abstracting. Mr. Cronin:—Is the Chancellor aware that South Africa and other Commonwealth countries are now creating their own money markets instead of using the London money market facilities? Mr. Thorneycroft:—I am aware that some Commonwealth countries are creating their own money markets; I welcome this since it should in due course increase the efficiency of their financial and monetary techniques. Cronin:—Is the Rt. Hon. Gentleman aware, however, that there is a considerable loss of valuable foreign exchange and therefore a deficit on the balance of payments as a result of these competing money markets? Thorneycroft:—It may be that in places they will fulfill a function previously discharged in London; at the same time we must welcome advances of this kind in a Commonwealth country

and certainly there is no reason why we should be opposed to it. Mr. Osborne:—Is it not true that the London money market is falling in importance because we have not the money to lend? Thorneycroft:—I would only say that we are not alone in that we have not the money to lend.

Mr. Cronin is obviously right on the ball, because on the same day he returned to the subject, asking the Prime Minister about the possibility of "co-ordinating withdrawals from sterling balances held by sterling countries in the U.K.," the effect of which is to put an intolerable strain on the balance of payments. Thus without any cause for complaint, we are drained of even that which we have, while Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Central Africa and Ghana all cry out for capital, with the newly independent members of the new Commonwealth as vocal as their older brethren. These countries have made no secret of the fact that if they do not get the money from Britain they will get it from somewhere else.

Now where does the British Government stand in relation to the new European structures? To the Government, the new interest in Europe must have been a godsend last winter; the new Tory team virtually came to power on a "European ticket." In fact, none of the Establishment's political commentators in Fleet Street could find much to say about the new Government except that it was rather pro-Europe. But while the Messina countries cemented their economic bonds, the United Kingdom preferred "to work with a European free trade area through the machinery of O.E.E.C., in which the transatlantic countries are represented." Later Selwyn Lloyd's Grand Design for Europe appeared, was icily received on the continent, and retired gracefully until such time as it could be brought out again. Since then, the Government has stood on the sideline, paternally encouraging the six nations to ratify their sideshow, while we awaited the time for our master plan to be set in motion.

A revealing exchange of views took place at the Savoy during the French Chamber of Commerce May luncheon (no press allowed) at which Sir David Eccles was invited to speak. The President of the Chamber had announced formation of a committee representing the Common Market members' commercial interests in the U.K., and had proposed that Great Britain should become seventh member of the Common Market. As Sir David rose to reply, a look of pained innocence took hold of him and he explained in monosyllables

how surprised he was that such a thing should be suggested, that Britain could not possibly adhere to the Treaty of Rome but that she very much wanted to see its ratification as soon as possible. Would the French be nice chaps and convey this to their colleagues at home. Some of the French members of the Chamber began muttering that they were not children at school and *qui s'excuse s'accuse,* and the British Minister's speech ended with recollections of Franco-British alliances in past troubles and dire warnings about the French dividing Europe if they went ahead with their new schemes and left out Great Britain. Since this was the day after his enormous *gaffe* about German domination, the speaker could hardly have ended on a worse note.

Subsequently, a tone of decided sullenness appears to have crept into the voice of the British lion, so reminiscent of the 1930's that one might even now consider the possibility of a Third World War, this time between Europe and the U.K. Certainly the Tories have not changed a bit. Will "the foe" once again threaten us from the pages of the *Daily Express,* will another "megalomaniac" seek "world conquest" by claiming outlets in Africa, and will Sir Oswald Mosley be once again thrown into prison without charge or trial for his effective opposition? Surely not again.

There is one clear way to stop this nonsense straight away. We cannot afford the same mistake again. Britain must go right into Europe as seventh member of the Common Market, and the countries of the Commonwealth, together with other European oversea territories, follow in suitable degrees of free trade relationship. It is interesting that Sir Cecil Weir, one-time head of the U.K. delegation to the Coal and Steel Community and a highly respected authority, believes Britain should go right into Europe. Privately, he thinks Scandinavia may well join up as a bloc with the Common Market, and does not believe this country will have the opportunity to join in for much longer, except on the terms of others. In this latter point he is at variance with the writer who fears we have lost the chance already and thus, for practical purposes, have lost our rôle in Europe. During the Assemblée Nationale debate last month, M. Pineau (Foreign Minister) openly declared that the French Government would on no account accept the present British plan for a Free Trade Area, excluding agriculture and with no preliminary agreements for harmonising welfare and social services. Well, hard luck, Britain! The Government, who ought to know, *must* have seen this coming; if they did not they are fools, and if they did

they are doubly so for not having the gumption to act decisively.

Make no mistake, we are concerned here with hard facts. It is all very well for Sir Winston Churchill to propose a European army and a United States of Europe ten years ago (after the damage was done) and then to cry "unite" in 1957 *after* the Assemblée Nationale debate, but what contribution has he made in the last twelve months? European bodies in this country may talk of integration, Atlantic communities and the third force, but they have not seen the wood for the trees.

Wake up, gentlemen, Europe is half united already. What a chance has been missed for Britain to assume the lead in the foundation of Europe-a-Nation, and the Euro-African community in its widest sense. How sad that it should be Britain who turns the milk sour with heavy references to a divided Europe. In spite of what has happened we shall have to enter Europe in the end. It will take real statesmanship to do it, involving much greater sacrifices and straining of our resources. The pitiful thing is that we could have done it already so much more easily.

AS GOOD AS GOLD

Fulness of Days, by The Earl of Halifax (Collins, 25s.)

LORD HALIFAX is known to some of his fellow Tories as Holy Fox, but in his memoirs the holiness is more in evidence than the foxiness—if indeed the latter trait exists at all in his character. Probably the legend that he was crafty arose from the effortlessness with which he acquired almost all the prizes of English public life, becoming in turn Viceroy of India, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of Oxford University without trying or even particularly desiring to do so. Great positions fell to his lot, seemingly without any exertion of will on his part, and he accepted them, after prayers for guidance from above, when, if he had followed his inclination, he would have lived with his family and played the Yorkshire squire.

It could be argued that such an excessively passive attitude, though becoming a Christian gentleman, unfits men for office. When Lord Halifax was Minister of Agriculture in 1924, for example, he says it was "a post at that time of almost complete futility and frustration . . . The soundest advice to give to any farmer was to get out of his head all fancy ideas of high production, to lay down his land to grass . . . and run his farm with the traditional stick and dog." In 1935 he was Secretary of State for War. "I do not think," he writes, "when I went to the War Office, that anyone outside the official world realised how great had been the damage wrought . . . upon our armament industry and our consequent capacity for war" (by the pacifist mood of the country). There is not a hint, in either case, that things might have been ordered differently, that the politicians who were supposed to be running

the State, least of all the unlucky man who happened to have been chosen to fill the uncomfortable position of Minister, could have modified, still less controlled events. He seems to have had no plan to put before Parliament, no thought of resignation had the plan been rejected. His attitude was one of complete acceptance, as if the ruin of agriculture, or the danger of being unarmed in an armed world, had been the will of God which puny man was powerless to question or to combat. All of which made him a very comfortable colleague.

It was King George V who had the clever notion of appointing him Viceroy of India. During his viceroyalty delicate negotiations took place with the Indian leaders about the granting of Dominion status to India. These negotiations could have been successful; they broke down as a result of the abusive speeches of a small but vociferous diehard group of parliamentarians, headed by Churchill, who unwittingly strengthened the position of their opposite numbers in India so that finally not Dominion status but complete independance became inevitable.

Lord Halifax has some interesting things to tell about the Munich settlement, and corrects Churchill's account in certain particulars politely but convincingly. He also shows, quite by chance, an aspect of the English scene in the months immediately following, which may interest those who are too young to remember that time, when he quotes a letter from Lord Hugh Cecil, then Provost of Eton, about A.R.P. at the school, written in January 1939. (The head master thought deep shelters should be built.) This letter is a reminder of the feverish war preparations which were going on; not only was re-armament, quite rightly, at last undertaken, but there were posters and banners in big cities with propaganda slogans put up by the Government urging everyone to be prepared, etc. All this was months before Hitler " broke his word " to Chamberlain by occupying Prague, which in turn led to the Polish guarantee and so to war. The warlike preparations, and the unceasing war propaganda of the newspapers, caused the Germans to believe that English politicians were bent on war, and Hitler thought of Prague as a pistol pointed at the nerve centres of Germany. Thus the Chamberlains and Halifaxes played into the hands of the Churchills and Edens.

When Chamberlain fell and Churchill took his place Lord Halifax stayed on in the Government. The two men were not sympathetic to one another, and it was a brilliant idea of Churchill's to persuade

Lord Halifax that it was his duty to go to America as Ambassador. He devotes a long chapter to his five years in the United States, which, owing to his discreet good manners, reads like the pages of a parish magazine where the vicar is thanking the lady stallholders at the village fête.

Of Roosevelt he writes : " He was genuinely interested in human beings as human beings; problems stood before his mind's eye always as human situations; the treatment of them spelt greater happiness or greater unhappiness for men and women." If this is so, it is unfortunate that the results of Roosevelt's policies should have caused human suffering on a scale unprecedented in history. Whether he was a sadistic demon or just a half-educated and frivolous invalid, the future must judge; certain it is, however, that F.D.R. and " Uncle Joe " (as he and Churchill with ghastly whimsy nicknamed Stalin) together arranged the enslavement of Europe.

Lord Halifax has no word to say about this frightful consequence of the war. There is no mention, either, of the Nuremberg trials; just as, in the chapter dealing with the thirties, there is no mention of the unemployed. Incapable of a cruel act himself, he is not so much callous as cold-blooded. He exists in a calm, dim and religious half-light, where violence and passion are excluded as effectively as excitement, joy and enthusiasm. He has been content to drift with the tide, and has made no attempt to influence his age. Even his relations with the Church of England, the institution (one supposes) nearest his heart, are mild and uncritical. Not a word, for example, about the Church of South India. He contents himself with anecdotes about bishops and other Church dignitaries designed to show their " human " side; among them a letter from the Superior of Mirfield about Archbishop Temple—" head and shoulders (not to speak of tummy) above anyone else on the episcopal bench." There is something unusually grisly about Anglican jokes.

