

THE
BELL

AUTOANTIAMERICANISM

LOUIE BENNETT : *HUBERT BUTLER*

BRIGID LALOR : *D. SEVITT*

THE DEATH OF NATIONALISM *SEAN O'FAOLAIN*

A NOTE ON F. SCOTT FITZGERALD *ANTHONY CRONIN*

MUSIC *JOHN BECKETT*

MARY BECKETT

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BOOK REVIEWS

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VOL. XVII. No. 2.

MAY. 1951

A Magazine of Ireland To-Day



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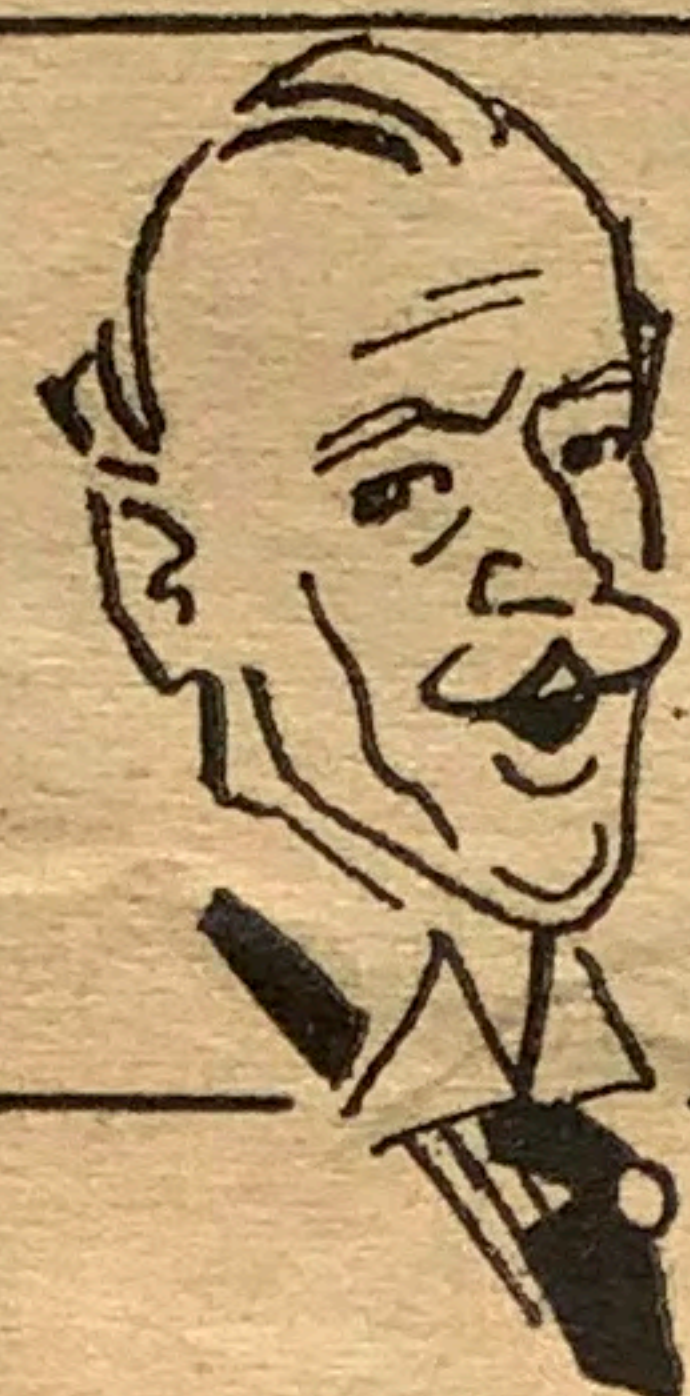
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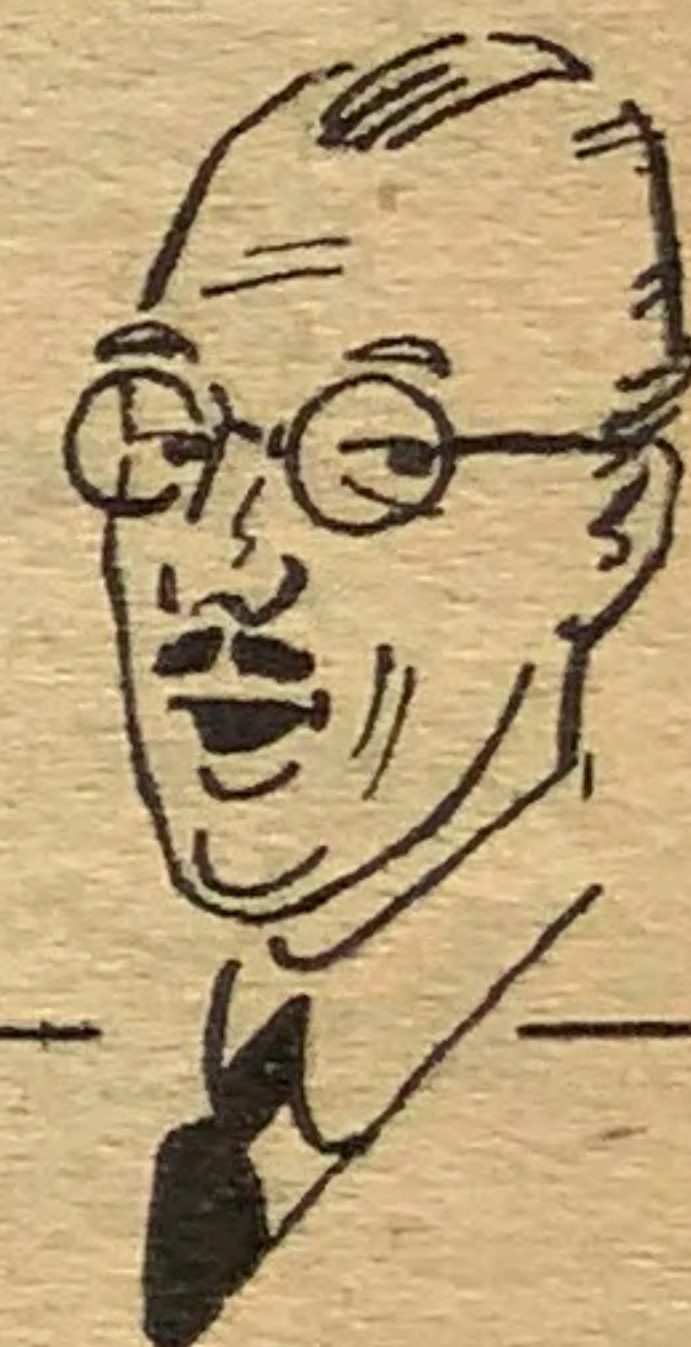
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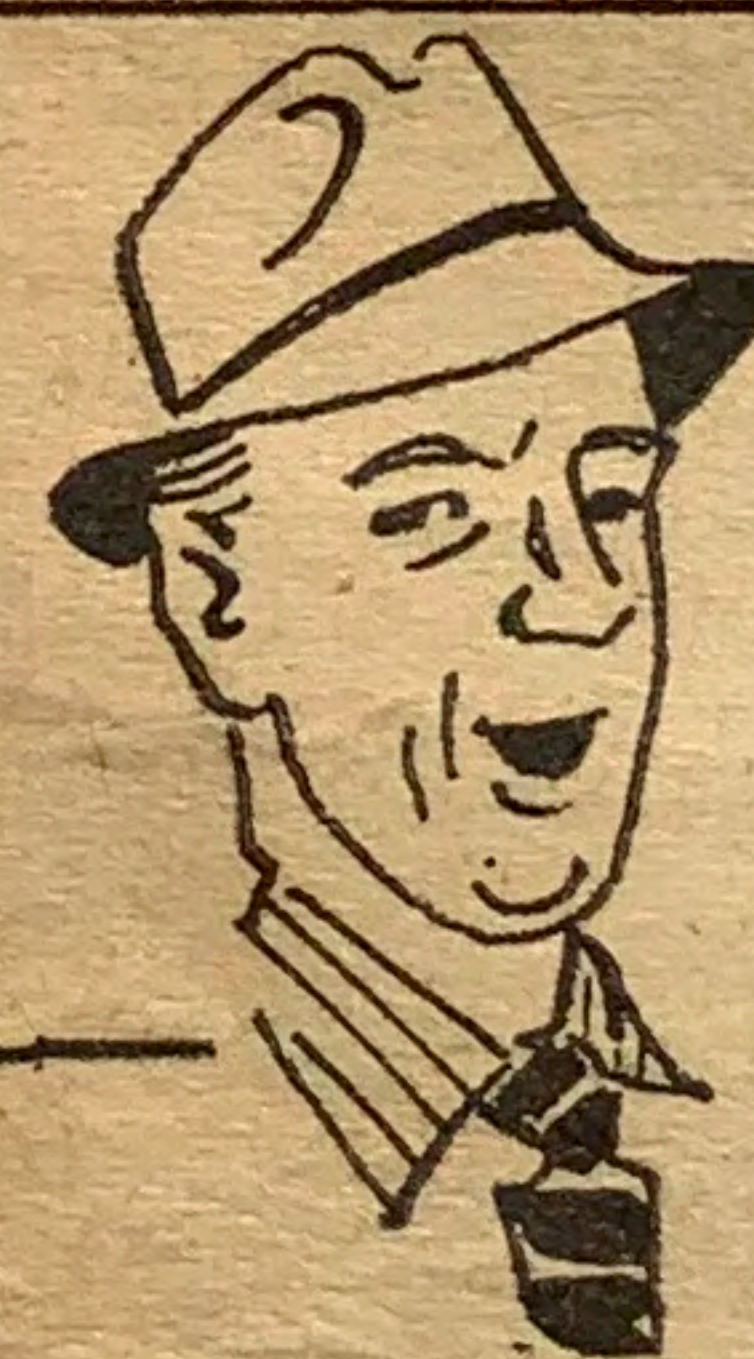
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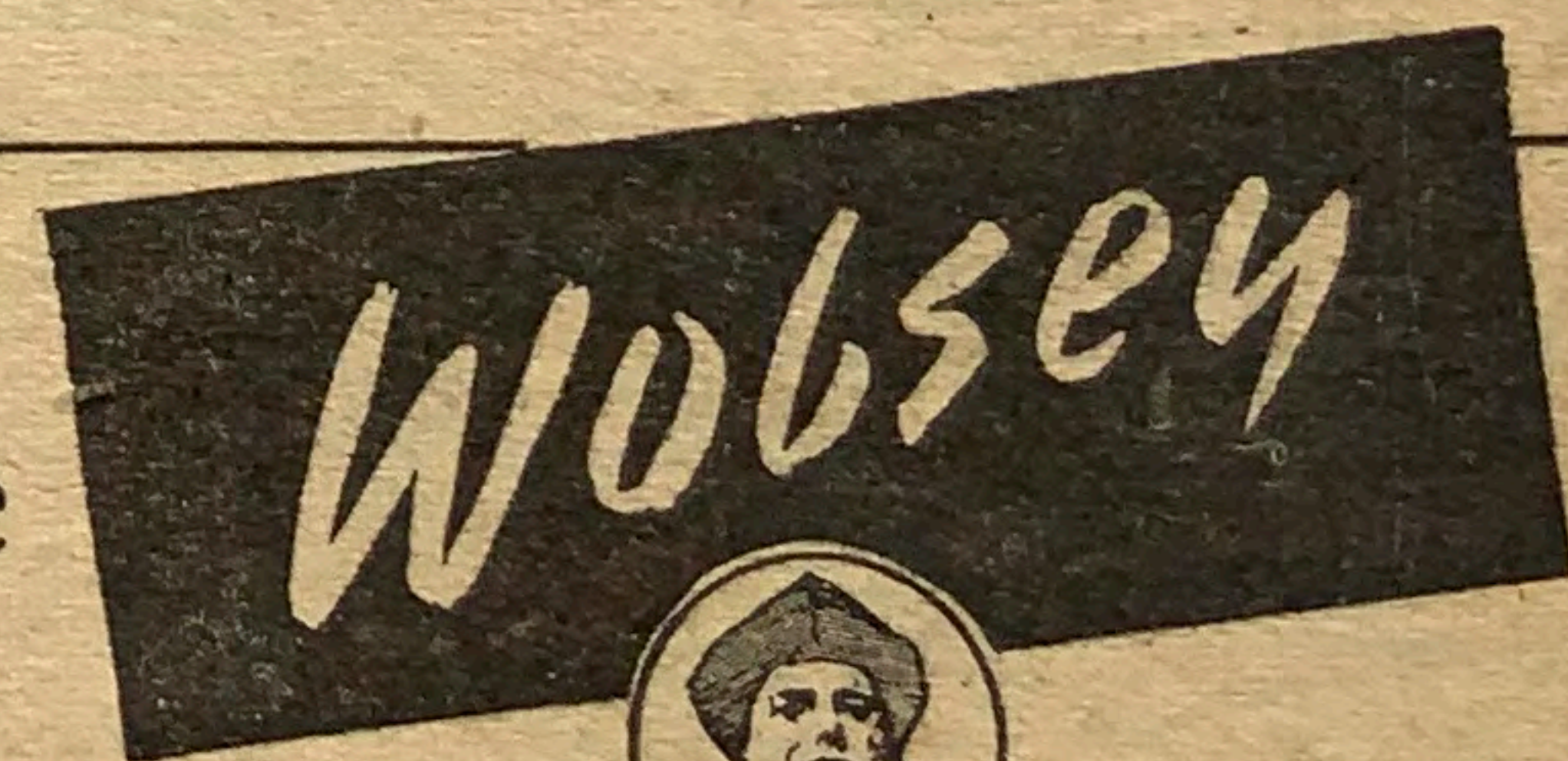


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The dreams you dreamt might yet come true.

When laughter fills the daily round,
And work is held a holy thing,
When mill and loom catch up the sound
Of folk who fashion while they sing,
And men and women toil, strong-thewed,
Where apples redden in the sun,
Untroubled then of hate or feud
Your work shall stand, your cause be won.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

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THE BELL

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ANTHONY CRONIN. BOOK SECTION, HUBERT BUTLER.
MUSIC, JOHN BECKETT.

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MAY, 1951

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THE PRINCIPLE AT ISSUE

By THE EDITOR

IT is rarely that a government, so poorly balanced as Mr. Costello's, has undertaken a piece of social legislation with the general good-will extended to Dr. Browne's mother and child scheme. When people's minds are turned outward, on a job of work in which they take joy, any doubt that the plan is not cast in a pattern that can fit down on things as they are, is resolved eagerly by open discussion on what difficulties in the objective situation need special care. These forward-looking hours do people a lot of good, intellectually and spiritually. They are of especial importance in Ireland where powerful, outside interference has, for so long, bogged us down in a mess of frustration, so that we burrow within ourselves.

The first interruption to the work on Dr. Browne's mother and child scheme came from the doctors. It raised no serious concern. The Irish Medical Association had every right to alert its members to safe-guard their special interests. The doctors are in good standing with the public, and in any trouble over the scale of fees and conditions of work they could count on lively, aggressive friendliness. It was somewhat of a shock, however, to find the doctors forming a picket between the Minister and the people, and many blushed for them when they raised the cry of 'communism', which is the catch-cry of the smug, in face of every appeal to conscience and good sense, on social change. As lay preachers the doctors are not impressive, and they will risk the good-will available to them, in negotiations on terms, if they persist in that role.

There would have been only public approval if it had been known that the Catholic Hierarchy had made representations to the government on the mother and child scheme. Public interest was centred on the provision that the service would be open to all, without any taint of a means test. Other matters such as sex education, and even the administration of the hospitals, were vague issues on which special discussion could go on without even causing any general turning of heads.

The heart of the issue, in the fate of Dr. Browne's mother and child scheme, is not touched on in the memorandum by the bishops to the government. An issue arises only when, on a matter of public concern, the government proceeds to formulate or amend policy on the basis of privately conveyed representation, without first going to An Dáil with the full story. There are especial reasons in Ireland for care that there should not be cause for even a faint suspicion, that the elected representatives are being by-passed, for we have been so burdened with conspiratorial weaknesses, out of the circumstances of the long national struggle, that whispers of government by intrigue are especially dangerous here. In this instance, Mr. Costello's government has acted in a conspiratorial way, and popular government has been put in jeopardy.