Why did Lord Halifax decide to write this quiet and modest account of his life? It may be presumed that his reason for doing so was to give his version of the two controversial matters in which he played a leading part—Indian independance and the Munich settlement. It is fortunate that he has taken the trouble, for honesty and truthfulness are rather rare among politicians.

D.M.

CAIRO DAYBOOK

by DESMOND STEWART

Friday.

Misrair.

PORT SAID already looks as though no one had ever touched it: the Canal is a long pure empty ditch. Then the Delta. In some ways Iraq was like this, but there the irrigation was never immaculate, with this last-inch fertility: there was always something scraggy and incomplete in the Iraqi sowing. Too few sowers; while here there are too many. Vivid green patches and the fallow land a plum purple. From the air solitary palms stand out like toys of lead. And then, abruptly, the desert, mostly stony and beige; but before we fasten our seat belts (the Scandinavian businessmen, the two fat women, the one Syrian merchant in a fez), there is a landscape of sand, with each dune razor-sharp on the summit, where the last wind swirled it.

On the ride into Cairo the first change since seven years ago is the traffic, which has increased vastly, and second, the cleaned up appearance. Also there is the calm majestic Rameses walking forward in the Station Square. This strange foot before foot posture: the Arabic for man is *rajul*, connected with the word *rijil* for leg, as though man distinguishes himself from the beasts in this forward walk.

Installed in the Continental Hotel, I sit on the small high-up balcony. There is the scent which I remember from 1950. It has not changed. Warm, aromatic, exciting, the breeze that blows freshly from the desert hills. So much congestion juxtaposed to so much emptiness.

I look down on little round tables set on the pavements (new since 1950); there are neon-lit cafés. There is a great pulsing noise, the rhythm of this hugest city in Africa. The people seem better dressed than they were; but there is still poverty, stowed away though it may be in a thousand corners. Certainly, the hotel rugs are worn thin: like the red rep in an Oxford bedroom.

On the great strange lake by Port Said, the graceful feluccas had been curled feathers before the wind. Now below my window three fat men in white gallabeias cross the road in dignified sail. What do they feel about Nasser? What do they feel about danger? What do they feel about the Soviet Union? They draw up beside a seller of round hole-in-the-centre bread. He is doing a better business than

the sellers of stale nudes and staler newspapers; better still than the persistent vendor inside the hotel: "A cane, with a knife, my dear, only half a guinea, what you say, my friend?"

Is there any city with more character than Cairo? Edinburgh, yes, Edinburgh too has a dusk smell; an anthracite cough that would make your throat catch, were it not for the seawind from the steel-grey Forth. I have never noticed a scent in London, except of petrol fumes in the summer rush-hour. But this is not dusk. Baghdad used to smell of relief, after the hot day. Beirut smells of sausages and grocery shops. But Cairo smells of the leopard and the lily at the same moment.

Saturday.

The Museum, unchanged, the streets cleaner, the buildings, bigger, but none of these can speak for the city: and I look forward to meeting someone, whom I knew in 1950. Then Z. was unmarried, living frugally in the Anglo-Swiss *pension,* writing essays in Arabic which attempted as their first duty to be unrhetorical. I remember him saying: "You have no idea how revolutionary the style of Addison would be in Arabic."

He now has a beautiful flat near the University. He has married a gentle attractive woman, who teaches psychology. The only thing they disagree on is religion: she believes, he does not. He is plumper than before; but the same books line his shelves, amongst them Taylor's Plato and Wittgenstein's Tractatus.

We take up our friendship where it left off. He had never doubted that I would be against Suez, and leaving politics, he speaks at length about the necessity for logical positivism in the Arab world. Elsewhere it may, with a trace of truth, be accused of aridity; as implying that metaphysics is a cul-de-sac. But here it is essential as a corrective to verbiage, to the oceans of rhetoric in which the Arab muses have drowned.

We speak of the split among Arab writers, between the old generation, like Ahmad Showqi, who were men of letters, who read, mastered the techniques of writing, and who yet had little of their own to say, who were not really sincere; and the young ones, who do not read, who are sincere; but whose sincerity, being unfed, produces twenty articles, a few poems, and little more.

I had wondered what a man like Z., calm, intellectual, even anglophile, would think of the Revolution. Would he have reservations?

No: in education, he said it had done more for Egypt in four years than had been done in the previous thirty. "If anything, they are going too fast," he said. "At least fifty per cent. of the school hours are taken up with extra-curricular activities. Do you in Beirut have too much classwork, too many periods of homework?"

Sunday.

Groppi's even more than Shepheard's was a symbol of the old Egypt: an aristocratic luxury box in a shoebox capital, a concentration of wealth waited on by the best servants in the world, the tall beautiful Nubians in their red fezes and sashes. They are unchanged, as dignified as before. But the rebuilt Groppi's has a simpler décor. Now much more like a smoking room, with round plastic-topped tables and chairs with an economical hole in their curved wooden backs.

Most people in the café read French newspapers, which can be distinguished by their use of red lettering. Here, anyway, the city of Dioce has failed to descend. There are the same eternal saurians, back-brushed thin grey hair, dark tortoiseshell glasses, grey pink skin, mirthless cautious smiles among themselves, corpulent, materialistic and disillusioned. An intellectual, short spade beard, fluffy bald cranium. young, vigorous, still rubicund: he too reads *Les Echos*. *Des jeune filles* in tight jumpers share the pages of *Progrès-Dimanche*. For it is Sunday; and it had felt to me like Monday. I had thought the shuttered shops outside were sequestered, 'enemy property': grasped for the sensational, rather than the simple, meaning!

A note on saurians: they often wear bow-ties, use cigarette-holders, and rarely have an identifiable line along the jaw. Two of them once hated me in August on the *Enotria* because in the third class cabin I kept my own airchute open. *Vous voulez tuer deux messieurs, alors?*

There is a middle-aged woman who I fear may go before I have impaled her in my brain. A Medea with a rope of giant pearls, a white Roberta Cowell hat on her bushy black hair. Round white ear-rings; heavy dark glasses (the uniform of Groppi's); a rouged face the texture of maccaroon paper, a white choker blouse, and a pert black jacket. She sits with a man who resembles a browner Mosaddiq. He talks with his hands. Animated for a few moments, then squirms back in his chair, his head on one side like a pensive

bird. So huge her pearls are; they stretch onto the single mountain of her breast as big as—the biggest imaginable marbles, the smallest conceivable hen's eggs.

Still more *ça va bien* and *ich komme gleich* than phrases of Arabic. Or it may be chance that I hear them.

The Arabic for Egyptianisation, is *Temssir.*

Medea has seams from her mouth's edge when she smiles. She must be sixty. She is dressed under thirty, and looks more of a fright than she would if she did not dye her hair, did not paint her cheeks, and did not tinge her lips. The Europeans resident in Egypt brought with them greed, and left behind grace, a love of nature, a respect for beauty—is that the explanation? Even the European children in little white shorts are threatened by the spirit of racial arrogance.

Everything in Egypt is significant; there are no trivial facts.

Even the ugliness of the multiform Latin scripts on the shop fronts —letters of a society that cannot make up its mind.

Just as England's coinage, and postage stamps, belie the facile hopes of a 'new age.' The cluttering of many symbols, roses, leeks and thistles, crowns and shamrocks — because no one symbol is enough. Contrast with a Greek coin and its simple owl. Or Nero's profile.

My interview with Colonel Hatem, the Director General of Information, is so short as to leave little impression on me but of a smiling man whose smile is pressed-out by will and whose tiredness, whose weighed-upon-ness, is most evident. (He has the reputation of working a twenty hour day.) "Anyone you want to see, tell Anis: he will help you." Anis, the Director of the Foreign Press section, is affable, and appears unrushed despite the caravans of American journalists, with a few Philippinos and Bulgarians as outriders.

"Who would you like to see?"

"The President, of course."

"Of course, but with Hamerskoeld here . . ."

"The Commander in Chief?"

"We will try."

It was like being in a shop and told one could make one's choice.

"And Um Kalthum."

An American in bow-tie rushes in: "I'm leaving at six. Can I make it with Colonel Sadat?

"No, he's in Tunis."

"Baghdadi, then?"

"No, I'm sorry—he's in Port Said."

Anis returns to our quieter interview. "You know Um Kalthum? You like her?"

"Living nine years in the Arab world, you can't help hearing her voice, at least once a day. Yes, I like her."

"And after Um Kalthum?"

"A doctor, a writer, a poet, a taxidriver—him I can find myself—Anwar as Sadat, if he comes back from Tunis."

Before dinner the telephone. "Anis here. Can you come round to my office? I have the poet: Abdul Rahman al Sharqawi."

I had already heard his name from Zaki, as being the sincerest of the young writers, both poet and novelist. He is tall, heavy, typically Egyptian, with a gentle very kindly smile. Anis tells me that his novel, *Al-Ardh*, is a milestone in modern Arabic literature. It is a realist description of life in a Delta village, similar to the village where Abdul Rahman was himself born in 1920.

I had also heard that Sharqawi was a leftist (an Americanism common in the 'Mideast'). Anis had told me that morning, "Foreign pressmen are not interested in our art, our culture or our land-reform: only two questions interest them, is our army being rebuilt, and are we going left?" Therefore Sharqawi, who has just been to Moscow, with a five man delegation of Egyptian writers, is the kind of person an Inquisitor might wish to screen. He talks of Moscow, a picture in blacks, whites and greys, which shows that Arabs are as capable of objective assessment as Anglo-Saxons.

His favourite writers are Maxim Gorki and Dickens; but Gorki seems to him the better of the two. Of the modern Soviet writers, the best, in his opinion, is Ilya Ehrenburg. Sharqawi is also a poet: the titles of his two most famous poems are 'Letter of an Egyptian Father to President Truman' and 'Port Said.'

Monday.