Here, then, is the very pith and marrow of this tragic affair of the resignation of Dr. Browne. The government has acted behind the backs of the elected representatives. If Mr. Costello can fairly take blame for it all, he would do himself great credit, and teach a useful lesson, if he should resign at once. It is to be hoped that the high drama in the clash of personalities, and the flippancies of rival political spokesmen, will be left aside for the moment—they but lead into ever-growing mental and emotional confusion—and the discussion centred on this vital principle of democratic government, that An Dáil must be the supreme body in policy making.

Already one meets proof of the harm that must come of the cabinet's conspiratorial method, unless it is dealt with adequately. Spokesmen in lesser bodies supporting Mr. Costello have to soothe discontent in their followers, and they take the line that they know the heads of many organisations are on Dr. Browne's side, but that nothing can be done *openly* while the bishops are on the warpath. Such whispers are a very deadly danger in the present setting. They but emphasise the need for concentrating on the principle at issue, the responsibility of government to An Dáil.

Once An Dáil is back in good standing again before the people, the way is open for a free-for-all on the mother and child scheme; what becomes of the scheme becomes important only when that higher question has been resolved. And in the conflict on the scheme it might very well be borne in mind that it is important

it be fought out in fairness. Their lordships, the Irish bishops, are sturdy and somewhat over-bearing antagonists in public controversy, but they suffer the handicap that in the eyes of the great bulk of the middle-aged and elderly people in Ireland they have been terribly in error within living memory, and that little people payed terribly for their mistakes. They might in this instance, therefore, practise a little tenderness towards those who will support the mother and child scheme, on the no-means-test level, in all good faith.

For the spokesmen for Dr. Browne's mother and child scheme will share their lordships' view on the sanctity of the home. They will have no quarrel with their lordships on doctrinal matters. The tussle arises on the factual level, whether the scheme, as a free one, solders or unsolders family bonds, and on this, their lordships have no special knowledge to offset the general view of the people.

Dr. Browne's mother and child scheme could become the bitterest public controversy since the Treaty. It could, on the other hand, be shirked so shamefully that it would go into that underworld of whispers where disheartened people lose faith in open, robust, intelligent struggle; in so far as there is a psychological factor in emigration a search into this underworld of whispers might be worthwhile.

It would be a great pity if at least a group of writers did not take the values in the circumstances under which Dr. Browne was forced out of office apart, with no end in view except to state them clearly.

An article by Sean O'Faolain on the Dr. Browne scheme has come to hand too late for this number. It will appear next month.

AUTOANTIAMERICANISM*

FOUR COMMENTS

By

1—A Trade Union Leader, LOUIE BENNETT

2—A Writer, HUBERT BUTLER

3—A Housewife, BRIGID LALOR

4—An Exile, D. SEVITT

(1)

I FORGIVE Sean O Faolain for introducing into our vocabulary such an awful word as auto-anti-ism because, though he does not answer my quite innocent question as to the possible perils of Americanisation, he challenges thought about it by his article in the March issue of THE BELL. O'Faolain is often exasperating but always thought-provoking. In this case, is he writing with his tongue in his cheek in order to compel us to think?

He apparently would have us believe that the E.C.A. are out on a philanthropic mission to poverty-stricken peoples needing only dollars and good advice to raise them to economic prosperity. He overlooks the point that governments are national trustees and must in all honesty use the national wealth in the interests of their own nation. And he chides us for a breath of suspicion as to the complete altruism of the Marshall Plan. But of course Washington quite rightly looks for some return for the activities of the E.C.A. in Ireland. Of course they have an ulterior objective and, again, quite rightly from their point of view. But, surely, we, on our side, may justifiably query whether our Government acts in the best interests of Ireland by accepting American dollars, American guidance in national development, American world policy. We can do so with full appreciation of the U.S.A's contribution to human knowledge and human welfare, whilst suggesting that Ireland, a small, agricultural country with age-old traditions

* Sean O'Faolain's article under this caption appeared in our March issue. He will conclude the discussion next month.

and customs has a different contribution to make to life and must, therefore, receive with caution, and even suspicion, efforts from outside sources to lead her people on the road to civilisation. And, surely, it is clear that America is gently drawing us into her wake at this particular moment.

E.C.A. officials on instructions from Washington presumably, are endeavouring with the utmost courtesy and kindness to contribute to our education in agriculture and industry. Books, pamphlets, journals, descriptive of the American way of life are generously provided. Charming E.C.A. officials attend our public meetings, join our conferences as friendly observers if not as official participants and have become a social asset of no mean value.

Agricultural and industrial experts tactfully advise and suggest. Industrialists and hotel managers have already been facilitated in visits to the U.S.A. to see for themselves how prosperity is achieved and dollars piled up. Now it is the turn of the young farmers and the trade unionists to go over and learn the secrets of higher productivity. Finally, our Industrial Development authority steps into the picture and enters into partnership with the E.C.A. So why is Sean O'Faolain surprised if some of us innocents ask what's afoot? (We need not blame him for being a little bemused, for when Americans are nice, they are *very very* nice.)

Granted that the U.S.A. are generous and their dollars useful. Granted that we Irish need to set more value on scientific study, to do a lot more hard thinking and a bit more hard work. Many wise people have told us so already and advised us to look to Denmark and Sweden for precept and example. And that advice rings more soundly than messages from a great comity of States. We have to remember that America thinks in miles where we think in acres. When I see her big motors lined along our narrow streets or touring our narrow roads I wonder how her theories of agricultural mechanisation can be applied to our small holdings and our hedged fields, or overcome the influences of tradition and a long and stormy history. Will they supply the answer to emigration, the flight from the land? In America they have supplied the cause for dust bowls and displaced families.

There is at present a spate of talk about industrial development and productivity. Apparently we are to solve the problem of

unemployment by building more factories and learning from the U.S.A. the newest technological processes and rationalisation methods. Apart from the many other difficulties surrounding the late entry of a small nation into the field of industry, we have reason to doubt the extent to which rationalised industry provides employment. The machine supersedes the human factor more and more effectively. Even in the U.S.A. the problem of redundancy was becoming so serious as to call a halt to technological innovations. The defence campaign temporarily solves this problem for the U.S.A. But a small, industrially backward nation must take the long view of the situation. Defence preparations under U.S.A. supervision might be immediately profitable. But if the threatened world war does not materialise, if the war fever subsides and the policy of *containment* (in its newly applied sense) becomes an international principle, what markets will be open to Ireland?

However, at the moment programmes for armaments and defence crowd our horizon, and our Government is up against the necessity to decide on a line of action. We common people have a right to know whether we are committed to follow American policy and thus find ourselves involved in world-wide political and military adventures which we have no power to control or influence. An anti-Communist crusade makes a strong propagandist appeal. But it is our duty to think out for ourselves the part we should play in the present ideological conflicts. How many of us really believe that a war such as now devastates Korea will defeat communism? Here and in many countries, in America itself, there is amongst the people a growing doubt of the efficacy of militarism as an antidote to any ideology, a growing anxiety as to the moral and material effects of the present alignment of two Great Powers competing for world ascendancy. But a Third Force is now definitely emerging, a force not dependent on armaments, free of imperialism, not yet adequately co-ordinated, but nevertheless at work 'to avert world war by getting in between the rival pressure groups of world revolution and world capitalism'. I quote from G. D. H. Cole, who continues: 'The "third force" cannot now be a great armed Power: it can still, given the right lead, be a great force for clear thinking and common sense.' Fine thinkers and fine patriots are moving into that force. They have a message

for the world. They believe that the great movements which release creative life are most often inspired by a minority, by small nations, oppressed peoples, the lone prophet, obscure groups of thinkers, poets, artists. They are, in fact, an element of the undying crusade for spiritual values as the motive force of civilisation. The sword of the spirit is the weapon of that crusade. In this present conflict of ideologies Ireland's fitting place is with that Third Force.

One Sunday lately I drove with friends along the valley of Glencree. It was dusk, and the valley lay below us in sombre colours, only the western sky palely lighted. No living thing moved there. We paused to look down over it. The solemn, secret essence of it swept us into silence. And presently for some occult reason thoughts from that great book of the prophet Ezekiel rose in our minds with its terrible denunciations and the promise of 'the little sanctuary' in every alien land to support 'the remnant of the faithful' in times of trial.

That was Glencree. Then down the mountainy road to Dublin City, and a different air. A return to practical realities and reminders that hardships, drudgery, and misunderstanding fall to the lot of the crusader. And what, after all, can Ireland contribute to a creative civilisation?

I think of Muintir na Tire, the Young Farmers, the Country-Women, the Co-operative idea slowly growing and fructifying, the theory of Vocational Organisation whose value for our economic life has yet to be fully understood. I think of the new spirit moving our younger generation in field, factory and office, in the studio and the study. I think of Sean O'Faolain and his like, thinkers and leaders of Irish thought, well aware of the need to hold fast to our national integrity, and strong enough to welcome the stranger in our midst without fear or suspicion. I think again of Glencree and 'the little sanctuary.'

And so thinking I am satisfied that the Irish people, *left free to follow their own way of life*, may make a valuable contribution to civilisation. But Sean O'Faolain and his like must be tolerant of poor doubting Thomas and auto-antis. Cat-fish have their uses.

LOUIE BENNETT.

(2)

SEAN O'FAOLAIN is normally the least traitorous of clerks, so it is disquieting to find him perverting Benda's famous phrase, '*la trahison des clerics*' to endorse a war-policy that would have horrified the French philosopher. 'The clerk,' wrote Benda, 'by adopting political passions, brings to them the tremendous influence of his sensibility, if he is an artist, of his persuasive power, if he is a thinker, and in either case his moral prestige'. Elsewhere he condemns those writers, who 'think it is essential for them to belong to a powerful nation, which can make itself feared'. (Note here O'Faolain's reference to our 'joke-army' and 'joke-navy'). And also: 'When I see philosophers concerning themselves with the safety of the State and Ministers striving to bring about love among mankind, I think of what Dante said: 'You turn to religion him, who was born to wear the sword, you make a king of one who was born to preach. Thus all your steps are out of the true way.' Here are three caps that might fit Sean O'Faolain in his present mood, and if he doesn't want to wear them, he ought to withdraw his custom from Benda's.

You see not only does O'Faolain concern himself with the safety of the state, bringing to that prosy-problem an artist's sensibility and a thinker's persuasiveness and a great deal of political partisanship, but also he commends the American government for its effort 'to bring about love among mankind' by means of E.C.A. etc. Now Benda's thesis, which seems to me wholly sound, is that it is the duty of the clerk, i.e. the O'Faolains, 'to preach universal love and the abolition of frontiers and other spiritual things', while it is the duty of the state to punish him and confine itself to the realist task of defence. He instances the life and death of Socrates, the destructive critic of the state; both Socrates and the government, which condemned him, acted in character and did their duty. So too did Zola and the Dreyfusards do their duty, when they stood up for justice, even though they thereby undermined the prestige of the French army—and so did the French government do its duty in resisting them.

Applying Benda's philosophy to Ireland, it is surely the duty of our 'clerks' to preach peace and brotherly love till they get shut up, ('The modern clerks,' says Benda, 'have ceased to understand that the sign of an attitude truly in harmony with their function is that it should be unpopular with the layman'), whereas it is the duty of our government to concentrate on the safety of the state in the most realist way imaginable, choosing 'cowardly neutrality', as in the last war, or active participation, whichever is most likely to insure the welfare of Ireland.

And, in fact, the best clerks and the strongest governments always have behaved like this. While the democratic governments were still stalling off the Nazis with pacts and promises, a handful of English clerks were using their sensibility, their persuasiveness, their prestige in the only legitimate way these can be used, not for war against Germany, but to give what help and encouragement they could to their counterparts, the clerks of Germany. For they knew that totalitarianism could not be killed by foreign armies, which would only rally the whole German people to the side of the Nazis; it must be destroyed by the Germans themselves. Therefore we find the usual group of honest clerks, a tiny one, Huxleys, Russells, Stephens and so on, and their colleagues in other democratic lands securing the Nobel prize for Ossietzky, who was in Sonnenburg prison camp for his resistance to the Nazis. We find H. G. Wells lecturing against the Nazis in Australia and threatened with expulsion by Mr. Lyons, the premier, because of his 'insults to the head of a great and friendly power,' (Adolph Hitler). If you want to see how *official* England was feeling about the Germans at this time, read 'Ourselves and Germany,' by Lord Londonderry or Neville Henderson on his mission. And forgive them if you can. As Ministers it was not their duty to be concerned about international morality. If the honest clerks had been more numerous, the Nazis would never have been able to persuade themselves that political accommodations were all that was necessary. Goering would never have come to England in 1937 for the coronation, confident that he would be well received. The hatred for Nazi cruelty that had to be soft-pedalled in embassies and consulates would have reached to those millions of average Germans who acquiesced in Hitler from apathy rather

than approval. Can you say that the honest clerk was of no account? If so, why was he invariably the first to be blacklisted in invaded countries? Generals were forgiven, but honest clerks were pursued with every kind of rigour. They, not the soldiers, were the formidable ones.

The average intelligent American will frankly admit the wholly self-regarding nature of America's foreign commitments. Joseph Harsch, the American radio commentator, in his book 'The Curtain Isn't Iron', writes in reference to them: 'We (Americans) do agree—most of us—that the function of government should be to govern for our material welfare, not for some purpose beyond our material welfare.'

Harsch too explains that from now on the struggle for survival in the west can no longer be expressed in that simple minded Either-Or formula adopted by Sean O'Faolain, 'either communism or capitalism.' Harsch shows, from innumerable examples, that the old capitalists elements are now completely submerged in most of the eastern satellite countries. Apart from their helplessness, many of them compromised themselves with the invader, others have been dispossessed by earlier non-communist governments. To attempt to resurrect these people as allies would be to focus upon them the undivided hatred of their countrymen and would be the surest way of exterminating them. No, Harsch maintains, the only suitable allies that the democracies must look for within the communist countries are the Titoists, the disaffected communists, who exist in every country, deriving from that revolutionary nationalism, which was in every country the real driving force behind the resistance movement. That is to say American policy, which is already seen operating in Yugoslavia, will be to support one set of communists against the other. It will be rather like Richelieu's policy in the Thirty Years War, when he persecuted the Protestants at home and abroad supported the Paladin of Protestantism, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, or like the Vatican support of William of Orange at a later date. That simple-minded crusade of right against wrong, white against red, into which O'Faolain invites us, looks quite different when you examine it more closely. As for those compassionate souls, who want a war to rescue the oppressed of the east, let them ponder Harsch's

words: 'If there is going to be a war we had better say a requiem now over eastern Europe.'

And what would the realist policy be in regard to the European countries, over which America and England exercise influence? Would not the Americans be *obliged*, by force of circumstances, to resurrect the Nazis and Fascists who have had over ten years' experience in fighting Communism? Would they not be obliged to delude themselves and Mr. O'Faolain into thinking they were doing something different? He becomes almost incoherent about a moving experience he had in Calabria, which proved to him that Ireland too *must* join in the Atlantic Pact. I too had a moving experience, which filled me with such helpless rage that only now can I write about it at all soberly. When I was working with the Quakers in Vienna, 1938, I walked down the street leading to the Prater a fortnight after it had been wrecked by the Nazis. You could still see the foul inscriptions on the broken Jewish shop fronts, which the officials had deliberately left there. 'Verholung nach Dachau' 'On a Rest-cure at Dachau!' was the mildest of them. I have never before, in any communist country, and I have visited several, felt myself enveloped by such an emanation of evil, of tolerated evil. And then I saw pasted on a wall in a small street near the Stefansplatz, the manifesto of the Austrian Catholic bishops applauding Hitler, and I heard how the leaders of the Austrian Evangelical Church had sent him an even more fulsome address, signing it, as did Cardinal Innitzer, with 'Heil Hitler.' If you don't believe me read them all, in toto, in the Dean of Chichester's 'Struggle for Religious Freedom in Germany.' Now, if at that time, when the world was not seriously menaced by communism, such connivance was necessary, such *trahison des clerics*, from those who should have been the foremost guardians of 'universal love and spiritual things', what sort of connivances can we not expect in a third world war, when the menace from communism *is* serious? Will it not be necessary once more to give power to those who instigated the horrors of the Praterstrasse? Of course it will. It's happening already. We are being reminded once more of that much-advertised Austrian '*gemütlichkeit*' and how the Austrians were not really Nazis at all, whereas in fact any Austrian refugee will tell you that the Austrian Nazis, of whom

Hitler himself was one, were the most brutal and remorseless of them all. I do not doubt that many American strategists have in mind a solution of the Eastern problem by the resurrection of a federalised Austro-Hungary but Tito must first be vigorously supported and then as vigorously attacked. First the whitewash, then the tar.