I have in Cairo the sensation of being at the still centre of the storm. Since Friday I have seen no newspaper with any pretensions to being up-to-date. The issue of *Time* which is now on sale was stale when I left Beirut. Only folders of nudes, the Arabic press, and Soviet periodicals: all of which makes life peaceable. One or two kiosks even have ten day old copies of the *Daily Express*, the anti-Nasser cartoons left in, not cut out. And the

people in the streets give no sensation of crisis. G., the English correspondent of one of the best U.S. dailies, said on the telephone: "Nowhere in the east is there more individual goodwill." At that miraculous moment when the sun sinks and the scent seizes the nostrils, and lights come out, brilliant in strange obscurity, there is movement, the busy life of a great eastern city. But no strain, no crisis. People don't stare. One can wander far more inconspicuously than in Baghdad, and how much more Cairo is a capital! The central main streets are as lavish as Rome or London, and no longer spoiled by such horrifying juxtaposition of extreme wealth with poverty. In 1949, I remember, the dirty trams used to crawl down Fuad al Awwal Street (now 26th July) laden with diseased and wretched humanity: they were offered as a gaze to the pasha's wife, buying luxuries in the expensive boutiques. One is no longer oppressed by such differences. One man wears a suit, another an Arab robe; yet one no longer feels that these are uniforms of schism.

The foreign critics: "But it is window-dressing. There are still slums . . ."

The Egyptian: "But it is our capital. Let us be proud of that; then we can transform the rest."

A question of 'spirit.'

Tuesday.

Tea, or rather, an ice, with Dr. Lutfi. On the Nile, the café Fontana, with a new bridge by Krupps to the left, the hospital to the right. He is a cancer specialist: short, smiling, speaking perfect English. He first met Nasser "whom I regard not as a man or a leader, but as a symbol of all we ever felt, or ever dreamed," in 1954. It was the time of the trouble with Naguib. He and thirty-five members of the Faculty were invited to Nasser's home: they went to the appointment in some hostility. They thought of Nasser as an ambitious officer; they were suspicious of him. His impressions are ticked off on his surgeon's fingers. First, he was astonished: Nasser's house was simpler than his own. Second, there were not enough chairs, some more had to be borrowed from the neighbours. Third, Nasser refused to sit down till the last of his guests was seated. And fourth, and to anyone acquainted with the loquacity of eastern academics this was the biggest surprise, Nasser allowed all to speak. Never interrupted. When at length the dons had talked,

he answered: an astonishing breadth of knowledge, coupled with a minute awareness of facts about the law, Egyptian history and world events.

The doctor's perplexed anglophilia is evident. He loves England, yet hates what has been done.

"Do people in England really think imperialism benefited us?" he asks, when I say that to most Englishmen the very word 'imperialism' seems ridiculous: a slogan without meaning. "Do they not see that we have practical, not emotional reasons, for blaming their policy?" He cites convincing figures to show how medical education, for example, has increased tenfold since Egyptian independence was secured after the first world war. One of the biggest obstacles to improving health services after the Revolution was the lack of statistical material. Whereas the cotton crop was as well covered as any subject of statistical enquiry in the world, there were no figures for disease or life-expectancy. And while in one area there might be no clinic or doctor within a radius of a hundred kilometers, in another there would be a plethora of clinics, built at government expense and under pashaly prodding, to please an electorate.

The doctor had been 'laid on' to tell me these things, but spontaneously he invited me to dinner with himself and his wife.

We go to the cabaret in Abdin Palace: a long low pavilion with windows of coloured glass lit faintly from outside. A mediocre and therefore rather noisy band. Tables with copper tops and footstools to sit on or backless divans,—which we all admit to finding uncomfortable. But the kebab is excellent. We do not drink (I have one small Danish beer) and I see that a majority of the drinks on the other tables are water. The cabaret is poor: six very ugly ladies in briefs. Kairouan, pretty and hard, sings inexpertly despite her billing as the *rossignol du liban*. A Greek girl, with what the surgeon at once notices as an appendectomy scar, is the dancer. She has taken Egyptian nationality, I am told with approval. Much applause. Her face is pretty and not hard. Her dance deserves the applause: just the right quiver of a beautiful abdomen (despite the scar) to the halting flute, just the correct paroxysm and castanet-clap to the sudden burst of a livelier tune.

Between turns, the doctor tells me that he was Hassan al Bana's surgeon, and by a strange coincidence, the surgeon on duty the day he was brought in, having three bullets shot into him, by the police. He was still conscious. He recognised Lufti which gave him confi-

dence, and tried to speak. "You are very tired," the doctor said, "so don't try to speak." The leader of the Moslem Brotherhood murmured some verses from the Koran and died.

Hassan al-Bana has long seemed to me the most interesting Egyptian before the Revolution. The doctor says: "He was a great and good man, while his followers were worthless. He had a clear, organised mind, while the others were merely instinctive reactionaries. He was sincere. But, thank God, the Revolution saved us from his movement."

Wednesday.

Another evening with Z. He is a member of the committee for poetry whose president is Al-Akkad. This committee is only one of many, each of which is presided over by a member of a Higher Council for Literature and Art, whose *ex officio* chairman is the Minister of Education. Such men as Taha Hussein, Towfiq al Hakim and Al Sibawi form this Higher Council: and the committee deal with translation, vernacular dialects, music, architecture, cinema and theatre, etc. (A similar family of committees deal with the sciences.) Z.'s committee aims to encourage poetry by publishing yearly collections of the most worth-while poems being written. But owing to the newness of this idea, they are starting by collecting the best work of the last five years. Hundreds of poems come in, and every week the members of the committee set aside two hours in which they do nothing but read. Only perhaps one poem in twenty is any good: the rest are "accepted ideas, what you expect, clichés, of word and thought." Z. had been reluctant to work on this committee, fearing that there might be insoluble differences of opinion; he is an admirer of Ezra Pound, while the others have more conservative canons. But there has been a surprising amount of agreement.

We discuss a problem of Pre-Islamic poetry. In the famous first lines of Imralqais:

> "Halt, ye two, at the remembrance of a loved one and a dwelling place,
> At Saqt al-Liwa between al-Dakhoul and Haumal,
> And Tudih and al-Miqrat: its traces have not been effaced
> By what South-wind and North-wind have woven over it."

is the attraction the glamour of remoteness, the strange names, the mysterious Beduin associations? If we wrote the same lines but

instead of "between Saqt al Liwa and al-Dakhoul and Haumal," we wrote "between the University and the Zoo and 17 Gamie Street," would it be the same? Both of us agree that the poet aims to produce a certain state of mind in his listener, corresponding to the suspension of disbelief aimed at by the dramatist: and strange, attractive names may legitimately play their part in this. Probably, even in the time of Imralqais, in the century before Muhammad, these names were strange to those who heard them, at the Poets' Fair. Even then, nomadism was to the citizens of Mecca what the wild west is to modern Texans.

Incidentally, nothing shows more the glory of the Arabic past, to which Arabism must look back hypnotised, than the brilliant and analytical study of Imralqais' ode by al-Baqillani, who died in Baghdad in 1013. His book on the uniqueness of the Koran attempts by a most close, almost empsonian analysis of the most esteemed pre-Islamic poet, to show how superior is God's eloquence to man's. A. is not familiar with his work, but later I check what al-Baqillani wrote: nearly ten centuries ago, on this verse:

> "Further, the recording of the places and the naming of the localities: al-Dakhoul, Haumal, Tudih, al-Miqrat and Saqt al-Liwa, does not serve any purpose in these two verses. It would have been sufficient to mention some of them in laying out the scene. This diffuseness, since it avails nothing, shows a certain lack of poetical power."

Friday.

After meeting Sayyid Mar'i, the Minister of Land Reform, and Ramzi Stino, Minister of Supply, I can see why the American journalists are interested in Communism or the army: they are simple, sensational subjects, with relevance to the reader in Little Rock, or Des Moines. Communism — a threat to us: a strong Egyptian army—a threat to Israel, a country we've heard about: a threat to peace, *our* peace, as well as theirs. But Land Reform, or Supply, the lowering of rents for peasants, the search for oil, or gold, in the western desert—these affect the Egyptian working man; but for them to interest the American, he must first know something, or feel something for the man with the spade, his back bent under the Nilotic sun. But there is little correspondence between the immemorial peasant, the vein-bearer of Pharaohonic and Islamic centuries, and the car-centred commuter of the United States. The Minister of Land Reform, as distinguished as a whisky advertise-

ment, may count off achievements; it is like hearing that Martians are getting more milk. It does not impinge. Only if the news can be 'slanted,' if more milk for Martians can somehow suggest, more safety for Pontiacs and Bendixes, only then can this kind of news squeeze into a footnote; it can hardly squeeze out the adulteries of film stars. But if the American, or for that matter the European, could achieve a kind of sexual identification with the Egyptians, as the novelist does with his characters, or the sculptor with his stones, then what the Egyptian government is doing for its people would have meaning. Then quotations from the Ministry's pamphlets would have poetry:

> Since remote times, there existed two kinds of struggle, going parallel to each other on Egyptian earth: a struggle between the river Nile and the desert sand, on the one side, a struggle between the peoples of Egypt and their despotic rulers, on the other.
>
> Article 1. Decree Law No. 178 of 1952 on Land-Reform.
>
> No person may possess more than 200 feddans of agricultural land. Any contract involving contravention of this provision shall be considered invalid.

Yet perhaps even this emotional identification is not necessary. The wisest Englishman I ever met said to me once: "There is a temperament which simply dislikes a mess: chaos is repugnant to it: without wishing to dominate, or to exploit, the victims of mess or chaos, such a man wishes to tidy things up. Chaos offends him." Such temperaments are not common; but they would be interested in the problems of Egypt: where the data are small and admit of little manoeuvre. A long thin strip of land; a rapidly increasing population. Either the numerous mouths must eat less and less, or there must be both horizontal and vertical development: the arable land must be increased, and the yield of the land used must grow.

Remarks from the Ministers:

"Land Reform without productivity useless."

"No land given away without acceptance of obligation to join a co-operative."

"Minimal holding two acres."

"Eighty-five per cent. of our land cultivated on a rental basis; previously land-owners charged what they could get; by fixing the maximum rent at seven times the land tax, we have already doubled the peasant's income."

"Seasonal idleness? We encourage carpet-making and now jam-making as well."

"You have heard that whisky costs £6 a bottle? Have you also heard that the loaf is still only a penny farthing?"

"Wheat consumption goes up as free farmers eat more of their products. This is a problem. Though the gain to the nation is a sturdier man-power."

"Before Reform, 1700 owners held 10 per cent. of the land."

"Rice is a crop we encourage. An acre of Delta rice can buy two acres yield of wheat, from abroad."

"Two-thirds of petrol products already produced in Egypt: hope soon to export."

"Poor land near Alexandria, 300 per cent. increase in yield, thanks to fertilisers and insecticides. With better varieties, can step up production still higher."

Ramzi Stino is a Christian, a Copt. He says that before the Revolution, Egyptian Christians were genuinely alarmed, because while the rich got richer, and the poor poorer, there was every opportunity for fanatics to use extremist bodies like the Moslem Brotherhood against the minorities. Since the Revolution, all Egyptians feel united behind their government.

Both Stino and Mar'i are of academic origin: professors from the University. The Government is either military, or academic. The party politicians are absent. (One assumes that it is to them that 'the Free World' looks for a change?)

In the hotel bar. Couples dancing to an Italian band in near darkness. At a table A. and H. A. is so educated, and so fundamentally sure of himself, so completely nature's juvenile lead, that he is open and natural. H. is obviously a very nice young man, but prickly. He says suddenly: "I saw the American edition of your novel. It seems you have written bad things about the Arabs."

It is true that the novel is sensationalised in the pocket-book edition: a naked, obviously Arab woman being lascivious on the cover, blurb references to "forbidden pleasures, perils and suspense in the alleys of an Arab city."

He also says, *à propos* of Baghdad:

"Ah, but you cannot compare Egypt to Iraq. Our civilisation is much older."

I thought he meant that Pharaohonic culture was older than Sumerian, a debatable point.

"When do you date the beginnings of Egyptian civilisation, then?"

"A hundred and fifty years ago, at least. At the time of Muhammed Ali. Since then we have been part of world-civilisation, taking from it, and giving to it. What have the Iraqis been doing?"

"Eating, drinking, making love, working?"

"Excellent activities, all of them," says A.

Later in the conversation, when I tried to explain the English man in the street's belief that 'imperialism' did not exist, but if it did, it was thoroughly beneficial, aiding eastern people who were now vociferously ungrateful, he became almost personally indignant, and could not see that to a Parisian Cairo might be what Baghdad was to a Cairene.

I then suggested the Lawrentian view that real culture should be spun from within, should have its roots in the people, and should not be something alien, like a coat, which you could buy and then wear.

He, who had been to Moscow and disliked it intensely, said tolerantly: "Then you have the Communist idea."

These few exchanges give only one side of his personality. They do not convey equal truths about him: his smile, his great friendliness, his excellent English, and while he is talking to an acquaintance at the bar, A. tells me that he supports his whole family on his salary. And yet it is equally true that people like H. give the foreigner a sense of claustrophobia.

Saturday.

Um Kalthum lives near the Nile, in a large 1938-ish Zamalek villa. An old black servant in a turban lets us into a sitting room; he opens the blinds; and as I look at the painting of an Arab woman in veil, and subside into the comfortable deep sofa, I think of how I am approaching, after nine years, the source of the strangest, strongest voice in the Arab world: I remember M. in Baghdad on first Thursday evenings of each month, giving a special party of araq and lettuce and fish; while we listened to Um Kalthum, for three or four hours, the tape-recorder turned. And in cafés and taxis and shops the same powerful lungs diffused their message; a

simple passion from a folk Flagstad, a long severe intensity, a sweet force.

Um Kalthum looks, as she comes in, more like a dynamic schoolmistress than an Arab artiste. She wears a slategrey suit, dark-edged glasses, and shoes with high, elegant heels. Her hands, the hands of a middle-aged woman, show she is no longer in her first youth; but when she speaks, her voice has a torrential eloquence. Her smile is all the more beautiful, for being rare; like a garden on a mountain side. The face with dark sleek hair drawn back is like the Sphinx, but the Sphinx animated.

Her name is a mystery, and she explains it to me. When her mother was about to bear her, her father happened to be reading a list of the Prophet's children, and chose her name, 'Mother of Kalthum,' not knowing whether Kalthum itself were masculine or feminine. She was born, of a peasant family, in the Delta town of Mansura; when she was seven her father found her singing to a doll the recitations which he had been teaching to her older brother for the birthday of the Prophet. Her father at once recognised that here was a talent to eclipse his own, and his son's; but because in those days the role of singer was considered shameful for a woman, he dressed the little girl in boy's clothes. And she still has the man's seriousness, rather than the eastern woman's frivolity, in her attitude to song. "As a girl, I loved all poetry, as a recreation, rather than as a study. In particular I loved Dailami, Bashar, al-Mutanabbi and Sherif. But of our modern poets, the best is Ahmad Showqi, for his work combines beauty with moral teaching." Like Matthew Arnold, Um Kalthum believes that poetry must do more than entertain. It must give guidance, in religious and moral questions. But people do not like guidance, they fight against it, when it is in sermons or editorials. Therefore, songs of her kind, wedded to poetry of Showqi's kind, can affect them without even their knowing. For art, she says, seeps into the sleeping part of the mind. And indeed, Showqi had not been greatly appreciated before Um Kalthum made his poems into songs. For the mass of often illiterate people they had been too difficult. But heard again and again through the medium of her powerful voice they sank into the minds and hearts of the people, there to work their beneficent purpose.

"Singing must be more than a sound while the men drink, or talk, or eat; it is something almost religious." And the length of her songs, many of which last more than an hour, plays its part too

in establishing the correct rapport between herself and her listeners.

Um Kalthum's attitude to Arabic music has none of the doubt which the Arabs who have heard Mozart for too long often feel. "In the east, and to me the east starts with Spain and continues to India, we have the sweetest voices, which can give most powerful utterances to the human heart. The orchestral music of the west is far superior to ours, and I love, of the west, only the classical music, such as Beethoven and Schubert. But their voices—they are too technical. They do not gush from the hearts, as do ours."

Yet she is conscious that in the west there has been more understanding and care for music than in the east. In fact, Um Kalthum has done for musicians and singers in the east what the Irving generation did for serious acting—shown that those who perform in public and who are applauded in public can, in their private lives, be respected too.

If Nasser represents *arubah* on the political level then on the level of music Um Kalthum is the 'voice of the Arabs.' She is conscious of this role: the thing indeed which most impresses her admirers is that she thinks of her people, not only of her fame, or even her art. She consciously tries to express in her songs the deepest emotions of the Arabs.

First Night of Ramadhan.

E. had heard Um Kalthum tell me to seek out the ordinary Egyptian, and he comes round to my hotel with a group of his friends in a taxi: a writer, a painter, a driver and one of his friends from the office. We drive to the quarter near the Mosque of Sayidna al Hussein. All the streets are gaudily lit up for Ramadhan: people wander as if for a picnic: this strange holy month, of day-long fasting and night-long sober revelry, leads one directly to the heart of Islam, simple, not mysterious. The interior of the Mosque is elegant, without being ornate or fussy, in this unlike the Mosque of Muhammad Ali: an atmosphere of light, with rich red carpets and smooth alabaster pillars. Informal, yet passionate piety. The Imam's tomb (though I thought he was buried in Iraq) is encircled by men who go up and kiss the grille-work round it. Inside, a huge sarcophagus with Arabic writing, surmounted at one end by an enormous green turban on a pole: green, the colour of Islam, and in particular, of the Prophet's family, apt for his decapitated grandson.

We then sit in a crowded long café, dating from early in the 19th century, where every alcove has an animated group, discussing subjects over mint tea. Hassan Manfaluti, who is the writer, speaks of the divorce between literature for the people and literature for coteries. Need to combine . . . "The Egyptian is cynical, does not believe in anything, loves foreigners. He likes to pride himself on being witty, like the ancient Greeks, as living on his wits. He feels immeasurably superior to other peoples. As does everyone, I suppose, everywhere, if he is healthy." He himself resembles a lean Egyptian from a tomb. He gets angry, I suppose on my behalf, when someone says, with no malice: "In Egypt, we say only two beings have sexual intercourse in public: dogs, and British soldiers." I remember wartime Hyde Park, and can add, at least, another dozen.

In a cul de sac, there is an open-air café, near a high mosque wall. Chairs all face towards a kind of stage, on which a strange old man in highly polished leather boots and leggings, in military uniform with floppy Bersagliere style fez and jutting beard like Balbo, and mad eyes, believes he is Napoleon. He stands like the Ancient Mariner watching if any of us misses a word of his address: in which case he repeats himself. He is exhorted good-humouredly by the watchers, heeling their chairs and clapping their hands.

"To the Front, Marshal! To the Front, Marshal!"

Thinking I am American, he begins to praise America. At which, there is an uproar of disagreement, always good humoured; yet it is clear that this group has not favoured the Eisenhower doctrine. Someone says, "Marshal, your mother is sitting in a café with her breasts crossed." Roars of laughter. The eccentric splutters with rage and continues his discourse. As we leave, he is beating a tambourine and chanting numerous choruses against Ben Gurion.

Monday.

The pashaly house stands back from the Pyramids road; at the gate a policeman points a tommygun. "What kind is it? Swedish," he says, and seeing my dislike of having it pointed at me, removes the magazine.

Inside, the house is not the home of a pasha, but of a revolutionary and a soldier. There are one or two rugs, oases in the bareness, two pictures, and behind the sofa a large pressed-out bust of Nasser.

"How do you find this room?" E. asks, remembering my stric-

tures on the over-decoration in the mosque of Muhammad Ali.

"Rather mixed . . . rather bare."

"That's my opinion too."