What is left of O'Faolain's Either-Or crusade? It is as inconsequent as a nursery game but there is wickedness in its frivolity. 'Oranges or Lemons, darling?' . . . but it doesn't matter which you choose really for 'Here comes a chopper to chop off your head!' and the kind old uncle has a real chopper under his Father Xmas robes, and sometimes he'll use it against the communist lemons and sometimes against the capitalist oranges. It all depends. 'The function of government should be to govern for our material welfare.'

But I think the source of O'Faolain's confusion is that he equates private benevolence and public. He compares cynical ingratitude for the bounty of America with scepticism of the motives that prompted the great reformers Howard and Wiberforce. What a fatuous comparison! The bounty of America is on a par with the bounty of the Irish taxpayer to the old age pensioner and the county home. There is kindness and enlightenment of course in it but so diluted with compulsion and the desire to make the state take over the moral obligations of the individual that Miss Bennett is perfectly justified in looking the gift-horse hard in the mouth. Did anyone give us a halo because of the gifts, which we sent to starving Europe after the war, disproportionately large, I believe, in relation to our income? Public and private benevolence must be judged by wholly different canons. The honest clerks, the Howards and the Wilberforces, were hounded by their governments, before prisons were reformed or the slave trade abolished. Behind every generous act of a government there is always the desperate pressure and often thankless effort of a few honest clerks.

Because of that let Mr. O'Faolain give all his admiration to those efficient, idealistic Americans, who are transforming the Calabrian countryside—to some, I feel sure, it is much more than a job for which they are well paid, it is a mission. But let him be wary of giving the credit which belongs to individual Americans,

to 'America', for 'America' means the American government which hasn't even a right to be disinterested.

Isn't it obvious that in our highly organised world the kindness and humanity and intelligence of the individual are commodities like any other to be hawked about by governments? I remember hearing from a Pole after the terrible bombardment of Warsaw of the wonderful efficiency of the German relief service, which arrived with hot dinners in thermos plates and kind fraüleins to pat the heads of the sobbing and mutilated orphans (Aryan). The kind fraülein, whose kindness is not simulated, with her nourishing soup-cubes and her piccy-books (German), is as much a part of a well-made modern bomb as its detonator. The illusion of stern justice tempered with mercy has to be conveyed by every modern dictator, and if O'Faolain thinks that the U.S.A. are in some way unique in their dramatic charities, he has had very little experience of modern Europe.

Has he forgotten about Mussolini, who abolished slavery in Abyssinia, and brought cinemas and libraries to benighted Arabs in Libya and Tunisia, while all the time at his front door this suppurating misery of Calabria, which O'Faolain so graphically described, was tolerated, till foreigners from another continent arrived on the scene. It was tolerated because Mussolini counted on the landlords to support his regime, and because it is always easier to take the mote out of your brother's eye than the beam out of your own. O'Faolain would undoubtedly see what I mean if he went to Macedonia, or if he even read the account of H. N. Brailsford, who has known that land for fifty years, from the time when Uskub, now Skoplje, was a derelict Turkish town. Brailsford was in Macedonia when O'Faolain was in Calabria. Their experiences were much the same. The transformation which Brailsford, a hard-bitten and experienced old journalist, discovered, he describes as 'a barely credible miracle' . . . 'After centuries of stagnation and oppression . . . for the first time in history her own young men are in charge of her affairs.' The Marxists are anxious to claim the credit for the transformation of Macedonia, the western democrats for the transformation of Calabria, but in point of fact nothing is proved by either except that miracles can be achieved by science allied with a team of respectable well-paid

technicians. An honest clerk would look in these manifestations not for justification for the American or the communist way of life but for the presence of that 'universal love' which communism and capitalism can exploit and harness and misinterpret but never effectively stifle. And I think in both cases he could find some evidence.

Without the acknowledgement of a common spirit at work, which Benda would call 'universal love' and which has nothing to do with communism or capitalism, all this regeneration is in vain. Look at the map! Calabria and Macedonia, lying over against each other, are on the frontiers of the opposing powers. If the opposition is as sharp and irreconcilable, as O'Faolain claims, Calabrians and Macedonians are for it and it doesn't matter much whether there are sewers in Lucania or Skoplje or not. If the Russians don't destroy them, the Americans will.

Yet if we recognize this universal love, the picture of the conflict is transformed. It no longer looks like a wolf seeking to devour a little lamb or even like one wolf intent on destroying another. It is more like an alligator with a defective nervous system biting its own tail, (if I am not overburdening this simile, I would say that 'the nerves' are 'the honest clerks'). Once the alligator got it into its poor bemused brain that the fierce protuberance, which it saw through the corner of a bleary eye, was its own, the lashing and the gnawing might come to an end. It seems to me that the brains and the teeth and the eyesight are at the western end of the alligator and therefore that the chief blame for the misunderstanding, as well as the chief hope for dispersing it, is with us.

But Sean O'Faolain's worst offence is his defeatism. For I submit that either he believes in the inevitability of that war which nobody (we all know) can win, or else his logic is at fault. For example he says, 'Nobody is free to dither indefinitely.' Everybody must take sides because of 'a global war.' Now what does he mean by that? Doesn't he see that the Atlantic Pact means either a permanent dither on the edge of war for a generation or two or else war itself. In the zone of Russian power there are already two tolerated ditherers, communist Yugoslavia, anti-communist Finland. As time goes on there may be more. China

might have dithered, had it not been for MacArthur, and she still may. Blessed be the ditherers! Harsch shows how for each loss of face on one front the Soviets must compensate themselves by a victory on another. If there are no neutrals in the western bloc, there will be no neutrals in the Soviet bloc either.

So what? Mr. O'Faolain dared to misrepresent Benda grotesquely so he shall have a bath of Benda. Let the Irish government be as squalidly realist as it possibly can. On the other hand let the clerks (a comprehensive term surely for those who are not swayed chiefly by national self-interest or material values) be as idealistic as they want. Let them go and fight for civilisation in Korea, if they really believe that is where the issue will be decided. Or let them try to do in Connemara what the Americans are doing in Calabria. But if they want to intervene abroad in some other way than fighting, let them forget about the barriers as Nansen did, when he organised relief for the Volga famine, at the height of the Bolshevik revolution. Think wherever possible of the people and not of the governments which represent or misrepresent them.

Does this sound vague? I could give many instances of how we could act in this spirit. We are a small people and whatever we do may be small, though if you come to think of it, Nansen and the Red Cross both originated in small countries. Sean O'Faolain has always, in practise, acted as an honest clerk, so let me illustrate my point by a recent action of his.

When Ivo Andritch, an honest Yugoslav clerk, if ever there was one, came to Dublin to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, crowds formed in the streets to boo and hiss at him, because he came from a communist country and it was assumed that he believed in persecution, the imprisonment of priests, the closing of churches and so on. He is one of Yugoslavia's foremost writers and neither before nor after the revolution has he written a line approving of one of these things, or suggesting any values of conduct or character other than those accepted by all civilised people. He returned home hurt and bewildered. O'Faolain was one of the few in Ireland who resented this treatment and wrote to the papers denouncing it. It was a small thing but important. For half a second the alligator was forced to recognize its own tail. But the alligator's head does not become its tail by acknowledging

a shared identity. The danger that we might become communists by reciprocal relations with them in their country or ours is not great. We are as likely to infect them with our heresies as to be infected by theirs. Let us not close any doors (and pacts and 'line-ups' are all doors) on this possibility of friendly, critical reciprocity.

O'Faolain rightly resents the hypocrisy of selling our assistance in 'the defence of Christendom' for the six counties. But does he really think we should become less, rather than more, pleased with our 'lily-white hands', our 'pure souls', if we joined the Atlantic Pact? Would not our ignorant smugness increase a hundred-fold?

Is it impertinent to suggest that what is behind O'Faolain's stirring call-to-arms is not apprehension of invasion or gratitude to America or concern for the Calabrian peasant but simply exasperation with our small-mindedness? Does he mean possibly that a bit of war-fever would be *good* for us? Tennyson and Ruskin dared without blushing to prescribe war as a tonic for the anaemic Philistinism of the British. Nowadays, perhaps, the flutter of preparing for a war that will never take place—Americans in Mullingar, money flowing, tongues wagging, planes roaring—might be a substitute for the exhilaration of a Victorian war. And how broadening it would be for us to 'line up' with India and Pandit Nehru on 'the problem of Asia,' instead of with Miss Cook on the problem of Baltinglass! Yes, indeed, it might be good for us and even if it wasn't so good for Asia, Asia could take it.

But all this is very different from the O'Faolain of ten years ago! We were far more gravely threatened then than now. There were many more pro-Germans in Ireland than there are pro-Russians to-day. But in O'Faolain's brilliant and pugnacious articles in 'THE BELL' the philosophy of Either-Or and the shamefulfulness of dithering was scarcely adumbrated. It is true that in the series which he called 'One World' (not 'Half a World') he argued that isolationism was becoming impossible, but he did not argue that it was immoral, while it lasted. Without being in the least parochial, he made us feel that we had battlefields at home in which we could expend all the strength we had.

And now why has he started haranguing us as if he were Lord Roberts or one of the bull-dog breed himself? It sounds phony

to me. For Sean is no gun-dog or watch-dog; he is an Irish terrier and at his happiest chasing the next-door cat. Did you notice, for example, how Kingsley Martin, that typically English intellectual, has only to poke his head once over the garden wall and talk about 'the problem of Ireland' and, as always, there is a wild scuffle and hurroosh, and Asia, Russia, Communism, Calabria are all completely forgotten. And then just suppose for a moment it was Pandit Nehru, who poked his head over the garden wall to settle 'the problem of Ireland'—and he'd have a perfect right to reciprocate this attention . . . ! Golly!!

O'Faolain is trying to use the contemporary war-scare as a means of rousing us out of our spiritual stagnation. But I submit that it is a poor way and that there are many better ways of performing this necessary task.

HUBERT BUTLER.

(3)

MR. SEAN O'FAOLAIN saw the peasant slaves of Calabria becoming free men under his very eyes. He thus witnessed a miracle in sweat, soil, and happiness, and fine artist that he is, every splendid instinct within him still echoes those peasants' joy. Salute to the American visionaries who conceived, and are executing, this splendid work.

Back home in Ireland, and still tingling in ecstasy, Mr. O'Faolain is irritated to find Miss L. Bennett expressing doubts about the disinterested intentions of E.C.A. towards Ireland. He apparently discovered that many people here hold the same views as she does. He describes this attitude as Auto-anti-Americanism, says it is founded on mean suspicion, and some other cesspool emotions which prevent people from understanding the enormous generosity of E.C.A. He proceeds from there to analyse this attitude under the various headings of British influence, suspicion, unbelief, cowardice, etc.

I share Miss Bennett's doubts and suspicions of American Torys. I shall do my best to explain why I do so, but I must admit Mr. O'Faolain's exposition of his own attitude is confusing. Under

the heading 'British influence in Auto-anti-Americanism' he says, 'the English Torys are suspicious, sore, and sour with the American Government because it has become a Class A power, and the world's banker.' The Irish Torys whose interests are identical follow suit.' This is perfectly correct. All Torys are supporting each other now, as ever. It is the Churchills and the Tory Mid-West senators, the De Gaulles, and the Francos, with the Dillon mascots who are now sounding the call to arms. Their identical interests are threatened. Of course they have their differences, the most important being, who shall be Class A power and hold the bank. At present they are playing up the need for unity. They are throwing no spanners in each other's works. Their Cold War weapon is propaganda. The world's Tory Press is doing its job so well indeed that even the shrewd Mr. O'Faolain has fallen for it. It is easy to understand its impact on less intelligent beings. He has swallowed the Calabria bait. (It was a succulent morsel). The English Torys, our traditional enemies, and Mr. O'Faolain are now in the same camp, and the Torys are again carrying the torch for Christianity, the self same one that Henry II carried over here in 1169. So I think I can understand Mr. O'Faolain's confusion at finding himself nice and matey with the English Torys. It is an atavistic reaction arising from the dangerous company he is keeping. The position is surely the direct opposite to Mr. O'Faolain's statement. The whole international Tory Press is supporting the American Government's foreign policy. The genuine Socialist Press of the world, with a minute fraction of its opponent's power, is fighting gamely to oppose this war policy with a policy of peace for the people of the world, so it is not Tory propaganda which is fathering our doubts here in Ireland. Tory propaganda has evidently got some dupes, but Miss Bennett or Kingsley Martin or the rest of us anti-Tories, are not amongst them. I am bitterly disappointed at Mr. O'Faolain's mud slinging at the 'New Statesman and Nation.' It is unworthy of him as artist and man. That paper is the organ of genuine Socialism as he says himself, and it is truly fulfilling its Socialist function in opposing Toryism of all nationalities.

Back to our Auto-anti-Americanism. My misgivings come from many sources. I know that the American people are being

taxed beyond endurance to provide unlimited funds for E.C.A. E.C.A. disposes of this money as best suits American military requirements. But I want peace, not war. Then, I hate to see our people take alms. This attitude could be an out-crop of racial pride. God knows it is a poor return for all the proud blood that was spilled to fertilize our soil if we, in this generation, can only produce a crop of beggars.

Now I don't want to stand behind Mr. O'Faolain's three A's. I am anti-British, anti-American, anti-Russian, and pro-Irish. With Connolly I 'serve neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland.' I, as an Irish Christian mother, do not feel I should expose my children, or Mrs. O'Faolain's children, or any Irishwoman's children to the horrors of an atomic war. If killed they must be, let them die because society to-day would not let them live full, Christian, civilised lives. I will not blood them to kill others. I will teach them the evil thing war is, its well proved inability to improve the world. I will teach them Christian charity, and that won't fail them if, and whenever it gets a trial. By this pro-Irish attitude I am not closing any outlets for the generosity, humanity, or justice of the American people. They can use their E.C.A. funds to fertilize and prevent their dust-bowls, cure mentally and physically their Navaho Indians, help their share-cropping, poor-white, and negro citizens, and make a hundred T.V.A. experiments. I wish them Godspeed in all these undertakings. These things need doing in America, but its Tory Government will not do them. It is too busy squeezing that 15/- per week from every American, and spending it in armed support of Syngman Rhee, and Chiang Kai-shek, and other gentlemen whose regimes were worse than ever Calabria experienced. Wall Street is still trying to impose these feudal rulers on their unfortunate countrymen. Is that what Mr. O'Faolain means when he says the American Government is only anxious that people live their own lives decently? I frankly do not like it viewed from the Chinese angle. I wish they would try the Calabria method oftener. I believe it would be more successful in combating Communism than bombs seem to be.

General Eisenhower has let the cat out of the bag as to what America gets out of all this. He said 'We must give Europe assistance because . . . if not, our system will wither away.'

The system he refers to is the American Tory system, and we pro-Irish are not prepared to sacrifice Ireland or Europe to support an American Tory Government. I hope I am making my grounds for suspicion and unbelief fairly clear. I have a few other reasons. The American military experts have already classified England as expendable. It is reasonable for any Irishwoman to suspect and resent inclusion in this category. I can understand the American who thus classifies us. I can understand that he couldn't care less if we Irish were all blown into hell, if we dove-tailed into this strategic position. I cannot understand any Irishman who agrees with this view.

His parting shot of 'cowardly neutrality' goes wide. When is neutrality not cowardly? Was Swedish or Swiss neutrality cowardly? Was American neutrality before Pearl Harbour and 1917 cowardly? If the Russian threat did not affect America now, she would be neutral. Would that be the cowardly species?

My attitude will be understood and respected by all genuine lovers of democracy the world over. If it is so respected during the war ahead (which Mr. O'Faolain takes for granted) the world will know that democracy is a live force. If it is not so respected and understood, democracy will be dead, and a global war will not revive it. Pierpoint Morgan, Cecil de Mille, and Mr. O'Faolain may expound a democracy diametrically opposed to my definition. I only answer, my democracy is synonymous with life, theirs with death.

Lastly, we pro-Irish value the way of life we hold. Its standard is not high culturally, or economically. We have failed our great dead leaders so often, that it looks now as if history is taking her revenge on us for our careless waste of their blood and teaching. We have not a leader on our horizon in these fateful days. We have consistently refused to do what Tone and Connolly would have us do for our own people. If we believe the propaganda of Mr. O'Faolain I can see us arriving in the other world *en masse* from an atomic bomb, carrying the banner (the Tricolour, with the Stars and Stripes in one corner, and the Union Jack in the other) of our new Banana Republic.

BRIGID LALOR.