The only article which might reveal our host is the new chandelier, a huge thing, above our heads. From a central gold ball eradiates a porcupine of brightly coloured arrows (sharp as knitting needles) interspersed with tulip-like prongs containing egg-shaped bulbs. A rainbow bomb: the colours black, red, yellow, green.

Is Anwar As-Sadat as flamboyant and aggressive as this chandelier? His published photograph made him as wooden as a Cherokee.

Such meditations are interrupted by his entry. He is not aggressive, but slight, gentle, and he wears slippers and informal clothes. His face is not wooden, but darkly mobile. He has a cold, and would we mind sitting in the sun? We leave the chilly reception room and sit at a simple table on the terrace. Although it is Ramadhan, and he is fasting, he insists on our drinking coffee and eating sweets. Away to our right another policeman is on guard: a wise precaution, now that the Cairo newspapers are full of the French plan to kidnap Nasser.

Revolt On The Nile had impressed me as an extraordinarily lively, as well as clear, account of the Revolution: a narrative as exciting as Buchan, and an exposé of Egyptian politics as lucid as Caesar. I had brought my copy, having marked three things. The first was the final phrase in the English preface: "written by one who shows himself in these pages to be a sincere and avowed enemy of this country."

"No, no," he said, a smiling schoolboy. "Egyptians are not like that—we make a distinction between British people and British policy. We are all against *that*. But the attitude of the British against Suez impressed us. There was nothing like that in France . . . Besides, I have an English mother-in-law who admires Churchill."

The second underlining: "The philosophy of our Movement rejected the idea of historical determinism. Progress was not automatic. It was the result of individual efforts, struggle and sacrifice." If any Marxist ideas influenced the cerebrum of this secretary of the Islamic Congress, they might be expected to be those that would combine fatalisms with fatalisms. The affirmation of free will was interesting, from either a Moslem, or a Marxist. He affirmed it again, but we were at once on a tangent. "I say firmly," and his

eyes gleamed, and the boyish smile had fled, "that one thing we in Egypt have learned is to separate politics from religion. The Moslem Brotherhood were the gravest of our dangers. I knew this, for I was the contact with Hassan al-Bana."

"What did he look like?" I remembered that the surgeon who had tried to save him thought him sincere and noble.

"Like a fox in a turban."

"And yet, while rejecting political use of religion, you cannot, as secretary of the Islamic Congress, support an Ataturk attitude to Islam?"

"Of course not. I fast. I pray. Religion is the soul of a people. But simply, we cannot allow any old man with a long beard and a clever tongue to use religion for his own purposes."

The third passage I had marked: "My political ideas grew out of my experience of oppression, not out of abstract notions."

Had any single event in his life turned him against imperialism? Was his conversion slow-maturing, like Newman's, or momentary, like Saul's?

No, there had been no conversion: he had imbibed his ideas from infancy. He could not remember a time when they were not.

But was there no particular example of oppression?

"Yes, the Dinshway atrocities. Those burned in my mind. You have heard of them, of course?"

I had to shake my head. I had been at the imperialist end of the rifle.

"Then you should read about them. Because an English soldier died of sunstroke, many Egyptians were lashed, and then hanged. Cromer was dismissed. Dinshway was very near my village."

"Your father—what were his ideas?"

He said proudly: "My father was a very humble clerk who admired Napoleon. He could never forgive the British for the way they treated him on St. Helena. To my father, Napoleon was a symbol of progress." (How in Egypt one comes back to Napoleon. Only the night before, Hassan Manfaluti had been telling me how Napoleon was always victorious against armies, and always vanquished by the peoples; and that the first people to have stood up to him were the Egyptians, who after he had defeated the Mamelukes, barricaded the gates of Cairo and refused to submit.)

Yet this friendly, vivacious, intelligent son of a clerk who admired Napoleon is considered by all western correspondents a fanatic.

"Have you ever had any British friends?"

Emphatically: " None. Not because I didn't want to, but because as an officer the only British I came across were members of the British military mission. We regarded them simply as enemies. Their mission was to prevent us from filling our own vacuum." (In justification of As-Sadat's viewpoint, I remember a drunken party in Baghdad, where in front of Arabs, an English ex-officer from the Arab Legion had said: 'I loved my men, of course; I loved them very much. But if the War Office had told me to mow them down, I'ld have mowed them down.' The officer had had blond hair, blue eyes, and a wet hand.)

Sooner or later everyone I met in Cairo had said how much they had been surprised by Eden's ultimatum: it had been so out of character. I wondered what Ar-Sadat's emotions had been: he was the first revolutionary I had met.

" Not for a moment surprised! I expected such a thing. He was a weak man, and the weak are impulsive. Only the strong can wait, or forgive."

" When the ultimatum came, what did you feel? "

He momentarily closed his eyes, as though blinking back on to what had become history.

" I will tell you. My wife had brought me four children, all girls. In November, she brought me my first son, and I called him Gamal. I thought it was even chances that in a few days I might be under the earth. In that case, I wanted my boy, when he grew up, to know what I felt about Nasser. And if I lived, then I would write a book, telling him all about these days. We have lived—even if I have caught a cold! "

" Do you think that perhaps, in fifty years, your son, Gamal, may thank Eden? Do you think that then, looking back, Port Said will have been a turning point in Egypt's history? "

Delighted he said: " That is exactly what I do think, and what I have written in *Al-Gumhouriyah*. Our Revolution was too easy. It was good, but it was too easy. I only felt that it became real at the time of Port Said. The fighting sealed it in blood: when we refused to give in, weak though we might be, against three powers."

We talked about diplomats: and here we were brothers in phobia. The diplomats in Baghdad, the diplomats in Cairo, how little their cocktail parties taught them, how little they understood! He told me the story of one of them " who speaks Arabic far, far better than I do." At the time of the 'aggression' he sent one of the

Embassy servants to the bank to get money. When the servant came back, the Englishman said:

"Have they started?"

"Have what started, Sir?"

"The riots against Nasser."

"There are no riots. The people are working, only when an aeroplane flies over, they stop to see if it will be shot down."

The Englishman had believed his own reports; for Sadat is convinced that the diplomats were in part to blame: they must have told Sir Anthony that at the dropping of a bomb, Nasser would be thrown out, and a pliant politician brought back. As in the war, when British tanks had forced Farouk to restore the Wafd.

I felt guilty for talking to him so long: on a summery day, he fasting, with a cold.

I got up.

"What would be the first step towards restoring friendship between us—or rather, towards creating it, for as you say in your book, the old relationship was never one of friendship?" I wondered if he would mention reparations, and how large the sum would be. The Cairo press had talked of 500 million pounds.

But no, he said something else. "Very simple: let them try and understand our point of view. That's all."

As he came to the door, he suddenly said: "You are Scottish, I think? Tell me, is it true what they say about the Scots—or is it just the same as the English say about us, the Egyptians?"

"Just the same," I said, thinking, with my back to the Pyramids, my face to Cairo, of what the history books say, and more important, what they don't. Mine, and all England's, had no mention of Dinshway. The very name is unfamiliar, and I have no doubt spelled it wrong. But to Anwar-As-Sadat, and his generation, it was, however spelt, a reality underlying and finally exploding the friendly cocktail parties and the Embassy dinners.

A DIARY

IN London the battle of Albert Bridge is raging; in Paris the battle of the rue Barbet de Jouy.* Well, perhaps not exactly *raging*, but at least Mr. John Betjeman and M. Gérard Bauer are doing their best to rouse public opinion against senseless destruction of old buildings and their replacement by hideous new ones.

Albert Bridge is a delightful and unusual Victorian bridge, and it seems that the people who want to pull it down have got a plan to spoil Cheyne Walk as well while they are about it. The rue Barbet de Jouy is a pretty little street where several of the old houses have gardens; here it is proposed to build a nine-storey block. The old districts of Paris are supposed to be protected by law from desecration, but since it is a ministry which threatens to build there is an interminable shadow boxing between departments; while this is going on it is feared the monstrous block may quickly be built and the damage irreparably done.

M. Bauer writes that this affair is symptomatic of an evil which all France is suffering from; even the so-called ville musée of Versailles is not exempt, there is a proposal to build at the bottom of the 100 steps opposite the pièce d'eau des Suisses, which would spoil one of the most beautiful prospects in the world.

Mr. Betjeman has the same story to tell about England, each week in his *Spectator* column.

In Paisley the building of 255 new houses has been brought to a halt by teddy children, who pull down the houses as quickly as Messrs. Henry Boot & Sons can put them up. Although a fence costing £200 was erected round the building site it only lasted a week. "Watchmen were stoned by bands of youngsters and forced to take refuge, with the result that the men left the job . . . Half

* The latest news is that this battle is won.

the glass in the windows of the houses had been broken, fresh brickwork had been knocked down repeatedly, and bricklayers had left their jobs as a result. It would often take bricklayers until midday to rebuild work knocked down during the night. Ceilings had been damaged by people walking through the roof space above and putting their feet through each plaster panel . . . piping and electrical fittings torn out . . . a child was seen to smash a panelled door with a pick, but could not be caught . . ." *

I suppose it is too much to expect the dignified inhabitants of the 7th arrondissement or of Cheyne Walk to defend their districts in this spirited way, but might it not be possible for them to harness the local teddy-power? In Paisley it appears that the bricklayers became so discouraged that "they left their jobs as a result." If Chelsea and St. Germain des Près cannot muster suitable children, might it not be possible to import some from Paisley? I expect the Paisleyites would love to see them go; they might even buy them single tickets. The child who smashed the panelled door would be perfect for special tasks—the sculpture on the Ecole de Médicine, for instance.

Otherwise some of the nuns in which the 7th arrondissement abounds might be induced to mount the scaffolding, like their sisters in the *Dialogues des Carmélites.*

★ ★ ★

According to the English newspapers petrol now costs 8/3 a gallon in France, but (as tourists who forget to buy their special coupons will soon find out) for ordinary people who change their pounds at the white market rate it is nearly 10/-. The French love of motoring is so great that they will make almost any sacrifice in order not to give it up; it may be compared with the English love of cigarette smoking. In both there is the spice of danger, and in both cases the governments can feel fairly certain that the law of diminishing returns will not operate, and that they will garner a vast harvest from the tax. Postage has also gone up in France; a letter to England now costs 9d., in the other direction it costs 4d.

★ ★ ★

Anyone with an impressionist picture for sale should move heaven and earth to get it put up for auction at the Galerie Charpentier

* The Times, June 13, 1957.

in June. If two Greeks take a fancy to it, the owner can retire in comfort on the income from the proceeds.

At the preview of Mrs. Biddle's picture sale, where Gauguin's *Nature morte aux pommes* fetched 104 million francs, I saw a Boldini and a Buffet hanging side by side. Both painted in shades of grey, they typified fashion now and fashion fifty years ago. The Boldini was a glamorous lady lying on a sofa in a cloud of tulle; the Buffet, the skeleton of a fish.

★ ★ ★

Mr. Fenner Brockway, M.P., and Miss Jennie Lee, M.P., visited Cypriot prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs, who showed them injuries which they said they had received at the hands of the British after their arrest. The M.P.s raised the matter in Parliament, and the Colonial Secretary said it should be looked into, but that the Medical Officer at Wormwood Scrubs had examined the prisoners when he received them, when " no marks, bruises, or anything else suggesting injury or ill treatment were noticed on any of these men." Mr. Brockway and Miss Lee, on the other hand, saw swellings, scars, and arms that had been broken.

Now Mr. Lennox Boyd, in response to further questions from Mr. Fenner Brockway (9/7/57), says that " the prison medical officer was anxious to make another examination. They insisted on some outside doctor, and refused to be examined by the prison medical officer. This is a matter for the Home Secretary. I naturally share the Home Secretary's view that we could not accept a reflection of that kind on the integrity and fair-mindedness of the proper authority." Mr. Brockway then protested that the integrity of Miss Lee and himself was also involved. " They had seen these injuries on these men . . ."

Even someone who knew as little of prisons and prison doctors as Mr. Alan Lennox Boyd may be presumed to know, might yet see that the Wormwood Scrubs doctor is not the proper man to look into this charge. Either he will still not see the injuries, or else he will see them and will be obliged to admit that his previous medical examination was a farce. If Mr. Brockway and Miss Lee fail to induce the Home Office to allow an independant doctor to examine the Cypriot prisoners, we shall all know what to think.

As far as the Cyprus end of the story goes, I suppose Mr. Lennox Boyd will ask the security forces there whether they beat up these men after arrest. The answer will be no, and an inquiry will be

refused on the grounds that it would reflect on the integrity of the proper authority.

I'll be judge, I'll be jury
Said cunning old Fury . . .

★ ★ ★

A letter to the *New Statesman* from Professor Gilbert Murray's son shows that the great Hellenist died, as he had lived, outside any church. It appears to have been his gentle and courteous manners towards a visiting priest which gave the latter an excuse to say that he was reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church into which he had been baptised ninety years ago. His ashes lie in Westminster Abbey; the Church of England is not particular about the outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. Herriot, all his life a free-thinker, was received into the Catholic Church before he died; apparently he took this step to please Madame Herriot. "La fermeté ou la faiblesse de la mort dépend de la dernière maladie" said the Marquis de Vauvenargues; this is very true, but often it is rather kindness than weakness which leads to deathbed conversions.

The successes claimed by priests sometimes remind one of the strange successes of modern doctors. One of the recent triumphs of medicine was the case of the man who died, had his heart re-started, and "lived" the "life of a vegetable" for twenty-three months, unconscious, in convulsions, being tube-fed by nurses once an hour day and night.

When Forain, the famous draughtsman, was dying, his doctor called a second opinion. After examining him from top to toe and making every imaginable test this specialist declared that every part of the patient's body was functioning normally. Forain, as he drew his last breath, said: *Je meurt guéri.*

D.M.

CINEMA

by VINCENT MURRAY

HOW ironic for the film industry that month after month the most noteworthy films come either from adaptations of TV plays, or from directors and writers trained in TV method. The enemy obviously believes in success by infiltration. This month, again, follows a similar pattern. **Fear Strikes Out** and **The Young Stranger**, both now on release, are far more adult than the rest of the month's productions. The former has a TV director, Robert Mulligan, in charge, while the latter has been adapted from a TV play. Both deal with aspects of American adolescence, and do it remarkably well.

Fear Strikes Out tells of a father-son relationship in which the father is determined the son shall achieve what he failed to do—play for the Boston Red Sox. When the boy finally does 'make the grade' as his father wishes, the accumulation of years of strain is too much, and he suffers a nervous breakdown. Only once before, I think, in Benedeck's *Death of a Salesman*, has this particular aspect of the American scene been so bitterly criticised. That the present film seems all the more powerful in its indictment of the father's obsessive impulses is due to the emphasis the script places on the boy. The slow process of psychoanalysis rings true, which is more than one can say for most Hollywood attempts at the depiction of the couch-technique. The director has obtained good performances from his players, too. Anthony Perkins is very assured as the boy and Karl Malden has that slightly off-key manner about him that well suggests the dominant note of his role.

Lack of any sort of understanding between father and son brings on the dilemma of *The Young Stranger*. More conventional than *Fear* in certain respects, the script comes into its own in its detailed description of the boy's character. Tom Ditmar has little time for his son Hal. and, though he prevents a cinema-manager putting through an assault charge against Hal, his refusal to believe his son's explanation only serves to increase Hal's bewilderment and unhappiness. These central sequences are excellently handled, and if the final ones matched them the film would be excellent. The father, however, for little apparent reason, suddenly *does* understand, and on this note of optimism the film ends. The playing is once more outstanding. James MacArthur as Hal shows remarkable insight into character. and James Daly as Tom draws a firm picture of the unapproachable authority the boy cannot comprehend.

It must be a long time since a Ford film merited the place of honour at the head of these notes. The latest, **The Rising of the Moon**, manages third place, and that with a bit of a struggle, too, for the old master seems not himself of late. I know he has publicly stated that it is, in his opinion, the finest film he has ever made, but I put this down not only to the Ford flair for showmanship but also to that broad streak of sentimentality which is so essential a part of his artistic make-up. After all, hasn't he also stated that he prefers his work with Shirley Temple to *The Grapes of Wrath* and *They Were Expendable*? His new film brims over with larger-than-life Irish characterisations—much more so than *The Quiet Man* and without the compensating filmic advantage of the earlier film. It is a triple-decker, with the titles: The Majesty of the Law, A Minute's Wait (suggesting a Lumière primitive) and The Rising of the Moon. Prisons, railways and troubles come into it and the players are given complete freedom to act their heads off — not a bad thing for experienced actors such as Cyril Cusack (a police inspector) and Noel Purcell. Those unaccustomed to acting for the films, however, need more guidance than they are given here, and the result is a lamentable mingling of styles. The sooner Ford gets back to America with a good script in his hands the better I shall be pleased. Just a note in passing while on the subject of Ford films: give a wide berth to the recent re-issue of *They Were Expendable*, for it has been severely cut and cannot be considered as an example of the director's best work. It is a shabby trick on the part of the producers, and one that is becoming increasingly common. If you happen to know the running time of a favourite film it is advisable to check it on the cinema display-board when the film comes around on re-issue. Otherwise it may be a totally different film you are seeing.

The rest of the month's films add up to very little. **The Teahouse of the August Moon** is a faithful rendering of the play, graced by a truly magnificent performance by Marlon Brando as Sakini, a Japanese interpreter. He gives the part probably more than it deserves, to the last infinitesimal detail. The result suggests an approach far deeper than the Method technique (to which, theoretically, Brando subscribes) can attain, and reveals in Brando an actor of remarkable skill, intelligence and versatility. This one performance goes a long way to compensate for the film's stylistic deficiencies.

The Spirit of St. Louis takes director Billy Wilder back, in theme at least, to his early work in German documentary, for the story of the Lindbergh flight receives little padding. All the better for it, of course, but a feature-film is a feature-film and must last the required running-time. Interspersed with the flight sequences, therefore, are flashbacks of the aviator's life. They seem so relevant in the context that one regards them not as intrusions but as essential revelations of Lindbergh's character. On the whole this is quite a happy marriage of documentary and feature production.

NEW BOOKS

The Uncertain Ally by John Biggs-Davison, M.P. (Christopher Johnson, 15s.).

THIS is an anti-American book, however much the author may deny the charge and plead that he is seeking only a *modus vivendi* between the United States, Europe and the Commonwealth. In his introduction he tells us the book was "substantially completed" in 1953 and "brought up to date" in March of this year for publication in June. His anti-Americanism is therefore deep-seated in the irritation which invariably arises from having to live on charity rather than by our own exertions; it was exacerbated by American chidings after the Suez fiasco.

Mr. Biggs-Davison is able to quote extensively in justification of his irritation. For example, he quotes Roosevelt telling his son Elliott: "I've tried to make it clear to Winston—and the others—that, while we're their allies and in it to victory by their side, they must never get the idea that we're in it just to help them hang on to the archaic, medieval Empire ideas . . ." He also throws additional light on Roosevelt's responsibility for Pearl Harbour and quotes General Marshall's message to General Short in Hawaii: ". . . If hostilities cannot, repeat cannot, be avoided, the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act . . ."

But anti-Americanism is not enough. The author pleads for closer co-operation between Britain and Europe, and for the development of the Commonwealth to which he still clings nostalgically, but he does not castigate the series of British governments which neglected both Commonwealth and Europe, pleading only that America would not let them do anything about it! He gives a slight hint of where the fault really lay when he quotes from Toshikazu's *Eclipse of the Rising Sun:* "If the British Government had played a more active role in the negotiations (between America and Japan) the outlook might have been quite different," and then adds his own comment: "But the plea of Sir Robert Craigie, the British Ambassador in Tokyo, that British influence should be brought to bear was dismissed by the government at home."