IN his article 'Auto-anti-Americanism', Sean O'Faolain would have us believe that the 16 million dollars from the U.S.A. to the Irish Government is given without any strings, without any expectations from Ireland and that the Irish people will not have to work, arm, fight or die for these dollars. If he expects us to believe that, he underestimates the native intelligence of the people and the deep rooted Irish suspicions of Imperialism whether it is the British or American variety.

He says that he wept when he found that 'the Americans have poured millions upon millions of lire . . . to reclaim the exhausted soil (of Calabria)' and to rescue the Calabrian peasants from poverty and starvation. Moryah. The tears which blinded him must have prevented him from seeing what Marshall 'Aid' has done and is doing to Europe. Let us dry and open his eyes.

In the latter part of last year, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article by Demaree Bess entitled 'Is the Marshall Plan Dead?' Mr. O'Faolain will agree that this paper is not Communist run. Mr. Bess wrote: 'The Marshall Plan has been altered so completely that it no longer exists. . . . The European Recovery Programme was supposed to continue until 1952 but it has now been altered beyond recognition. . . . The European countries are now being forced to spend so much upon rearmament that they can no longer hope to be self supporting by 1952, the Marshall Plan deadline. The new emphasis upon European rearmament has indefinitely postponed European recovery.' Since these words were written, Eisenhower has become the Warlord of Western Europe's armies, Herod has become America's economic dictator in Europe, the rearmament and remilitarization of Western Germany under 'ex'-Nazi generals is proceeding, Nelson's British Navy has been pawned to a Wall Street admiral and more and more of Europe's (and America's) wealth and efforts are being used for armaments instead of reconstruction. Bess goes on: 'The present U.S. program is chiefly concerned with European rearmament. The renewed economic strength of Western Europe is now being considered primarily as military potential. . . . E.C.A. has been streamlined to play a role in European rearmament.'

similar to that of the War Production Board in the United States rearmament during World War II.'

So American altruism boils down to harnessing Europe for war under the control and direction of Yankee generals, admirals and economic dictators. Marshall Aid is martial. However, perhaps Mr. O'Faolain doesn't believe Bess. In Brussels last December the leaders of the North Atlantic Military Bloc decided to 'recognise' the Marshall Plan. In January of this year Truman stated that Marshall Aid would henceforth be used to help Western Europe prepare for 'defence' and not economic recovery. O'Faolain's preposterous eyewash stands revealed for what it is—a stunt to help put through America's policy in Ireland.

Have not the Americans again and again intervened in the domestic affairs of the Marshallized countries? Marshall Aid was freely used to buy European politicians and as a mean of political pressure and intimidation. Is Marshallized Greece a free, independent and democratic State? No, Greece's Monarcho-fascist dictatorship is financed by Marshall Aid and her government and B Specials are under American orders. In France, the U.S. Marshallizers financed and inspired the campaign to oust the largest political party in France from the Government, the Communist Party: in Italy E.C.A. engineered the split in the Italian Trade Unions, as Senator McCarran said, 'the E.C.A. provided guidance' and supplied the money for the job. Irish Trade Unionists take note. The readers can supply many more examples. In the United Nations, the Marshallized countries jump to the crack of the U.S. master's whip. Do you remember that when recently in the Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, some of the Marshallized countries wanted to support the demand for a peaceful settlement of the Korean war and hesitated to declare China an aggressor in Korea, the United States of America openly threatened to cut off Marshall 'Aid' to those countries?

Mr. O'Faolain asks us to believe that America's dollar gift to Ireland is different, that the rulers of the United States are full of loving sentiment to the Irish, that the 'gift' is not parcelled up and has no strings. Who then sent the Dutch troops to occupy the airbase in Derry? Was this done by the Dutch and the British

without America's knowledge? Is it not more likely that the self same Dutch and British governments received their instructions from their American lords and masters? Recently American bombers landed at Dublin Airport. Were they uninvited guests? Did they mistake the Irish coastline for the Calabrian fields, or is it not more likely that they were having a reconnaissance of Collinstown for future possibilities?

No, Mr. O'Faolain, it won't do. America wants to involve Ireland in her plans for conquering the world. She needs Ireland's ports and fields for naval and air bases: she would like to transform Ireland into an unsinkable aircraft carrier for her atomic warfare against Russian and Eastern Europe just as she has done or is in the process of doing in Britain, France, Western Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Iceland, North Africa, etc., etc., etc. Who is the amadan, Mister O'Faolain? You think that the anti-Bolshevik excuses and reasons beloved of Hitler, Goering and Mussolini can fool the poor, ignorant Irish? If so, remember what happened to the Nazis. You invite the Irish to join a holy crusade against Communism. 'I don't want to be pushed about by America. I don't want to be dragged by America into a line-up against Communism'—O'Faolain makes his 'auto-anti' protest. Then he lets the cat out of the bag altogether. 'Why not do it of your own free will?' he asks, 'because you do want to take that position anyway, do you, or don't you?' There it is in a nutshell. Let Holy Ireland join America's crusade war against Russia freely and without pressure from the United States of America. That would save the United States a lot of trouble and expense and the Irish mackerel would be well worth the sprat of 16 million dollars.

Fortunately however, America's plans have received considerable opposition throughout the world. Her billions spent on her puppet Chiang Kai Shek came to nought in China and her blood bath and murder in Korea will just as certainly fail to conquer the unbreakable heroism of the Korean people. In Western Europe there is tremendous opposition to rearmament, particularly to German rearmament and daily the world movement for peace by negotiation grows stronger and more united.

'The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour,' said Connolly, and among the basic objectives of the Labour Movement is the

cause of peace. It is therefore fitting that Louie Bennett, an Irish Trade Union leader, should warn the Irish people against America's real motives, against joining Wall Street's preparations for war and conquest.

D. SEVITT.

A SWAN

(LIKE RILKE'S)

*Unceasingly through the waters of space
And of time, the weary swimmer still strives,
Making way, like a swan, with small trace;*

*While death wavers up underbreast,
Burlesquing whatever a feather contrives,
Deriding the swan and the quest:*

*The waters of places and hours are flowing
Dark under white, deep under down, and going
In laughter away with a feather-flecked wave;
The swan, in his contours more pure,
In his circuits of living more sure,
Disdains the pale image the waters engrave.*

KEVIN FALLER.

THERESA

By MARY BECKETT

DURING the last year of the war Theresa was so recklessly gay that some of the neighbours began to whisper gossip about her. 'I know it's jealousy that's wrong with them,' her mother said. 'But I hate you to give them the chance to say things about you. You shouldn't be going out with American soldiers at all,' she scolded when Theresa came in even later than usual. 'You know quite well they get a girl a bad name.' Theresa laughed. 'They get a girl lovely presents,' she said and she reached up to stroke her mother's cheeks with the new fur gloves she was wearing. 'Aren't they nice and soft? My hands won't ever be cold again,' and she pressed them against her own face. Her mother had to smile at her. 'All the same, Theresa, this won't last,' she said. 'What I've always wanted is for you to marry some nice man who'll be good to you. It's not like when I was married and bringing you all up; the men have work now.' Theresa interrupted her. 'Ah sure that won't last either,' she scoffed and banged out of the room.

One morning she told her mother that she was going to have a baby. Her mother sat down and cried. Theresa turned her back so that she wouldn't have to look at the way her mother's face had crumpled. 'I'm not the only one,' she said sulkily. 'There's plenty of other girls worse than me.' Her mother didn't answer her and she shouted, 'Oh don't go on like that. What good will that do? I'll have the baby in the hospital and I'll leave it in the home and I'll be back at work the same as I always was.'

But it didn't happen like that. She didn't ask to see the baby when she woke after the birth; she closed her eyes again after one glance round the ward. She'd had a bad dream, she told herself and she wasn't right awake yet. If she opened her eyes in a minute she would find herself at home. Then she saw a young fair-haired nurse carrying the bundle. Theresa kept her eyes on the nurse's face and thought how nice she looked and wished her hair would turn out that colour when she put bleach on it. The nurse laid the baby in the crook of Theresa's arm, and Theresa

gasped as she looked into the screwed-up black face with the flattened nose and thick lips. This wasn't hers, she thought, pushing it away. The baby whimpered and the nurse bent over her. 'Hold it like this,' she showed her. Theresa lay there, staring straight ahead until the weight on her arm became uncomfortable. Then she put her other arm round to ease it, and for a moment the baby was pressed warmly against her breast. Suddenly she tightened her arms so that the baby was turned towards herself. She rubbed her cheek against the blanketed head and then looked round aggressively. Nobody was looking near her though, and when the nurse came to take the baby away all she said was, 'I forgot to tell you it's a girl.'

Afterwards, when she should have been resting she began to worry. She was puzzled about the whole business; he hadn't been a negro. Not that it mattered now—the baby had to be looked after whether it was black or not. But how could she manage to keep the child safe from people who would jeer at her for being a nigger? Presently a nurse seeing her awake gave her a tablet to make her sleep.

In the morning she smiled when she got the baby in her arms again. She felt the fuzz of black hair with the tip of her finger. 'She'll have curly hair,' she thought. 'And she is nice-looking—far nicer than a whole lot of these skinny red babies.' But the black skin showed up very darkly against the white shawl she was wrapped in. 'I'm bringing her out to have her baptised,' the nurse said. 'What name do you want for her?' Theresa had never considered a name and now no name would come into her mind so she asked, 'What's your name, nurse?' and the nurse laughed. 'Deirdre,' she said. 'My mother was romantic!' It was an unusual name Theresa thought and smiled at the nurse. 'Yes, I'd like that. She might as well have a nice name at least.' In an hour's time the baby was brought back to her. 'There you are,' the nurse said. 'Nothing left but Christians, children of God and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven. She has great lungs too; you should have heard her shouting when the water was poured on!' Theresa laughed with pride and then lay looking into the baby's face, admiring the long black eyelashes that were unnoticeable against the dark skin. She slept then, but started the moment

the nurse tried to lift the baby away from her, and didn't yield until she was fully awake.

All the time she was thinking how she was going to look after the baby when she left the hospital. She'd have to be watching all the time for fear anyone would harm the child. It wouldn't be so bad until she began to walk; she'd be able to keep her safe. She'd have to stay off work but the munition factories were all closed since the war had ended, anyway, and she had never done any other work. It wasn't till her mother came to see her that she was reminded of her original plan. She hadn't had time to think of her mother until she saw her at the door of the ward. Her mother's determinedly cheerful expression gave her a sense of relief; she would have someone to help her care for the baby. Her mother hurried up to the bed and then saw the black skin of her grand-daughter. 'My God!' she whispered staring at the baby's face. Then she looked at Theresa. 'Are they good to you?' Theresa felt sick at the sight of her mother's anxiety; she assured her that everybody was very kind to her. 'How about the nuns?' her mother asked. 'The nuns?' Theresa echoed wonderingly. 'Will the nuns take it into the home when it's black?' her mother repeated and it came back to Theresa that she had meant to put the baby into the home. But she couldn't leave Deirdre in the home. Deirdre was hers. Nobody else could mind her right. 'Do you hear me?' her mother asked, her voice sharpening and Theresa answered defiantly, 'They don't take black babies in the home.' Her mother cried out in alarm, 'They've got to take it, d'you hear me? You've got to put it somewhere. I'm not going to have the people sneering at you for bringing home some nigger's brat!' Theresa was frightened. Her mother hated the baby, she could see. What would she do if the baby wouldn't be safe from malice in her own home? Her mother sat in silence for a while. Then she got up and stooped over the bed to press Theresa's arm that was round the baby. Theresa was dimly aware of the warm firm touch even after her mother's quick footsteps had left the ward.

But when the nurse was settling her for the night she asked, 'What are the nuns like? I mean, are they good to the children?' and listened to the nurse's assurance that the nuns were careful

and kind. By morning she had made up her mind that Deirdre would be safer in the home and she asked the nurse to send word to the nuns and then refused to think of it any more until her mother came to see her again. The lines on her mother's face seemed deeper, she thought. 'Theresa,' she began, 'would you like to bring the baby home with you?' Theresa shook her head. 'You can bring it home with you if you like, now,' her mother continued. 'Your father and I won't let anybody say a word against you.' Theresa shook her head again. 'I know that,' she said. 'But you don't like the baby.' 'Well——' her mother said hesitantly and then tried to explain. 'You see it's only that you'd never rise up again if you have the child with you always, but if it's what you want——' 'You don't like her,' Theresa interrupted. 'I'm sending her to the nuns,' and her mother's face showed her relief. 'It's just as well, maybe,' she said wearily. 'Your father was paid off on Friday.' Theresa looked at her in dismay. Then she consoled her mother, 'I'll be able to work all right. At any rate you're not to go out charring the way you used to before the war.'

And after a couple of weeks at home Theresa was glad to go out to work in one of the mills. The work tired her out but it served to deaden the aching desire to have Deirdre with her. At odd moments of the day and night, though, the warm milky smell of her would haunt her, making her head swim with the fierceness of her longing. She caught several of her parents' anxious glances and tried to shake off her listlessness. 'Would you not think of going to the pictures, love?' her mother asked three or four times and Theresa forced herself to smile 'Yes. Maybe. To-morrow, or the next night—or some night there's a good picture on.' At times her mother's brooding solicitude annoyed her. When she asked, 'What sort of women are you working with?' Theresa shrugged 'They're all right.' Her mother persevered, 'Is it true that some of the men aren't respectful to you?' 'Ach could you blame them!' Theresa flared and her mother was afraid to question her again. After a while people grew used to the change in her and didn't bother her any more.

Then one Sunday, something happened that made it impossible for Theresa to leave the baby in the home any longer. The new

parish priest made the announcements and then asked them to please listen as he had something important to say. There was a rustle of interest but Theresa didn't stop fiddling with her prayer-book. The priest began: 'I believe that there are girls in this parish who had children during the war, and that they put them into the orphanage.' Theresa kept her head bent, but she could see her mother's hands clenched round her beads. 'Those children,' the priest continued, 'were brought into the world without any hope of a father's protection and care. That's over and done with but is it any reason for denying those same children a mother's love? The nuns are good to them, but how can they give a couple of hundred children the same attention that you can give to one or two? Supposing even, that they're quite happy in the orphanage, what happens when they are fourteen? They're sent to work with tradesmen or as servants. Some of them will find good homes but how can you be sure that your child won't fall into the hands of someone who wants only cheap labour?' Theresa was staring at him. This was Deirdre he was talking about. Deirdre mightn't be happy in the home—that's what he was saying. She could hear only scraps of what followed. 'I know it's hard for all of you, impossible for some . . . ' Theresa thought frantically, 'I've got to do something. I can't leave her there,' and she heard nothing except the end of what the priest said: 'And if any girl is brave enough to bring home her child she needn't be afraid of what people will say. I will publicly disgrace any person who says a word against her.' The people, subdued, slid to their knees and only Theresa remained sitting.

She'd have to bring Deirdre out of the orphanage—there was no doubt about that. But where in the name of God was she going to bring her. She wasn't going to leave her at home with her mother and father when they bore the child such a grudge. She would have to get married. . . . There was Harry Mulholland; he used to ask every other week to marry him. But that was before Deirdre was born. Nevertheless she would ask him in the evening . . .

When she was preparing to go to his house she felt angry with herself for having become so drab-looking. Her clothes had worn shabby and all the blonde part of her hair had grown out. She

tried smiling at herself in the mirror but her face seemed all dragged down. 'Dear knows he'll not like me much the way I've got,' she thought. But she could try anyway.

Harry looked startled when he opened the door and then he burst out laughing at her. He pointed to the rocking chair in the corner and Theresa sat down and looked round the untidy kitchen without speaking. At least she could make the house more comfortable for him, and Deirdre could be very happy in it. Then she turned to Harry, sitting rubbing his hands in embarrassment. 'Would you like to marry me now?' she said. Harry's eyes widened and then he laughed uneasily. Theresa, watching him, saw all the things that had made her consistently refuse to marry him before; the way his nose curved down over his upper lip and the little tuft of hair that he couldn't get at with his razor because of it, and the big soft greyish coloured ears he had. He was bending one over with his fingers and flaking off chapped skin from the top of it. She wondered now at her silliness in even attaching any importance to such things. 'You used to want to marry me,' she prompted him. He cleared his throat. 'Well you see,' he began, and then licked his lips. 'Well dammit, Theresa, you used to be full of fun and laughing every time I'd see you. That was why I wanted you. If I thought,' he said then, 'if I thought that you'd forget about what's happened and be the same again I'd marry you in a flash.' He glanced at her hopefully but Theresa looked away from him into the fire. 'You see I want to have Deirdre with me,' she said.