One further quotation is worthy of note. Soon after his appointment as first American Ambassador to Moscow, William Bullitt reported: "It is of course the heartiest hope of the Soviet Government that the United States will become involved in war with Japan . . . The Soviet Union would certainly attempt to avoid becoming an ally until Japan had been thoroughly defeated and would then merely use the opportunity to acquire Manchuria and sovietise China." Substitute the words Germany and Europe in the appropriate places above and the story is complete. But the author's party did not learn the lesson in time.

Read this book—and be wise after the event.

G.V.

The Roosevelt Myth, by John T. Flynn (Devin-Adair, New York)

THE second, revised and enlarged edition of this important and well-documented book on the Roosevelt myth was published in America last year, but it is not too late to review it here, because it has permanent interest for all who wish to understand the extent of Roosevelt's responsibility for the world as it is today—for the destruction of Germany and Japan, formerly the ramparts of anti-communism in Europe and the Far East; the sovietisation of all eastern Europe; the capture of China for communism.

Mr. Flynn is a writer on politics to whom we owe *The Lattimore Story* and *While You Slept.* He has written not a biography of Roosevelt, but a detailed criticism of the Roosevelt policies, beginning on March 4, 1933, with the inauguration of the future " war lord " at the White House, and ending with his death in 1945 soon after the shameful and sordid Yalta Conference.

Even now, the New Deal still has its partisans, admirers and apologists in London, Paris, Geneva and elsewhere. Mr. Flynn shows that this complicated, spendthrift and demagogic mixture of social and economic measures, far from saving America, as has been claimed, corrupted its institutions, accentuated its deficit and violated its system of free economy and private enterprise. The New Deal, staffed by Marxists and unscrupulous internationalists, opened the door to the most subversive and questionable elements, and, as time went on, to Soviet agents like Lattimore, Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss.

It is interesting to note that Roosevelt, who reproached Hoover with financial extravagance, spent more than all the thirty-one American Presidents before him put together—exactly three times as much as all the other Presidents from George Washington to Herbert Hoover. Did this vast expenditure solve the social problem? On the contrary; at the time of Pearl Harbour there were almost twelve million unemployed in the United States—more, even, than during Hoover's term. It was the war which cured the unemployment problem.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was first and foremost a demagogue. Possessor of great personal charm, but lacking economic ability and with only superficial knowledge of the world, he was by degrees consumed with love of power. He took in many people, before being himself taken in by Stalin, whose plaything he became at Teheran and Yalta.

Mr. Flynn says: " The people were sold first the proposition that Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only man who could keep us out of war; second that he was the only man who could fight successfully the war which he alone could keep us out of; and finally that he was the only man who was capable of facing such leaders as Churchill and Stalin on equal terms, and above all the only man who could cope successfully with the ruthless Stalin in the arrangements for the post-war world."

This book is rich in descriptions of the personal career of F.D.R., and his curious methods; his entourage, and his not less curious family. His career, marked by megalomania and incredible fantasies, began in foreign politics with diplomatic recognition of the U.S.S.R., and ended when the tanks of the Red Army had invested almost the whole of eastern Europe and were at the gates of Berlin, after Yalta when all Stalin's demands were acceded to by a moribund Roosevelt. It was a career posthumously crowned by the fall of China (of which he had deliberately undermined the anti-communist defence) into the hands of Mao Tse-tung.

P. Hofstetter.

Cielo E Pietra, by Luigi Fiorentino (Maia, Siena, 500 lire.)

THE first half of the twentieth century was a time of disenchantment for poets in Italy—and everywhere else in the Western world. It is because some of them are finding a way out of this disenchantment that those of us who recognise the essential unity and homogeneity-in-diversity of European culture should take note of some recent changes in the cultural climate in Italy; there is, or should be, a greater commonalty of literary interest than of any other, mercantile or politic.

The twentieth century ushered in an era of " progressive reaction " —against the limitations of language, form and theme characteristic of nineteenth century Romanticism—and the beginning of a movement towards a greater flexibility and universality in scope and manner. Like all movements which begin as a reaction against something, and do not gradually evolve in a satisfactory and Hegelian way, the ' progress ' was of a somewhat eccentric kind and was, typically, individual, undirected effort. Even the temporary groupings of poets, around the leaders of the anti-literary futurists, and ' twilight " theorists, served only to heighten the illusion of isolation; discarding the good with the bad in form, rhyme pattern, stanza structure and simplicity (often, though, simplesse) the poets who came to maturity in the first four decades of the century became hermetically sealed (ermetismo) off from both the traditions of the past, and the mass communication possibilities of the then present. Their poetry, though aurally satisfactory, became obscure, private, mannered, coterie; as Mario Luzi has said *(L'Inferno e Il Limbo*— Marzocco, 1949), this was not their intention:

> Contrariamente all' opinione diffusasioggi, l'ermetismo non solo non rifiutó di parlare, ma volle se mai dire troppo . . ."
> (Contrary to popular opinion, 'ermetismo ' not only did not refuse to speak, but wanted, if possible, to say too much.)

In an excess of enthusiasm for the now unlimited poetic horizons they had before them, they rushed ahead without sufficient critical preparation or contact with their fellow-travellers; they tried to evolve a new poetry and a new role for the poet in society without

what Luzi calls a 'Revolution of Manifestos,' with an unvoiced wish that society should approach the poet and not oblige him to be consciously didactic or immediate in an effort to achieve a rapprochement.

"Ermetismo" has nevertheless produced some very fine poets, whose work belongs to the permanent literature of our time; cataloguing is always invidious but the names of Rebora, Ungharetti and Montale, and certainly Quasimodo come quickly to mind. But no matter how absolute a poem is, if it is not read, understood and allowed to function, as an art form its value remains absolute, its utility not socially appreciable.

It is here that the work of Fiorentino is important; he is essentially a post-eremetic poet, concerned not only with the undisputed twentieth century universality but with a step by step justification of his existence as a poet, in a contemporary social, and not only an absolute literary, context. Widely travelled in Europe and conscious of his Europeanism. he has made contact with the larger community, in a Polish P.O.W. camp, in Norway and Sweden as an uncommercial traveller, in his own country during the recurrent post-war crises in Trieste; he writes the poetry of the intelligent layman, with an imagery distilled from all the symbols and social fetishes of our time. wrought into a framework of speech refined to an ideal of 'optimum everyday oratory.' Anything but an intuitionist, he works and reworks his systems of impact; a first writing inevitably produces a poem uneven in strength, as the emotional input varies with the changing association and permutation of association of images in the mind—Fiorentino, as far as one can ever know these things, has 'emotionally subedited' his poetry until all the middle-strength passages have been re-lived, and reformed—or cast away.

His 'High Poetry' achieved in this way, is 'difficult'—not in the sense of obscurity. and certainly never obscurantist: it is difficult in the way that the *Times* is more difficult to read than the *Daily Sketch*, but (though this may be an unfortunate analogy in Britain) as well worth the extra effort; parts of his new collection *Cielo e Pietra* must be approached in this way. When he is writing, as he does in the first and second parts of the book (*Accadimenti* and *Antico affano*) of his wartime experiences and of his travels the impression is clear, the crescendo and diminuendo inevitable and the 'purpose' of the poems obvious enough; they are often of great beauty—*Ballata della Neve* and delightfully relaxed *Lettera da Oslo* I found especially enjoyable. They achieve the fast colour and the flowing line characteristic of Quasimodo's Sicilian poems without making me feel (as I do often with Quasimodo) that I need either an intellectual or a geographical guidebook.

The second and third parts of the book, *Cielo* and *Pietra*. are a bridge, making possible a meeting of artist and layman on this side of ermetismo—they contain the poems in which Fiorentino has used

to best advantage the scientific discipline he brings to poetry. wish a translation would do justice to the music of:

> Ora che il tempo si scandisce in giorni,
> se " Amore " dici come un tempo antico
> e mi guardi con occhi di gazzella,
> un loto sono, e tremo come il giorno
> primo, e " si " dico alla vita.
> Odo nella tua voce un cielo d'acque:
> senza macchia sorridono le stelle.

I know of few poets capable of making a reduction of complexity to simplicity as admirably as Fiorentino. I would find only one fault with this book, and it is common to all his work: the danger of sub-editing out of recognition; sometimes I feel that the poem, imperfect though it may have been, would have been better left alone. Perfection is hard even for an onlooker to admire.

Fiorentino edits the bi-monthly *Ausonia*; it is well worth reading and has given birth to a new literary label ' Ausonismo ' (De Castillo, *Revista de Literatura*, Madrid, " Luigi Fiorentino y el Ausonismo "). The first Ausonista's *Basalto* established him as one of the foremost contemporary Italian poets (it ran to four Italian editions and one each in Mexico, Belgium, the Argentine and Yugoslavia); *Cielo e Pietra* does nothing to diminish his reputation.

Roy MacGregor-Hastie.

The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, by Evelyn Waugh (Chapman & Hall. 12s. 6d.)

Over the door of the old world was written : Know thyself; over the door of the new world shall be written : Be thyself.

Oscar Wilde.

THERE is a ghost story about a man crossing a wild moor at night who felt evil forces hemming him in. He tried not to be frightened, and said aloud: " I have been a righteous, honest, good man; if anything terrible should happen to me now there is no justice in this world." A voice answered : " There is none."

Mr. Pinfold, the hero of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's new novel, was rather like this man. He had nothing to reproach himself with. He looked back over his life : " Affectionate, high-spirited and busy in childhood; dissipated and often despairing in youth; sturdy and prosperous in early manhood; he had in middle age degenerated less than many of his contemporaries."

He had written a number of wonderfully funny books which were the delight of the English speaking world; he had a wife and children of whom he was fond and proud, an adequate income, a country house where he could avoid his bugbears (jazz. Picasso and interviewing journalists). He had dozens of old friends who loved him, and millions of fans eager to buy his books. Yet poor Mr. Pinfold was rather miserable; he was unwell, rheumaticky, and

he slept badly; time hung on his hands. "There was a phrase in the '30s: 'It is later than you think,' which was designed to cause uneasiness. It was never later than Mr. Pinfold thought. At intervals during the day and night he would look at his watch and learn, always with disappointment, how little of his life was past, how much there was still ahead of him."

Mr. Waugh thus describes the middle-aged Pinfold: "the part for which he cast himself was a combination of eccentric don and testy colonel, and he acted it strenuously, before his children . . . and his cronies in London until it came to dominate his whole outward personality . . . He offered the world a front of pomposity mitigated by indiscretion, that was as hard, bright and antiquated as a cuirass.

One day Mr. Pinfold felt so ill that he decided to go for a sea voyage to Ceylon. He said goodbye to Mrs. Pinfold and set forth feeling very groggy because he was taking pills for his insomnia and his rheumatism. On board ship he had his ordeal. He was assailed first in his cabin but later on wherever he went, by Voices which teased him at all hours. Sometimes they accused him of having neglected his old mother, or driven a neighbouring farmer to suicide, or of deviations from the desirable social norm such as being a communist, a fascist, or a Jew. None of these accusations worried him unduly, since he knew they could easily be proved to be false, but the voices themselves worried him terribly; he thought he was the victim of a huge practical joke played by experts in wireless telegraphy from the B.B.C., an institution Mr. Pinfold had never liked. Often the voices conjured up scenes of violence and sadism, and once, a modern St. Anthony, Mr. Pinfold was told a lovely young girl was to be brought to his bunk: he sat waiting in his dressing gown, but nothing happened. All this would have been meat and drink to a Freudian; it was misery to Pinfold, a Roman Catholic whose very prayers were interrupted by the nastiest of the voices. For one moment he wondered if he were going mad.

When he could bear this persecution no longer he left the ship at Port Said, but there, and in the aeroplane, and in Ceylon, his familiars still accompanied him with tormenting teases; he abandoned all thought of working on his novel and flew home. Here, Mrs. Pinfold convinced him that no wireless invention in the hands of a spiteful enemy could account for his experience; and at that moment the voices fell silent . . . for ever.

The story of the ordeal is very sad; I cannot agree with the blurb writer that it should delight all those who live on the borderlines of sanity. Everyone has a subconscious mind, while not everyone has enemies at the B.B.C.

Perhaps Mr. Waugh will write a sequel, telling whether Gilbert Pinfold ever decided to take off the antiquated cuirass which he wore as a disguise, or whether the carapace was become a part of him which he could no more do without than could a tortoise.

D.M.

HELLEU AT DEAUVILLE

by SYDNEY REDESDALE

AT the turn of the century when I was 20 we spent some weeks every summer on board our sailing yacht, and sooner or later entered the Basin at Deauville. Alongside the quay lay the beautiful schooner *Etoile*, belonging to our friend, the artist Helleu.

The Helleu family consisted then of himself, a handsome man of 40 with a black beard, Madame Helleu, most elegant, with red hair (C'est pour ses cheveux que je l'ai épousée, said Helleu), Ellen, aged about 16, and Johnny, a very little boy with an infectious laugh. Paulette was not yet born.

As we entered the harbour there was the Helleu family sitting on deck under their awning in all the comfortable chairs and cushions imaginable. Highly delighted to see us arriving, Helleu was waving to us to come and tie up next to them, and with a good deal of shouting in French and English from pilot and crew this was accomplished.

Madame Helleu greeted us in her quiet way, her beautiful red-gold hair wonderfully coiffé; Ellen, dark and handsome, wearing white or sand colour, and Johnny, laughing somewhere. Helleu was very fond of Ellen and very proud of her. When he wanted her he called out Ellen! Ellen! *Ellen Helleu!* And then if she didn't come at once, in a loud but quite pleased voice to us—"Ellen est terrible."

Soon we crossed the plank from our deck to theirs and found the other two artists who were with Helleu every day—Boldini and Sem.

Boldini, the fashionable portrait painter, a small rotund man in spectacles, was much older than the other two; we thought him cross and disagreeable. Helleu called him *le Monstre*, and it fitted him. Sem was a dear little man; we all loved him. He looked like a jockey, and spent much of his life at race meetings caricaturing rich, cosmopolitan racing people. When at the Grand Prix de

Deauville the crowded grandstand contained not a soul who was not eagerly following the race through glasses, Sem would stand below, back to the horses, legs apart, straw hat on the back of his head, looking up with pencil and paper in hand, drawing a rapid sketch of some quite unconscious personage. His caricatures were rather cruel, very different from the more mildly amusing portrait caricatures of Spy, in *Vanity Fair*. Every year produced one or two "Albums Sem," which were eagerly bought, and Sem was reputed by his artist friends to be quite immensely rich. He always had something funny to say. My father was a great devotee of good bread, and Sem said, Ah, yes, bread was so important. "Moi, j'aime tant le pain que quand je mange un morçeau de pain—je mange toujours du pain avec." Ah, quel fonny man, said Helleu.

Every day beautiful and fashionable ladies came to Helleu's yacht to have their portrait drawn in dry point etching, which was Helleu's speciality. My sister and I, in our inadequate London clothes, were all agog to see the smartest and loveliest women in Paris—perhaps in the world—as they all congregated at Deauville for the races week.

Helleu handed these beauties down on to his deck in gallant fashion, and the sitting began. A lovely hat was generally worn, though if the sitter had exceptionally pretty hair this was sometimes dispensed with.

Helleu took his sheet of shining copper and a pencil with a sharp diamond at the end, and began to scratch with the diamond on the copper, sometimes little hair-like strokes, sometimes deep gashes. Once on the copper, of course, nothing could be erased. It was a very special art, and it became the great fashion to have a dry point etching portrait by Helleu. The copper plate could produce many copies, I think I remember about 50 could be printed off.

As he drew, he paid extravagant compliments to his sitter; this put her in a good temper and made her look her best.

A very favourite sitter of his was "la petite Duchesse de Marlborough," pretty and charming, with her small dark head and long neck.

Boldini also painted her and he annoyed me very much by saying, Yes, at Blenheim one sees many Helleus—in the passages. He left us in no doubt that the Boldini portrait was hung in the drawing room.

This must have been the time of the French Impressionists, but I don't remember our three friends talking about them much, except Degas, whose ballet dancers they admired greatly.

Another friend of Helleu was Sargent. When he visited Helleu in his flat in Paris he said, and truly, "Il n' y a rien de laid chez vous, Helleu." The flat in Paris had the first all-white room I remember seeing—long before the time of the "white furniture traffic" of London.

When we went to visit them there, Helleu opened the double doors and welcomed us in with both arms opened wide. Then came a silent and no doubt disapproving scrutiny of our Engilsh clothes. He persuaded my father to buy me one really lovely dress in Paris, it was *la robe aux trois volants*, the skirt three deep flounces, of thick white silk edged with white satin.

But to go back to the yachts in the Basin at Deauville. As well as the pointe sèche portraits, Helleu painted the sea, and above all, the yachts.

One day there was a gale of wind blowing and for some gala reason the yachts in the harbour were all dressed with flags. Helleu sat painting them, and he saw me and called out, "Ah, que je suis heureux! Je suis au bal, avec les drapeaux." And truly they looked as if they were having a wild and abandoned dance.

I sat very often to Helleu. He called me "la Loi," and I soon had a good conceit of myself after listening to all the encouraging compliments. My sister and I looked upon him as quite old; to us he called himself "le vieillard de quarante et un ans," for us to contradict.

Helleu used to say, When you have a piece of great good fortune, look at the face of your best friend—you will see a grimace on it. If I denied this horrid idea he only replied, "Ah—vous êtes jeune—vous êtes gentille."

The *Etoile* did not often put to sea, though when Helleu had his English captain, Patrick by name, they used to go to Cowes and cruise about a good deal.

We generally stayed a fortnight at Deauville and our enjoyment was vastly increased by the three delightful and amusing artist friends, of whom Helleu was the most interesting to us. They were at their best on board the *Etoile*, all three together—it was never quite the same in Paris.

LETTERS

MODERN MARXISM

To the Editor of *The European*
Sir,

Mr. D. V. Chaplin (and, for that matter, Mr. A. J. Gregor, too) is obviously an egg-head of the first boiling, as they say in the States, and his study of early Marxist thought is much too specialist for me, I fear. But, as far as conclusions go, he does say (p. 219) that " the very point of Marxism is that *individuals may* have a real objective and relative freedom but that *classes* may yet be determined."

This may be the very point of Marxism but it is certainly not the point of disagreement with non-Marxists. Bourgeois sociologists, political strategists, the publicity narks, the Vatican—all agree on this differentiation. What *is* disputed is the theory that the working class triumph will make us all happily united, unhampered by spiritual myths which we have temporarily had to rely on.

In our present England of the Common Man we have effectively a classless society (or Ad-mass), very comfortably off, with a combined public and private insurance system making up a reasonably secure Welfare State; we have ready access to entertainments and diversions of every kind together with ample leisure, our behaviour is materialist, and we possess what amounts to a one-party political system which most of us support because it gives us maximum freedom to do as we like.

No matter what political movements may develop in the future and no matter how heavily we shall fall if we retain the existing capitalist framework, the fact is that at this moment in time we have achieved in England what amounts to the ideal Marxist state. And the British people have never been so inhibited, disillusioned and miserable in their entire history!

No, Sir, it is not a national ideology that we need, but a robust empiricism working within the compass of men's needs and aspirations, which never change but only develop. Marxism is no more an answer than Bourgeois Capitalism. Both are losing their driving force, even their *raison d'être*, and are themselves but temporary myths.

Yours, etc.,

Bertram Peel.

187 Amesbury Avenue, S.W.2.

THE POETIC IMAGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

To the Editor of *The European*
Sir,

Aural poetry—in at one ear and out at the other.

Yours, etc.,

Richard Aldington.

Les Rosiers,
Montpellier.

ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

Mr. Desmond Stewart points out that owing to his bad handwriting there were two important errors in the July issue of *The European.*

The Israelis are descendants of the Kazars, not the Kazaks.

The Arab refugees did not " free " but " flee " their lands.

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