Abstractedly she watched the flames weld the black coals into a glowing shape. Then Harry put back his head and shouted with laughter, and slapped his thigh and rocked backwards and forwards. 'By heavens that'd give the street something to talk about!' he laughed. Theresa smiled dutifully; it felt a rather stretched smile. 'You and me and what do you call her? Deirdre? A ready-made family! I can just hear out' Mrs. Munro and the Skillens talking about it, and what my poor mother, God rest her, would have said,' he continued chuckling. 'But they're not allowed to talk about it,' Theresa told him, and when she had explained, he began to laugh again. 'That's rich,' he roared and then he turned to her excitedly. 'We'll do it,' he

said. 'We'll get married and you go for the child and we'll wheel it out for all the oul' crones to look at, and if they as much as turn their heads we'll threaten the priest on them. Didn't I think all the fun had ended with the war. But we'll get a lot of crack out of this yet!' Theresa smiled and got up to go. She would have liked him to settle all the details at once but she was too tired to stay any longer. She was a bit disconcerted by his bursts of laughter; she wasn't sure that it would be good for Deirdre to be treated as a huge joke, but she would have a home in which to rear her and that was the main thing.

When they returned from their week-end's honeymoon in Dublin Theresa went to fetch Deirdre from the nuns. They congratulated her and praised her and said what a fine baby Deirdre was, until Theresa's heart warmed and she started back home without the feeling of apprehension that had been with her since her marriage. Deirdre was well wrapped up so that very little of her could be seen, but when they came near home she began to cry and fight until she had her arms free of the tightly wound shawl. Then she waved her fists in the air and crowed, till the children playing in the street shouted their delight in 'the lovely wee brown baby.'

Many a time Theresa was glad that she was able to trust them to wheel Deirdre out in the big cream-coloured pram that Harry bought for her. She had to get Deirdre out of sight if she wanted peace from Harry's great gusts of laughter. For Harry the joke never seemed to pall. Every fine Saturday and Sunday he insisted on Theresa and himself wheeling the big pram through the poor streets and up into the suburbs of prim villas, and he shouted laughter into the startled faces of other strolling couples. When Deirdre grew a little older she laughed too and cheered and banged the pink rattle Harry had given her, against the side of the pram. To keep up the pretence of enjoyment Theresa had to smile too, but there were nights when she was so tired that she wanted never to see Harry or Deirdre again. She kept telling herself that she enjoyed having Deirdre with her but she was such a big boisterous child, and she always made her feel so ashamed with Harry. By the time she was two Theresa had the first of Harry's children to look after as well. Theresa thought that the new baby

would take his mind off Deirdre but he seemed to look on his son only as a foil for Deirdre's darkness. She chased Deirdre out to play as much as possible, and she was grateful to the neighbours for being so good to her. The children didn't fight with her either because she was so big and strong and dictatorial.

Still when she was five and had to go to school Theresa began to wonder if the strange children's parents would object to her being there or if the teachers would refuse to take her in. She mentioned it to Harry one evening but he wouldn't take it seriously. 'Aha, so she's going to school is she?' he laughed at Deirdre. 'You'll knock 'em cold!' And he began sparring with her, shouting 'Come on Joe Louis!' and Deirdre yelled and flailed the air with her dark brown fists, and their three other children banged and shouted too. Theresa, in the rocking-chair, was worn out trying to prevent the youngest from bouncing off her knee in his excitement. When the noise had subsided, except for one of the children howling on the floor because Deirdre had bumped into him and knocked him down, Harry said: 'Do you know, I believe I'll take the day off to-morrow and bring her down to school myself.' Theresa protested immediately. 'Oh, no, no I can't let you do that. I'll have to do it.' Harry turned away from her and cuffed the child who was howling, but in the morning he went off to work as usual and left Theresa to bring Deirdre to school.

Walking her down the street, holding her tightly by the waist, Theresa thought Deirdre didn't look too bad. When she was well scrubbed she looked like somebody out of the pictures. Theresa kept on giving her directions as to how she was to behave, until the baby-room door opened after her hesitant tap, and a fat round-faced young teacher came out. Theresa wished she didn't look quite so young; she didn't like having to explain about Deirdre to anyone who appeared so childish.

But the teacher, without seeming the least surprised told Deirdre to go in and find a seat for herself. Theresa bent forward to give the child an encouraging shove, but Deirdre marched straight up to the front seat, pulled a little girl off it and sat down herself, surveying the room belligerently. Theresa and the teacher watched her and Theresa, shame-faced, said, 'I'm afraid she'll be a bother to you. The father has her ruined.' At that the teacher raised

her eyebrows and Theresa hastily explained, 'My husband, I mean,' but the teacher was in a hurry back into her room to quell the uproar that had arisen. She waited only to tell Theresa, 'Be sure and keep her at school every day. She'll be making her first Holy Communion soon.'

Theresa walked home slowly, wondering how Deirdre was going ever to get through such an ordeal as that would be. She would be dressed in a white frock and veil that would make her blacker than ever and she would have to walk down the aisle facing a packed church. As the months passed and the date fixed for it became nearer Theresa had moments of complete panic. Tentatively she suggested asking the teacher if she would arrange that Deirdre should make her first Holy Communion quietly by herself at an earlier Mass. Harry objected that it wouldn't be fair to Deirdre. 'Once you begin that, God knows where it would end,' he said and Deirdre who was listening began to bawl 'I want a white dress, so I do! I want a white dress!' The other children joined in with her crying and for the sake of peace Theresa gave in.

During the early part of the Mass, Theresa knelt with her head bowed, too afraid even to watch what Deirdre was doing. Gradually the comfort of Harry's burly presence encouraged her to look up, and she saw that the teacher had brought Deirdre to the end of the seat beside her. She was pleased, and surprised when, watching Deirdre walk back from the altar with her hands joined demurely and her tight little black eyes roving round the church, she heard several women murmur, 'Ah, God love it, will you look!' Theresa sat up in the seat, feeling weak, suddenly. She listened with absorbed attention to the curate who began his talk by asking the children which they would rather have—a good long sermon or a big cup of tea and a fry. Theresa smiled when she heard Deirdre's voice loud over the rest, shouting for 'A fry'. He had always been nice to Deirdre.

When she came out he was standing at the top of the steps, talking to a bunch of children. Deirdre pulled away from her and ran over to the group. The other children stood back to let her pass, she walked straight up to the priest. 'Father, bless my beads,' she said peremptorily, holding up a pair of red beads Harry had given. 'Ah, it's Deirdre herself,' Father Harvey said heartily.

'How are you at all? Man, but you're great style. Stand out there till I see you.' Theresa, watching Deirdre preen herself, thought how cold and lifeless and anæmic the other children looked beside Deirdre's healthy overflowing vigour. Then she heard Harry's laugh from the crowd of men at the foot of the steps and hurrying forward with Deirdre's coat she took her home.

Harry came home in great form shortly afterwards and when breakfast was over her suggested taking Deirdre out of Theresa's way for a while. 'I'll bring her down town and get her photograph taken,' he said. 'You'll do no such thing,' Theresa said, appalled. 'You'd have everybody laughing at her,' but Harry persisted, 'She'd enjoy it, you know. I'm all for letting her have what fun she can get now.' Theresa repeated that Deirdre wasn't going, and calling her in from the street where she was playing, began stripping off her white dress and veil. She was aware of Harry watching her and she was irritable with the child. She smoothed the long folds of white satin clumsily, conscious of her haggard face and of her body swollen with pregnancy. Then she asked crossly, 'What's wrong with you? What are you staring at me for?' He came over and fingered the stuff of the frock. 'Do you remember you had on a white shiny thing like that the first time I asked you to marry me?' Then he put his hands on her arms. 'Look, go on down town now and buy a new dress just like it,' he said eagerly. 'Sure, I would only look daft,' Theresa protested, half-angrily. 'You wouldn't look daft, you'd look grand,' he coaxed her. 'Go on now. Your mother and father will be over this evening. Why don't you dress up and have a good time for once and let me see you laughing again.' Theresa's eyes lighted for a minute and then she rejected the idea. 'I can't have a good time when I have Deirdre on my mind,' and when he tried to sweep that away she insisted: 'Harry what's going to happen to her when she grows up? How's she going to get married? How's she going to get work? What in the name of God is she going to do? And I can't do anything for her. I can't even think of it. I can't face it at all——' 'Hey, hey, hey, hold on,' Harry interrupted her, laughing. 'Did I hear you say "can't"? Did I? Harry Mulholland doesn't know the meaning of the word "can't". Amn't I in with you on this? Of course you'll see her through. You'll be able to help her all

right, won't you. You'll feel better about it when you're not so tired. Come on now, won't you?' And to please him she said, 'Maybe,' but her voice was still wavering. She noticed the way she was clenching the white frock and she sat down with it over her knee, stroking it. She watched her hands till they stopped trembling, and then: 'Yes, Harry,' she said slowly. 'Yes. Maybe I will.'

A NOTE ON F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

By ANTHONY CRONIN

WHEN he died in Hollywood ten years ago F. Scott Fitzgerald was not only considered by his contemporaries, but considered himself to be a failure, and the obituaries published along with the American edition of *The Crack-Up* have a curious condemnatory or apologetic tone. For some years before his death contemporary criticism had ceased to take him very seriously, regarding him as a tired and burnt-out hack, a curious relic of the roaring 'twenties, and in his humility he had almost come to accept the general judgement. But the man who wrote *The Great Gatsby* and *The Crack-Up* and who died while at work upon *The Last Tycoon* was not, in spite of the drinking bouts and the one hundred and twenty magazine stories which paid for them, a man who needed apologies or should have endured so much remorse.

Cocteau says somewhere that an artist must discover his own rules of sanctity and that no one else can tell him how to live. Perhaps Fitzgerald, careless of his talent though he was, and dependent on time which he did not get, had nevertheless discovered those rules.

He was born in the American middle-west in 1896, the son of parents of Irish origin. After an unsuccessful though enjoyable career at Princeton (where his ambitions centred on literature,

college-politics and football), he joined the American Army. His hope that he would see service overseas was not realised, and after the war he had an unhappy period in an advertising agency, during which he was too poor to marry the girl to whom he was engaged and unable to write the novel he had planned. Eventually he abandoned the job, went back to his parents' home and wrote *This Side Of Paradise*, which was an immediate critical and financial success. Shortly afterwards he married, and the success of his novel combined with his own riotous and extravagant manner of life to make him a gossip-column celebrity in a decade which specialised in that kind of notoriety. After some time Fitzgerald and his wife went to Europe and were identified with that group of expatriate American writers whom Gertrude Stein characterised as 'the lost generation.'

Besides the five novels on which his reputation now rests Fitzgerald turned out a good deal of inferior fiction for the magazine market. Later he went to Hollywood to work on film-scripts. About 1936 he experienced that moral and emotional break-down of which he writes in the introspective essays entitled *The Crack-Up* . . . essays which though they are resolutely honest reveal him as a man of fine personal quality.

Tired out by the emotions involved in the insanity and death of his wife, by the after-effects of his youthful way of life and by the financial commitments in which it had involved him, and by remorse for what he considered had been the misuse and wastage of his talent, he died in 1941.

The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald's third novel, is undoubtedly his best, perhaps his only completely achieved book. The form is perfect; the fact that it is short enough to be read at a sitting brings out its rare and curious unity of mood, a mood of tragic irony, and one feels that the entire book was clear to him before he wrote it. Whereas in *The Beautiful and Damned* or *Tender Is The Night* he appears sometimes to be improvising, feeling his way without any clear conception of the end in sight, *The Great Gatsby* is written with complete assurance and carries the reader effortlessly to the end, the unforgettable funeral in the rain to which nobody comes except an anonymous stranger.

It is the story of Jay Gatsby, who has made himself, through

boot-legging and other activities, a millionaire in the fabulous American way, and who is in pursuit of a dream. Years before, when an officer in the army, stationed in a middle-western town, he had fallen in love, but during his transfer overseas and his initial year of poverty after the war, he had lost the girl. The enormous structure he has subsequently raised about himself—the millions, the huge house and the fabulous parties on the lawn—are an attempt to recapture the butterfly, to extort from life the magic it had once promised. But because of the terrible power of the imagination to destroy the present, exalting instead the future or the past, the attempt is doomed to failure. Gatsby meets the girl (now married to inherited and, therefore, scornful wealth) again, and makes a gallant effort to re-live the dream, an attempt that proceeds through comedy to ironic death.

'He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could scarcely fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the Republic rolled on under the night.

'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. And one fine morning . . .

'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'

The Great Gatsby is the most perfect expression its author achieved of his essentially romantic attitude—a view of life as an affair of infinite mysterious promise, realisable only for a moment in early youth, and afterwards as a continual seeking for what exists only in the mind. All his heroes—Antony Patch, the rich young man in *The Beautiful and Damned* who can find nothing worth doing in life and who, after the years of love and gaiety are over, is condemned to a gradual atrophy of the will, and Dick Diver, the brilliant psychologist in *Tender Is The Night*, drifting gradually into alcoholism—are men whose supreme moment comes early and who never find anything to equal it.

In an Essay called *An Early Success* Fitzgerald tells how after the publication of *This Side Of Paradise*, when he was in his middle

twenties, he was driving one night along the Riviera, and, stopping his car, he looked down at the lights of Monte Carlo twinkling below:

'It was not Monte Carlo I was looking at. It was back into the mind of the young man with cardboard soles who had walked the streets of New York. I saw him again—for an instant I had the good fortune to share his dreams, I who had no more dreams of my own. And there are still times when I creep up on him, surprise him on an autumn morning in New York or a spring night in Carolina when it is so quiet that you can hear a dog barking in the next county. But never again as during that all too short period when he and I were one person, when the fulfilled future and the wistful past were mingled in a single gorgeous moment—when life was literally a dream.'

All his books are concerned with men who are similarly betrayed by the past into dis-satisfaction with the present, and even Stahr, the Hollywood producer who is the subject of *The Last Tycoon*, is haunted by the image of a dead wife and the confused memory of a time when he had some sort of motive for the acquirement of power.

This conception of the tragedy, the 'heartache at the heart of things' is the closest approximation to a philosophy of life that is to be found in Fitzgerald's novels. He cannot be discussed, as most of his contemporaries can be and are, in terms of formal belief, and this may partly account for the decline into obscurity that preceded his death. He described himself, truly enough, as 'a spoiled poet', and his prose is highly evocative, abounding in immediately visible beauties; but he is, as most of his contemporaries are not, a pure novelist, interested in human motive, profoundly aware of the disappointments and tragedies of life, but not concerned to argue or to exhort. He believed in the value of the primary virtues, kindness, courage, dignity and honour (which he defined as not lying to oneself) and he regarded the loss of these virtues, as most of his heroes come to lose them (*Gatsby* is the only one who does not crack-up, whose end is swift) as tragic, though he does not condemn.

In this Fitzgerald seems to express fairly accurately the American attitude. If there is an American idealism this surely

is it, a naive belief in the importance of certain human virtues without any coherent system of beliefs to give them validity. Even the usual European artist's substitute for religious, political or philosophic conviction, an assurance of the supremacy of art over all other human affairs and of the consequent importance of the good artist, Fitzgerald does not seem to have possessed, and since he committed himself to autobiography it is not impertinent to remark that it might have saved him from a good deal if he had.

One of the most disquieting elements about his work is in fact the divorce of his characters from the ordinary routine occupations of the world. Apart from *Gatsby*, who is a crook, and Stahr who is a Hollywood magnate, none of his people are occupied in any ordinary way; they are monied and leisured, people whom the envious would class as wasters. This is partly so perhaps because Fitzgerald could not resist the novelist's temptation to daydream, partly also because he had a very acute sense of the value of money as enabling people to attain what he described as 'mobility and grace'; and the fact at least is proof of a real if inverted sense of the importance of the economic factor.

In *The Snows Of Kilimanjaro* Hemingway tells how when 'poor Scott Fitzgerald' once began a story with the sentence 'The rich are different from you and I', an acquaintance replied 'Yes, Scott, but the difference is they've got more money', which is of course more or less what Fitzgerald meant. In any case if there is a day-dream element in his concentration on riches it is explained by the fact that during the decade in which he matured as a writer the great American hope was to be freed by the stock-market boom from the necessity to work.

So much has been made however of Fitzgerald as the voice of an age, the prophet of the American 'jazz-age' that it is difficult to use any national or temporal adjective in connection with him and avoid misunderstanding. His first novel, *This Side Of Paradise*—an immature but still exciting work, the performance of a young man who wanted to show what he could do—was hailed at the time as a banner for the revolt of American youth after the Great War, a justification of the hedonism of the boom, and Fitzgerald never quite escaped from the reputation which it won him, a reputation which to a certain extent he seems to have enjoyed. In

the later novels, however, and especially in *The Great Gatsby*, in so far as the background is important at all it is re-created for the reader, who needs no acquaintance with it apart from that provided by the author, and this is as good a definition of timelessness as any other. The descriptive ability he possessed and the ability also to suggest without describing the background, carry the reader immediately into the time and the place.

He possessed in fact all the equipment of a great novelist, and if, apart from *Gatsby* and *Tender Is The Night* his achievement is fragmentary, it nevertheless leaves echoes in the mind. The narrative gift which he exploited so well in *Gatsby*, where the problem of the first person narrator is solved in a way which reminds one of the other great examples—Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, Henry James's *The Turn Of The Screw* and Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*—he did not always make such good use of; but even in a book as ultimately unsatisfying as *The Beautiful And Damned* the style alone is full of unexpected pleasures. His clear and charming prose, with its ability to suggest the fleeting poetry of the visible and the pathos of lost joys, will continue to be read. He did not, as the note-books reveal, achieve such prose without effort, and the achievement deserves our gratitude.

THE DEATH OF NATIONALISM

By SEAN O'FAOLAIN

IT is the essence of nationalism that as soon as it has achieved its object it dies as a force. Until its object is achieved it seems inexhaustible. While it is still striving for its object its creatures, patriots by the tens of thousands, may die, and seem to fail: the force thrives. But, ultimately, nationalism is not inexhaustible. We know from Irish history that this is true as for the power of failure to succeed. 'They went forth to battle and

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they always fell'; and the urge that drove them to their death flourished by their deaths. But we have not yet learned the truth of Dean Inge's epigram that 'Nothing fails like success'; although the experience is under our eyes if we only wish to see it. Nationalism now blocks our road like a broken-down car. We have driven it to death.

Nationalism as a force did not come into Ireland until the 19th century. The very *idea* had no effective existence until the 17th century, and then its effectiveness was limited. This does not mean that the idea of 'Ireland', and of racial distinctiveness did not exist long before the 18th century; but it does mean that the idea of unity did not exist in any effective form, and, obviously, without the idea of unity there cannot be an idea of a nation. The city-states of mediaeval and Renaissance Italy did not develop the idea of nationalism until the French invasion of Charles VIII—which, by challenge, evoked the promise of a coherent response: a national resistance. Alexander Borgia's efforts to form a League against the French was one such effort. The vigour of his son, Caesar Borgia, was another; and, we remember, it evoked the ardent admiration of the first Italian—Niccolo Machiavelli—to formulate a technique of government, for this very purpose of saving not Florence, his own city-state, but *Italy*. Here in Ireland, faced by the cohesion of the new English State born out of the Wars of the Roses, our fissurated and disparate society failed miserably to respond in kind. That great man, the Earl of Tyrone, attempted to reply in kind by becoming, in effect, a central Irish king. But the petty chiefs, too long accustomed to their patriarchal ways, too long accustomed to think themselves immune, too long conditioned to the life of the border-raider and to its purely local techniques, foiled all his efforts to turn what was to all intents and purposes a rabble into a nation, and, as a result, as we know, he and they alike went down in the Battle of Kinsale. Nationalism as a creative urge to unification did not therefore arrive here, and then unsuccessfully, until the 17th century. The point of interest to us, in view of the fact that we owe the existence of modern Ireland to the rise of Nationalism, is that its rise was frustrated by a stubborn, short-sighted policy of clinging to an outmoded, antique past which, to-day, we actually idolise!

But it is one of the most common follies of nationalism, as Toynbee has pointed out, with many historical illustrations, to idolise an ephemeral self, ephemeral institutions, and ephemeral techniques; and indeed the sum of what I have to say about nationalism is that, in all its most dangerous aspects, it is, in effect, a form of idolatry. That is, it tends to create idols, and to put those dead idols between the intelligence of a people and their proper object.

To follow the history of Ireland into the 17th and 18th centuries is to meet this idolatry again and again: as when in reading the Gaelic poets we find all their thoughts and hopes bound up with a past that could never be recalled, with a caste-system, and a way of life, and notions of government long discredited. No theme, for instance, is so common with these relicts of the old Gaelic world than the return of the Stuart kings, who will free Ireland. Once again, it is part of the folly of our present policy of idolising the Past that our children are encouraged to take inspiration from these political and literary anachronisms of the 17th and 18th century.

Nationalism did not become a really effective force here until the 19th century when a great man arose amongst us with enough vigour of intellect to observe that the days of kings and princes were over and that two great revolutionary forces had come into the world to replace them, Democracy and Industrialism. O'Connell saw that if Irishmen wished to take their place among the free peoples of this modern world they would first have to fashion themselves into a modern democracy, and take over from the world of the Industrial Revolution its political techniques, as well, indeed, as something of its ruthless, utilitarian philosophy. O'Connell is our first successful nationalist of major size precisely because, in his realism, he accepted the principle of change. He refused to be dominated by any historical mystique, he cut away the past, he adapted himself to his own times, he never allowed any idol to tyrannise over him. In the sense that O'Connell was an European we might say that while serving the Irish people day and night he refused to allow 'Ireland' to tyrannise over him. Yet, once again, we do not revere O'Connell to-day for these his real powers, and his real achievement: we associate him almost solely with Catholic

Emancipation and minimise the fact that he emancipated us from parochialism. We do this because our once-urgent nationalism has receded back into Berdyaev's definition of Nationalism as 'an aggressive parochialism in space.'

In our own time nationalism came to its zenith and to its final achievement. Most unfortunately its elements have never been submitted to an objective analysis. The mystique which always accompanies a fervent period of nationalism, and which is its outward symptom rather than its inward impetus, has been mistaken for its impetus. We have never, for example, sufficiently appraised the force of the crude economic impetus behind Sinn Fein, although we are, now, fully aware that the Land League was the driving force in Parnellism: we know, that is, that the Parnellite movement was largely a peasant movement. But we have never acknowledged that behind its outward mystique Sinn Fein was basically an artisan movement: that the peasant hunger for land in the nineteenth century was matched in the twentieth by a hunger just as powerful among the grandsons and sons of those peasants who emigrated into the towns. For whereas the peasants had won their land and were fast changing from peasants to yeoman farmers, what future lay before their children in the towns and cities? The social aspect of the 1916-1922 revolutionary movement has not been realised. Or is only being very slowly realised now that we can plainly see the effects of the revolution in the rise to power of a bourgeoisie composed of men who, thirty years ago, had not one penny to rattle against another. We sold the revolution to the world as a romantic thing. It was, behind that facade, a very realistic thing. That was why it succeeded.

The type who best illustrates the revolution illustrates its causes and its impetus: its most active leader, Collins, the son of a farmer, obliged to work in London at a modest salary, with no prospects commensurate with his abilities, and, were he to marry, with no prospects for his children but to live either in exile or as the family of a modestly-paid official. He was what one might call a typical member of the urban, intellectual Irish proletariat. All his colleagues conform more or less to the same pattern. However we may glorify and worship the ancient rural Gaelic tradition the revolution of 1916-1922 did *not* originate in

that quarter. Efforts have, of course, been made to suggest the contrary: as when some significance is alleged to attach to the fact that a professor of Celtic, and a member of the Gaelic League, originated the Irish Volunteers; but we now know that he was merely a figure-head or puppet being pulled by the wires of the purely urban Irish Republican Brotherhood, and that the driving force behind the scenes the whole time was this secret society which had as much to do with antiquity as a Mills bomb. One might draw a comparison between this urban movement, equally fostered in London and semi-Anglicised Dublin, led by men of such mixed blood or foreign experiences as Pearse, Griffith, De Valera, Collins, Burgess or Childers and the Italian Risorgimento, led by a sailor born across the Alps in Nice, travelling the world, picking up his ideas in the cosmopolitan port of Genoa, collaborating with a French-speaking statesman, Cavour, and a trans-Alpine monarchy, and owing nothing whatsoever to the 'great Italian past'. But it seems that the past never gives birth to revolution. (The past is always dead.) Its effects in modern life do. The point is that modern nationalism here succeeded because it had a modern and realistic impetus. To-day's idolisation of antiquity, over the head of all that originated that movement and brought it to success, is another sign that Irish nationalism, having achieved its object, is a spent force. Old men always bore us with their memories. The present, doubtless inevitably, has no interest for them. 'This is no country for old men . . .' What country is?

This is the central evil of nationalism: that, sooner or later, it ossifies the mind. In automobile language it chugs along splendidly for ten or twenty thousand miles, and then we hear the *pink-pink*. A good engineer, a good statesman, does a job of decarbonising, and we chug along again; but before long we have to get a new car, and it is, by then, also a new model. To be sure, one meets the type of man who says, 'I wouldn't give up that old car for anything. It carried me here and it carried me there, and my heart is stuck in it.' He ends up in a ditch, having been passed-out all along the road for years by amused racers. Or he may even store the old crock away and bring it out once a year on Saint Patrick's Day for the Old Crocks' Race. And, yet, in his day he was a great man and it was a great car.

THE DEATH OF NATIONALISM

Toynbee, in his study of the causes for the disintegrations of civilisations, or their abortion, has a good phrase for this: 'The Nemesis of Creativity.' By this he means that there is a limit to the creative power of any party. This is what Dean Inge meant by 'Nothing fails like success.' As Toynbee sees it, all leadership—that is the example of a pioneer minority, whether a minority inside a country or inside a continent; leading a country or leading a continent—has the power of responding to one challenge, but rarely to two. They become slaves of the machine they create and of the philosophy they have established. Hence becomes the adoration of the 'ephemeral self.'

He gives examples of this idolatry of the ephemeral self, ephemeral institutions and ephemeral techniques: the vain-glory of Athens, the sterility of Italy after her great hey-day, the contrast between the ossification of South Carolina, caught by the spell of her past, and the initiative and inventiveness of North Carolina, the prolonged sterility of the East Roman Empire, clinging to the idea of Rome's past greatness, the conservatism of the British Parliamentary system (an 'institutional idol'), which makes him gravely doubt that the new political leadership of this changing world can possibly come from that quarter, the manner in which British industry has clung too long to obsolescent techniques, the overthrow in war of old techniques by new, as in the debacle of the French army against the German in 1870. I have heard men here in Ireland, so spell-bound by their admiration of their own deeds as guerilla fighters against Britain thirty golden years ago that they still believe that they could contain an invasion of Ireland by the same methods. If they are a tragic joke there is this to be said for them that the history of civilisation provides many examples of similar tragedies due to the same cause.

One of the most tragic examples of this idol-worship is in Education. It would take too long to develop the history of popular education in Britain, which began in the 1800's with the facile Liberal fancy of universal uplift and which has so far arrived at universal vulgarisation, involving among other things, as the present state of the House of Commons shews, the virtual destruction of Liberalism: though it is to be added, however, that the story is not ended, and that by various inventive devices the

British are attempting to cope with this immense problem of universal literacy. It will be simpler to refer to our own case.

Here, our now-decrepit nationalism has based our educational policy on Past-worship and on a principle of Immunisation. We have failed to observe that side by side with the political revolution we have undergone a social revolution as a result of which we have created a new proletariat and a new bourgeoisie with enormously increased ambitions; that these have developed desires for standards of living based not on our own experience but on the only other experience we have—that of life in modern Britain and, to a lesser degree life in the United States; and that we are physically unable to provide ourselves with the needs and luxuries of these ambitions. One evident result of popular education has been much publicised from time to time, our colossal imports of reading-matter. The effect is that we are teaching our children to read in order that they may read papers, periodicals and books—I make no mention of the cinema or the radio—whose total influence is to make a joke of the educational principle of Past-worship and Immunisation. To this our chauvinists have no reply but to ask for more and more censorship disguised, in this case, as penal tariffs.

This passing mention of the idea of censorship brings me to a last example of the evil effects of a decayed nationalism: the effect on the arts. The theory of and practice of censorship in modern Ireland is part and parcel of the idolatry of nationalism: that is, it has arisen out of Past-worship as a futile effort at immunisation. Nowhere, of course, is there less of Past-worship than in a living literature. The past is utilised, exploited, may even inspire, but we have only to compare the persistent development in the work of Yeats with the stasis, or mimesis, of his many imitators, whom he well compared to a dog's fleas, and who thought that anybody could become a Celtic poet by playing with a bunch of clichés—fairies, leprachauns, clurichauns, bog-pools, Irish names all wrapped up in a moony mist—to realise that a truly creative writer never allows his material to become his master. Nationalism, while still struggling towards its object, was enormously inspiring between 1900 and 1922. A great change came over Irish letters after 1922, seen clearly in Sean O'Casey's fury at the cruelty of idealism; and with him may be put almost every Irish writer of distinction since.

The Past Worshipers were aghast at O'Casey and riots broke out in the theatre. Outside the theatre we got a virulent Censorship of books. The theory of all these people was that the new writers were assailing the old traditions and, if allowed a free run, would break them down. The truth is quite the opposite. Men never abandon old techniques, old ways of looking at life, old values until these things have all broken down already. To say that the writers by abandoning the old roads are weakening the old country is as absurd as if somebody suggested that the abandonment of the old Roman roads helped to weaken the Roman Empire. The grass on the Appian Way grew from seeds of the wild grass on the Capitoline Hill.

Irish writers since 1922 are not one whit less patriotic than Irish writers before 1922, or than anybody else. But they do not measure patriotism by the same standards as in 1916-'22—because to-day a living patriotism does not measure itself by the same standards. In this they are not clearer-headed than other people; they are merely responding instinctively to the changed life which they are aware of intuitively. Moreover the writers tend to be aware of life in a broader way than others: life in the world at large. They see that the parochialism of nationalism-in-decay bears no relation to the world at large. They therefore become aware more acutely, and quickly, than others do of this parochialism and its futility and spit on it.

Moreover, all literary development is a process of a swing between 'Tradition and Revolt'—read John Livingstone Lowes book of that title; and the value of writers in any country is that they do revolt against a tradition, by instinct, as soon as it is exhausted. But the mechanical nationalists—for the old clock-work still ticks over, even while it is running down—stuck in the groove of 1916-'22 can only measure patriotism by the old ways and the old days, and feel betrayed, and in their egocentricity think that this means that 'Ireland' is betrayed by men of letters who know that that is all over and done with, and want to write about a modern Ireland in a modern world.

But here is the dilemma of modern Irish writing; here is why the Theatre, for example, is dead as a door-nail in Ireland to-day;

namely, that the politicians—the Old-Men-of-the-Sea on our backs—are thinking in terms of thirty years ago, and so are the churchmen, and they will not *allow*, or help to create, a modern Ireland in a modern world. So: (1) your writers get angry, and say angry things; and we have the amazing spectacle of a Government Department deliberately smearing the writers of its own country abroad; and (2) your writers have nothing to write about that is living and urgent. The present decay of Irish writing is due solely to the Old Men of the Sea who refuse to move with the times—politicians and churchmen alike. And the Devil of the piece is our rotting Nationalism.

Unhappily even when nationalism is dead or dying as a creative force it can go on being a profitable force. In fact true nationalism never pays—one pays for it; but chauvinism and jingoism, which are nationalism rotting, do pay. Every Irish businessman to-day is a patriot. If he wants a tariff he will want it not for his own sake but for Ireland's sake. But this is not peculiar to Ireland. We are dealing with universal laws. There is no kind of nationalism so aggressive as economic nationalism, and, by the way, no kind of nationalism is so prolific in wars, and, at that, in the bitterest of wars. No wars up to the Industrial Revolution were fought as bitterly—I am not saying as destructively—as wars since then. Laurence Sterne went to the continent completely forgetting that England and France were at war (it was during the Seven Years war), and when taken into custody by an official was, with very little difficulty, allowed to go on his way. When Napoleon interned British residents and travellers Wellington said he was no gentleman. Our methods of total war naturally goes hand in hand with economic nationalism. But when this economic nationalism, based on the theory of self-sufficiency, shakes hands with the theory of Immunisation—here the sole, lazy and negative policy of the Catholic Church—businessmen become not merely super-patriots but super-churchmen. Under this cloak of a desire for patriotic and religious unity they develop an internal kind of totalitarianism. This naturally results in anti-liberalism, anti-Semitism, anti-individualism, the most disgusting kind of vain-glory, isolationism, neutralism, antiquarianism, all defended as Nationalism. It is not nationalism. It is simply exhaustion and jingoism.

To conclude, let me not be thought for one moment to be advocating internationalism. That also is an abstraction. It does not suggest any sort of individual existence. It does not suggest the normal life of any man—except perhaps that of a newspaper correspondent or a wagon-lit attendant or a Cook's guide. To me the ultimate evil of nationalism (and most other *isms*) is this threat to the creative individual by the tyranny arising from the idolisation of an abstraction. For after nationalism has achieved its aim it is no more than that, a tyranny of the mind. Here, one of the best recent examples of an exhausted nationalism was Clann na Poblachta, the belated offspring of 1916 and all that. It had one social thinker, and having fired him, it must inevitably die.

What replaces nationalism? Dr. Browne answered that. And the 'profitable force', which I have described above, answered him. That is the struggle of forces that is going on to-day in Ireland, and if it has any vitality we are all right. If it has not we are sunk.

THE PENNY-FACED HAMMER

By SEAMUS MURPHY

IF anybody mentioned him at all, they described him as a quiet inoffensive man who knew a thing or two and kept to his own side of the road but it can safely be said that days used go by without our being aware that he was working in the same shed with us. If it interested anybody, which it didn't, very much, his age was calculated to be sixty-seven because 'twas known that he worked as an apprentice on the spire of Carrigrohane Church and was drinking nothing stronger than lemonade at the time. Beyond that we knew very little about him.

But we knew an awful lot about his five-pound penny-faced hammer. We had its history at our finger-tips; the various men who had owned it and taken it all over Ireland and England and

America. It had worked stone that were only names to most of us—Vermont Granite, Indiana Limestone, Elberton Granite from Georgia and other American stones; Purbeck Marble, Hopton Wood stone, Portland and Clipsham, and Irish Limestones from Ross in Cavan to Carrigatrump in Cork.

We all liked to use it and to be thinking of the places and stones it had seen. Not a day would pass but someone of us would find a reason to borrow the penny-faced hammer; it was a hammer with personality. If a man was pitching off the over-length on a cross or coping a scantling of limestone, he felt it was a job for the penny-faced, which had experience and age and only needed to be shown to the stone.

We always handled it with reverence. When a man had a loan of it he weighed it in his hands, fondled it, talked about it—and to it—examined the cant of the faces and the four champhers that tapered down from the centre to each face, that were as round and just the size of a penny. It was worn and dented and the sharp arrises had been deadened long ago with constant use.

It was always on the go, and always referred to as a great tool. I was very young then, and literal-minded, and for a long time I could not understand why a hammer should be called a tool. Tools, for me, were chisels and hammer-points, but as I watched the men using the penny-faced, holding it up and squinting and smiling at it, I began to see that to call it a grand tool was the highest praise.

One time the ash handle of it got loose. With any other hammer a wedge would be driven in and no more said. But not with this one. We had a solemn consultation, everyone giving his opinion. Some were in favour of a new handle altogether, others thought an iron wedge was the thing, and more thought maybe oak—it was a very serious business.

Yes, the penny-faced hammer was very important. It was never left on the banker after blow-up but was stowed carefully away at the bottom of its owners tool-box. Of course there might be days when it wasn't mentioned at all but the man who owned it never let go on very long. Somehow he would manage to bring the interest round to it, and to himself as a result in a small way. Because, indeed, but for his hammer, he'd have passed

unnoticed altogether. He was like a man with a good terrier. He stood in a sort of reflected glory, answering questions and going over again the history of the hammer before he got it, taking to himself some of the praise and affection that were showered on his tool and fading into the background when the conversation moved on to something else.

That was the way things were until the new man came. He was from Carlow, a big man from a small county, as he said himself. He could not understand at all the feeling in the shed for the penny-faced hammer. He listened to the talk and the yarns and the praise and one day he said: 'What the hell's all this oul guff about that bloody oul hammer? Sure 'tis no better an' no different from any other hammer around.'

We argued and explained and pointed out the romance and tradition that went with the penny-faced, but he couldn't see it. He stuck to it that there was no difference between it and a dozen other hammers around the shed. The man who owned the penny-faced didn't say much but he took to rubbing up the hammer everyday with emery cloth until it shone like silver and then he put it upon the banker and said:

'Now is it the same as any other hammer?' We all looked at it. It looked different all right, and bloody queer but something was wrong, you might say that the spell was broken. Or maybe 'twas that the Carlowman's attitude had infected us all in spite of ourselves—anyway, you could see the doubt in each man's eyes as he looked at it there, sparkling and shining.

The day of the penny-faced hammer was over. As time went on less and less was said about it, the men forgot to borrow it and its owner didn't try to bring the talk round to it—I don't remember now what his name was, or what happened to him after that.

Maurice Craig's article on GANDON in the April number of THE BELL appeared by permission of The Cresset Press Ltd., publishers of his forthcoming book, *Dublin, 1660 - 1860*, from which it was an extract.

MUSIC

By JOHN BECKETT

IN the course of the last few weeks I have heard two large-scale orchestral works, the significance of which, in relation to Irish music, and to modern art music, seems to me to be of particular interest. They are the tone poem 'With the Wild Geese' of Sir Hamilton Harty, and the violin concerto of E. J. Moeran. In this article I propose to try to assess the significance of the achievement of these two works in relation to Irish music, and to modern art music; and to record, and I hope to justify my belief in the negative and redundant nature of that achievement.

What is meant by the term 'Irish music'?

Irish music is, in the only final sense, Irish folk music, for this music only is contained within the national, this music only is created within the rigid and limited tradition of a people unaware of any other; in a tradition which is alive as long as this is true. The folk composer is isolated and as a result of that isolation is ignorant, not of the expressive end of his art; in this respect the composer of art music is as ignorant as he; but of the greater technical tradition of that art. He creates within the exclusive tradition of a people, of a locality, using musical means which remain the same sometimes for centuries: the intense limitations of those means and of that tradition make his art possible, and impose upon it the consistency of its achievement. The folk music of a people can only become extinct when the traditional awareness of that people has been extended so that it is no longer identified with the wonder and sureness of isolation, but with the bewilderment and boredom of misunderstanding.

Art is desire.

To the artist the expressive end of his art, the expression of his desire, must be identified with the means by which he strives to achieve that end. In as far as his desire is creative, so must the means he employs to express it be created. Thus the means of folk art can only have creative significance to the folk artist, for his desire is identified with, is contained within those means. To the composer of art music the means of folk music can only form a part of the greater means of expression assimilated by him in the

work of the other artists of his tradition. His creative desire cannot be contained within that which is a part of itself. Folk music is the only national music; the folk music of Ireland is the only Irish music.

The art music of the West, to-day, is constituted of the works of composers from such widely separated places as Russia, America, England, Finland, Germany, as well as France and Italy and other countries. Composers from and in these countries are working together with the common heritage of a vast international tradition of art music stretching back for over a thousand years, yet they work isolated from that tradition and from each other; they work without the means of expressing the inconceivable to which they must turn, for in their art they have reached one of the great turning points in its history; a point at which the roots of a new tradition must be laid.

In the tenth century composers felt the need for some other means of expression apart from the monodic art which could no longer contain their creative desires, and from this need was born the conception of polyphony as a conscious means of expression in music. Towards the end of the sixteenth century with the rise of the secular and of the instrumental in music, composers again felt the need of expressing the new, and they created those means in the art of instrumental homophony and of opera. And now, since the beginning of the twentieth century, composers for the third time in the history of music, feel the desire for the inconceivable. They know that the traditional means at their disposal are inadequate to express this desire, that in fact it arises from this inadequacy; they know that the means for its expression must be created, not developed. They know that man must always change his cry, that he can never repeat it.

If one considers what contemporary composers have done in the face of this imperative challenge one finds that only the very few have accepted it, indeed are aware of it; the majority have turned from the unknown to the known, have turned either to folk song or to the music of previous periods for their means of expression, indeed some have never left the world of romanticism. This is not to say that many such composers have not written music in itself beautiful, but such music is nostalgic, is negative

in its desire and in its expression; it expresses the fear of the composer for the new, for the inconceivable. To the artist fear is sterility, he must accept, he cannot refuse.

In this sense the strong tendency towards neoclassicism in contemporary music, particularly in the later works of Stravinsky and in the music of Hindemith is a refusal; the art of Vaughan Williams, so deeply rooted in the music of the Tudor period and in English folk music, is a refusal; Bela Bartok is another composer who in his extensive use of folk song elements, whatever the apparent vitality and scholarship behind his achievement, is expressing his fear and his refusal.

The problem is to create a new fusion between melody, harmony, and form; to create a new means of musical expression. This can only be achieved through a creative desire for the inconceivable. Is music still the means of expressing desire, or has it achieved the sterility of fear?

Perhaps the only attempt to be made in this century to achieve such a means of expression has been made by Arnold Schoenberg, and by his pupils Alban Berg and Anton Webern. Schoenberg was intellectually aware of the necessity for a new means of musical expression, he was intellectually aware that such a means of expression, while being created from the freedom of modern sound must have a perceptible order and the limitation of form. In his 'Twelve Tone Technique' he has made an intellectual effort to achieve that order and form; he has tried to create, with his intellect, a means of expressing the hitherto inconceivable. Such expression cannot be achieved in this way however, though perhaps only in this way can it be approached. Such expression must take form not from an intellectual, but from a creative desire. Only an end can be achieved by the intellect, a *means* of expression will be the result of creative desire. When will the composer appear who will have the greatness of creative conception to substitute for the blind precision of the intellect the infallibility of inspiration?

In the light of these remarks on national music, in particular Irish music, and on modern art music I will consider briefly the works which I mentioned at the beginning of this article. I have already stated my belief that both these works, despite the many

beauties of sound which they, in particular the latter, contain, are negative and redundant in their achievement. I am not discussing their beauty in relation to the old, but their significance in relation to the new.

The tone poem 'With the Wild Geese' by Sir Hamilton Harty was written in 1910, when the composer was about thirty-one years old; the violin concerto of E. J. Moeran was composed some thirty years later. Both these works were composed at a time when composers were aware (in the case of the former work to a lesser, of the latter to a greater degree) of the disintegration of the tradition of their art. In both these works folk, or folk-like material is used; the use of such material in relation to modern art music is uncreative and shows a misunderstanding of an art which, if its significance is not to be shattered, must remain inviolate within its own tradition. In their position in the tradition of Western art music, both these works are contained within the old, within the known; the means of expression used in them, the tonal, melodic, and formal idiom, are the means of expression of a dying tradition. In as far as in them their composers use these means of expression, means, the significance of which towards the new is no longer vital; their achievement is redundant.

The creative desire expressed in them is for the disintegration of the old, not the integration of the new. The challenge of the inconceivable is refused. In as far as this is true both these works are, in relation to modern music, negative in their achievement.

Composers, as I have said, have reached a point for the third time in the history of their art, where a *development* from the old is no longer possible, where a new means of musical expression must be *created*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by HUBERT BUTLER

Letters of Marcel Proust. Translated by Mina Curtiss. Chatto and Windus 1950. 21s. net.

This is the English edition of the volume published in America in 1949. The selection of letters is identical, but it is a much more elegantly presented version, with some enchanting photographs added and the introduction by Harry Levin omitted. The publishers were inspired in their choice of these photographs; for one gains from them another illustration of the pride and grace of life so ruthlessly explored by the author in his vast novel.

The letters are full of interest, from many points of view, but perhaps most of all in the spectacle they present of a writer trying to be all things to all men, and at the same time attempting and achieving his masterpiece. Proust did it by developing a chronic illness, which enabled him to stay in bed all day, write all night, and emerge, now and again, at eleven or twelve at night to enjoy the company of a truly select few. Safe in his bed, Proust wrote to innumerable correspondents with a most entertaining and almost inexhaustible variety of politeness, from the strained elaboration of diplomatic politeness to the gay politeness of the heart. Some people have labelled this politeness sycophancy, hypocrisy, cowardice, but we might more fairly, I think, call it kindness, or the generous discipline which social training had bred in the author and the demands of which he was unable to resist even in his sickroom. One of the few things which can call forth a rebuke from him is the selfish notion that he could, if he chose and when he chose, emerge from his retreat. He tells Robert de Montesquiou that the one thing which would introduce a nervous resentment into the admiration, the respectful and grateful affection, which he had for him would be the idea that "when once every fortnight I can get up, go out around ten o'clock at night for an hour or two, this single innocent relaxation can be considered as a deliberate recovery, which would imply that the illness too is deliberate, with an eye to enjoying vain pleasures."

If this were ironic, it would be delicious; it is still more delicious to find that it is written in all seriousness, as a protest against a "most unfair and most unjust suspicion." It is still more delicious to find Proust telling Madame Strauss, herself an invalid, with whom he is on true and easy terms of friendship, that he is "worn out" by letters from Montesquiou who refuses to believe he is ill. In truth these letters contain, in all their variety of "epistolatory relationship" a true interplay of comedy.

But they contain much more, because the author of the letters is also the author of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, and the same motifs, broken and fitful here, instead of ordered and recurrent as there, appear.

BOOK REVIEWS

the same endlessly subtle and disintegrating penetration of analysis: "Come to think of it we are wrong in making fun of pretentiousness, of irritating ways. Talented people are like that."—"The frightening thing in these letters is to see how egotistical love is."—" . . . and then, as Christmas gradually loses for us its validity as an anniversary, it takes on a more and more intense reality, in which the light of its candles, its snow, that melancholy obstacle to some longed-for visitor, the odour of its mandarins steeping in the warmth of the rooms, the gaiety of its cold and its fires, the perfumes of the tea and the mimosa, come back to us coated in the delicious honey of our own personality, which we had unconsciously deposited there during the years, when caught in the spell of our own egotistical designs, we were not aware of Christmas; and now, all of a sudden, it makes our heart beat faster."

How similar is this to the famous passage in the novel, where Proust, having described how, a year after his grandmother's death, the full realisation of his loss struck him one day as he stooped to tie his boots, begins to explain his belief of the inter-relation of heart and memory: "For with the cloudiness of memory are linked the heart's intermissions." From both we gather the painful nostalgic paradox that only the lost is possessed and the possessed truly lost.

And this nostalgia and paradox and sense of the evanescence of personality lie at the core of the novel, as does also the insistence on the importance of what Proust here calls the "involuntary" memory. In a letter to Antoine Bibesco he writes: "Voluntary memory, which is above all the memory of the intelligence and of the eyes, gives us only the surface of the past without the truth; but when an odour, a taste, rediscovered under entirely different circumstances, evokes for us, in spite of ourselves, the past, we sense how different is this past from the one we thought we remembered, and which our voluntary memory was painting like a bad printer using false colours . . . I believe that it is involuntary memories practically altogether that the artist should call on for the primary subject matter of his work."

The *Letters* are full of such illuminating passages, of what the publishers call the problem of subduing experience and sensibility to a work of art. Everybody should find them entertaining, the literary critic enlightening and the student of Proust absolutely indispensable.

LORNA REYNOLDS.

The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge. By Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated by John Linton. London. The Hogarth Press 1950. 7s. 6d. net.

This translation of the *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge* first appeared in 1930. It is a strange book, half autobiography and half invention, and has long been considered necessary for an understanding of the great Austrian poet who so obviously influenced more than one of the English poets of the 'thirties. Reading it now again, one feels that Rilke's

influence extended to more than poetry, that this may have been the instigator of many a volume of autobiography dealing with a difficult and tormented youth.

Undeniably there is a certain precious and pampered tone about the writing, and the *Notebook* is hardly to be compared to the *Letters* for breadth of interest. Nevertheless it does give us, through the imaginatively expanded experience of childhood and youth, an exploration of that side of the poetic personality which Keats defined as negative capability. The vulnerability of the poetic nature, its exposure to ecstasy and despair, its liability to be invaded by other personalities, its Protean-like power—or necessity—to be not only man or woman or child, but animal or object, all this is described with delicacy and intensity.

Rilke also shows how such a receptive creature takes experience into the depths of his nature, the recesses of his memory, his very blood; and then, in a rare hour, regurgitates it, so to speak, as a poem. In the famous, and perhaps by now, too-much quoted passage, beginning, "Verses are not, as people imagine, simply feelings: they are experience," he says. "Only when they (memories) have turned to flesh and blood within us, to glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves—only then can it happen that in a most rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes forth from them."

"One must have the immense patience," he says, "to wait until they come again," and here Rilke links up with Proust and his theory of the involuntary memory, and both may be only saying what Wordsworth said in different words about recollection in tranquility. The poets themselves, when they talk of poetry, never cease to remind us that literary creation starts in the human creature, the human heart, the human soul, in experience, in memory, recollection, patience. In this they are a most necessary corrective to the vast "theories of literature" which those who are not poets write for our confounding.

Besides thus exploring the poetic nature, Rilke gives us accounts of persons and places, of certain of his heroes and of the places he valued. For Rilke, women who were great lovers were always significant: it is his belief that for centuries, "women have borne the burden of love," so figures like Sappho, the Portuguese nun, Gaspara Stampa carry the greatest symbolical importance for him. Of Sappho he writes here "that slight figure straining towards the infinite which (according to Galien's testimony) they all meant when they said 'the poetess'." Certain places also bore for Rilke a strange and powerful significance. Avignon was one of these, Venice another. Of Venice he says: "Soon it would be cold. The soft narcotic Venice of their perceptions and demands disappears with those somnolent foreigners, and one morning the other Venice is there, the real Venice, awake, brittle to the breaking point, and not in the least dream-like: this Venice willed into being in the midst of nothing and set on sunken forests, created by force, and in the end so thoroughly manifest. This

hardened body, stripped to necessities, through which the sleep arsenal drove the blood of its toil, and this body's penetrating spirit, ever spreading, more powerful than the perfume of aromatic lands. This inventive state that bartered the salt and glass of its poverty for the treasures of the nations. This beautiful counterpoise of the world, which even in its embellishments is full of latent energies ever more finely ramified."

This gives one the tone of the book, the delicate, if sometimes strained and neurotic, perception with which it is written. But perhaps the normal person's neurosis is the poet's health. Certainly there have been some, like Auden, who have held that the thing for the poet is to be as neurotic as possible. The translation reads with the naturalness of an original.

LORNA REYNOLDS.

"*Old Irish and Highland Dress.*" By H. F. McClintock. Dundalgan Press.
 "*Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges.*" By Constantia Maxwell. Dundalgan Press. 21/-.

It is pleasant to see an enlarged edition of H. F. McClintock's scholarly and beautiful "*Old Irish and Highland Dress.*" This volume includes a section on the Isle of Man and contains under the same cover the separately published "*Our Highland Dress and Tartan.*" to which J. Telfer Dunbar has made an important contribution. Professor Shaw of U.C.D. has given a very clear and readable description of early Irish clothing as far as this can be deduced from Irish texts. His conclusion, a very important one, is that there were two types of costume in common use. There was an aristocratic one consisting of a cloak and a tunic, not unlike the costume of the Greeks and Romans and with existing counterparts on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. There was also a jacket-and-trews costume worn by the plebeian, similar to that which was common all over northern Europe in classical times and gave its name to Gallia Braccata or 'Trousered Gaul.'

Mr. McClintock and Professor Shaw are cautious about drawing conclusions from these facts as to the provenance of the successive invaders of Ireland, yet their significance in any enquiry about racial origins may be considerable.

This book has contemporary as well as historic interest. Mr. McClintock traces the origin of the fallacy that the Irish, like the Scots, wore kilts and for the modern revivalist he suggests a costume more in keeping with the authentic Irish tradition.

The many illustrations, apart from their appositeness, are of unusual interest and beauty. Needless to say the book is produced by the Tempest Press of Dundalk, which seems in Ireland to lead the way in scholarly book production.

From the same press comes also a badly needed reprint of Constantia Maxwell's "*Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges.*" It has ten new illustrations and some small textual additions. This book is one of the

classics of Irish historical research and is too well known to require comment here. The extensive bibliography reveals how exhaustive Miss Maxwell's investigations have been. Yet she wears her learning lightly, and whether she is dealing with Freney the Robber or Beauchamp Bagenal's table manners at Dunleckney Manor, there is scarcely a page that is not highly entertaining. Recently when I enquired at a county library for this book, I was told that they had not even one copy. What are county libraries for?

H. B.

"By the Rivers of Babylon." By Margaret McNeill. Bannisdale Press. 12/6. Will this book by an Irishwoman who worked with the Friends' Relief Service among the D.P's in Germany be read as it deserves to be read? Miss McNeill writes with great simplicity and charm. Her sombre theme ends where it began in almost unappeasable misery and heart break. When her team was leaving Germany, she wrote that their "pitifully shallow-rooted workshops and welfare services were shaking and would rapidly sink into oblivion." She writes of unimportant people and trifling events, of the organisation of a Ukrainian band, a Lithuanian choir, a nativity play and of a few successful interventions against official callousness. These activities were all ephemeral. They made scarcely any impression on the appalling sufferings of Europe. Yet the book is exhilarating. There is no despair in it. In a dark place the Friends and their helpers managed to keep alight that small flame of universal brotherhood which governments have so often tried to extinguish and churches failed to cherish.

Miss McNeill has an ordered as well as a modest mind. There is a wonderful absence of professionalism, of knowing chatter about UNRAA, IRO and UNESCO. There are no photographs, lists of achievements or gracious tributes to colleagues and superiors. I suspect that she has chosen to give a mask of fiction, which will deceive nobody, to her experience, so as to relieve herself of these encumbrances. Cargoes of blankets, condensed milk and concert parties are not in themselves conclusive evidence of goodwill. For example, we are brought no nearer to an understanding of the problem of the 'kidnapped' Greek children when we are told by those who have visited them that they are well fed and are learning to make raffia table mats. There is no smugness about Miss McNeill.

The anguish of exile, the alternative terror of forced repatriation, are almost beyond healing but at least they can be imaginatively interpreted and described, so that complacency becomes impossible. This Miss McNeill has done. The characters she describes exist in these pages in their own right and cannot be classified by their race or their misfortunes. Reliever and relieved are part of the same contemporary pattern. Those, who to-day dispense charity, may to-morrow be its recipients. There is no special balm for the wounds of refugees; there is only love, which must be given as well as received. No man is so deprived that he cannot love his neighbour and where he expresses this love his other privations become

curable. This is not an exclusively Quaker message but they have taught it more effectively than others and it would be a tragedy if this historic enthusiasm were to be smothered under a mountain of tinned meat and routine benevolence. With every new war there is a more rigid conscription and a closer organisation of all human effort. Is there not a danger that the Quakers may find themselves sacrificing some of their ancient detachment so that relief work may be more efficiently co-ordinated, accommodating themselves imperceptibly to those military necessities which their predecessors refused to acknowledge.

Miss McNeill is not blind to this tragic dilemma. You cannot absolve yourself by good works alone from your duty to your country. At the risk of being ineffectual and misunderstood the objector must always cherish the ideal of a wider human brotherhood than his countrymen can tolerate. This must often mean loneliness and tension but it brings with it also perspicacity and courage.

As an account of the European scene this book has greater documentary value than the more pretentious memoirs of politicians and generals. I wish it could be as widely read.

H. B.

Selected Poems. By Robert Farren. Sheed and Ward. 10s. 6d.

Moving Day. By P. A. T. O'Donnell. Fortune Press. 6s.

Selected Poems. By Richard Eberhart. Chatto and Windus. 6s.

It is probably a shortage of paper rather than an access of modesty—just look at the 'blurbs'—that causes poets to put out "Selections" from their previous books; thin volumes of chosen pieces, instead of the interim "Collected Poems" that their predecessors used to issue every so often.

But whatever the reason, the change is almost certainly to the average poet's advantage. Most readers, for instance, will form a better opinion of Mr. Farren from his *Selected Poems* than from reading through his previous four books of verse in their entirety. More especially is this true of that interesting but not quite successful attempt at a "lyrical epic," *The First Exile*. Far from suffering by dismemberment, the passages here chosen and printed as separate poems gain considerably by the process. They range from the delightful nursery rhyme called "The Pets"—as charming a triviality as one could readily find in modern verse—to the technical innovations of "Dawn Speckle upon Doomsday," and the assonantal accomplishment of "The Finding of the Tain"—

By ashing sods where shadows mope
a cailleach puffs a pipe to ash,
and fumbles under thoughts like smoke
for words that lift the spirit's latch:

E

words that have crept down time on rungs
of country cailleach's tongues, unchanged,
flushing with flame the smoke that clung
around a race's heritage

It is by the poems from *The First Exile* and by some of his beautiful renderings from the Irish that Mr. Farren's fame seems likely to be established.

Mr. O'Donnell's little book of poems and scraper-board pictures shows him to be sensitive and, up to a point, deft in two mediums. These lines from a poem called "On Howth Cliffs" are characteristic—

Moving alone in a shy zone of sun,
Scaling the discontinuous terraces,
I hear a surf that shakes above the sea—
The choring of the clustered heather-husks,
Arid amongst the marble. When I pause
Suddenly softness falls

Even his war poems tend to be gently meditative and elegiac, and his total output for the past ten years seems to be but thirty-two short pieces.

Mr. Richard Eberhart, an American who has lived and written much in England, is probably a more considerable poet than either of the Irishmen who here companion him. Like Mr. Farren's, his book is a selection from four previous books, but whereas Mr. Farren gives us a hundred and eighty pages, Mr. Eberhart is content with an offering of eighty-six. He is a mystic, and in many of his poems he reminds one of Blake. In some of them there is, more surprisingly, a hint of Wordsworth's very different mysticism. "Maze" owes something to Blake—

I have a tree in my arm,
There are two hounds in my feet,
The earth can do me no harm
And the lake of my eyes is sweet.
But a fire has burnt the tree down,
I have no blood for the hounds.
Why has the will made me a crown
For a human mind that has bounds?
Who made the tree? Who made the fire?
The hounds have gone back to the master.
The earth has killed my desire
That leaped up faster and faster

And such a poem as "Four Lakes' Days" is Wordsworthian in mood and allusion, though not in technique.

All these books are pleasantly printed and produced.
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JIGSAW JOURNAL

By BELLAMY

I LEAF through years of pages of this journal in search of the revelatory luminous fire that once seemed to burn in every bush. The bushes are burnt and their charred remains, fossilized by fire, litter the hillsides where as a young Moses I heard repeatedly the Voice that intoned: I Am Who Am. Every young Irishman is a Moses in his youth when idealism pours through his veins like first-run poteen. As members of the Hierarchy and of the Garda Siochana constantly remind us, poteen is dangerous. In so far as idealism is concerned, one might add to their advisory committee almost any of the adult business men who are successfully schooling the new Ireland in drab Victorian industrialism and who play the political game with a cynicism that is wrongly attributed to the politicians. The game is nearly up. Whether Moscow or Washington rules the world, the capitalism towards which Irish business aspires, is finished.

Musing in that dyspeptic manner I leaf through the journal and find myself amused and appalled in turn by the airs and graces of the young man I was once. I do not know whether I should be amused or appalled by the record of a fit of bad temper which was provoked by a young English Catholic on his first visit to Ireland about seven years ago.

He entered Ireland as into a ruined citadel. Ireland had been the hope and the Hy Brasil of intellectual English Catholics. Ireland had disappointed them by remaining third-rate and sordidly matter-of-fact in everything that appertained to or could possibly minister to the good of the Church and the glory of God. Newman's vision of an island of learned sanctified gentlemen had proved itself a piece of preposterous romanticism.

The young Englishman was chirpy in the distressing Dickensian fashion of so many English Catholics. His chirpiness did not conceal his disappointment. The intensity of the disappointment is a measure of the failure of Ireland to provide herself with a body of vigorous Catholic lay thinkers (or for that matter clerical) whose activity would be of the same quality as that of the French or even of the English themselves. Take away Professor Alfred O'Rahilly and what have you! At its lowest you have the naive journalism which is never easy unless it is denouncing something or reporting speeches by P.P's or Bishops; and at its highest you have the usually constipated scholarship of *Studies*. Between them the highest and the lowest provide insufficient material for the foundation of even one wall of the splendid edifice of learning and holiness which poor foolish Newman envisaged for Ireland in one of his palpitating moments.

Such things were said to the young Englishman by an earnest member of the company in which I found myself one evening some seven years ago. Also in the company were two Irish writers of insular repute. Writers have never been my special companions, and I do not sit at ease among them because of my continual disappointment in their conversation. Among



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themselves they may display the wit, good sense, profundity and felicity of expression with which lay tradition endows them. They may reserve their best as something arcane from the vulgar eye and ear. In company they succeed in keeping their minds on drink, horses, women, petty gossip, scandal, the neglect of their egos, income tax, and the cost of living, and when they are Catholics, or are nominally Catholics, they potter about with little fragments of blasphemy like an archaeologist who is determined to piece together the gathered shards into the form of a vessel. The two writers in the company were reserved and aloof until the chirpy English visitor accused Irish writers of having failed Catholicism in the English-speaking world. The journal has it:

"... Irish writers had shirked apologetic and ducked the apostolate. Would not listen to any historical explanation. Insisted that the historical excuses were overdone. One of the two (writers) said with surprising heat that the English seemed to think Ireland existed solely for the purpose of ministering to Britain. Englishman blissfully unaware of the rise in temperature, declares that Ireland has failed abjectly to take part in the crusade against Hitler for the salvation of religion and culture. Everybody embarrassed by the visitor's starry-eyed enthusiasm. Host rearranges sods of wet turf on hearth and one guest reclines on a couch with drooping eyelids and drooping cigarette. The Englishman chirps to a standstill. There is a deepening silence until our host fingers his neck inside his collar, coughs, and says we should all have a cup of tea."

Silence? It is the Irish way of dealing with the uncomfortable, the unwanted, the unconventional. Like peccant priests, ideas and individuals are "silenced."

* * * * *

I talk to my journal. I must have been mentally washed, shaved, togged in my Sunday best, and shoe-shined when I wrote, two years before the visit of the Englishman, about an incident which, truth to tell, I had since forgotten. Most entries in the journal are made as in the extract quoted above in a metaphorical state of undress. This entry about an execution is nearly dapper:

"At eight o'clock on Wednesday morning (Sept. 2, 1942), a young lad, aged nineteen, named Thomas Joseph Williams, was executed in Belfast Prison for the killing of a policeman. On the night before the execution he selected a number of religious pictures from his missal and on the back of each wrote in a clear steady hand a few words of thanks to the three priests who consoled him. After the priests had left he wrote six letters and compiled a list of names of friends to whom he wished to leave some token of remembrance. He slept for four and a half hours and rose at five o'clock to wash and prepare himself. When the priests arrived at half-past six he greeted them smilingly. He heard two Masses, received Holy Viaticum and the last blessing of the Church; and having prayed for a few minutes he handed a crucifix to one of the priests, refused breakfast,



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stimulant, cigarette, and calmly walked between two of the priests to the scaffold. As he walked he repeated, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my salvation." On the scaffold, he kissed the crucifix held out to him and continued to repeat the ejaculation which was his last word before they drew the bolt. "His courage moved us all" said one of the priests.

Outside in the city, police were busy breaking up crowds and keeping the people over a quarter of a mile from the prison. People knelt to say the Rosary and at them interjections were shouted by women who sang 'Dolly's Brae,' 'The Sash Me Father Wore,' 'God Save the King,' and 'There'll Always Be An England.' To such depths of *walpurgnacht* obscenity could souls descend. Later batons were drawn; rival Catholics and Protestants came to blows. Outside in Ireland during that day there was excitement when in towns and villages shops were closed and blinds drawn, while crowds marched the streets from Mass, and talk and argument festered up from the wound."

* * * * *

I would not write that now. There would not be so much simplicity in an account of martyrdom. There should not be such simplicity. Of such is Repository Art and the abominable popular hagiography in which denial of the body is implicit. Christians who deny the body and *sensibilia* their place, deny the Incarnation and the Crucifixion.

* * * * *

Damn Partition. Hell damn and rot the phantasm.

It is a diversion of energy. That is bad in a country in which energy is not as abundant as we like to think. What is worse is that Partition provides a mask for the cretinous faces of some of the demagogues of the Republic who must have something to conceal their political vacuity. What political thinking have most of them offered during the past two decades? What would their policy or policies be if, suddenly, they were given all the Protestants of the North as fellow-citizens? It is safe to guess that there would be Silence, the Silence which has become essential, though wholly unnecessary, in Irish life. There is an unexpressed Theory and an undescribed Practice of Silence that seems to have its origin in some primitive taboo that forbids mention of the name of certain numinous things lest mention be a calling down of uncontrollable powers.

The asininity of men in high office, ecclesiastical interefence, corruption, suppression of civil liberties, catastrophic policies, and the costly blunders of officials, are not only safe but sound, so long as no public word is uttered. Our public press, with the exception of one or two newspapers, connives at the silence and is guilty by complicity.

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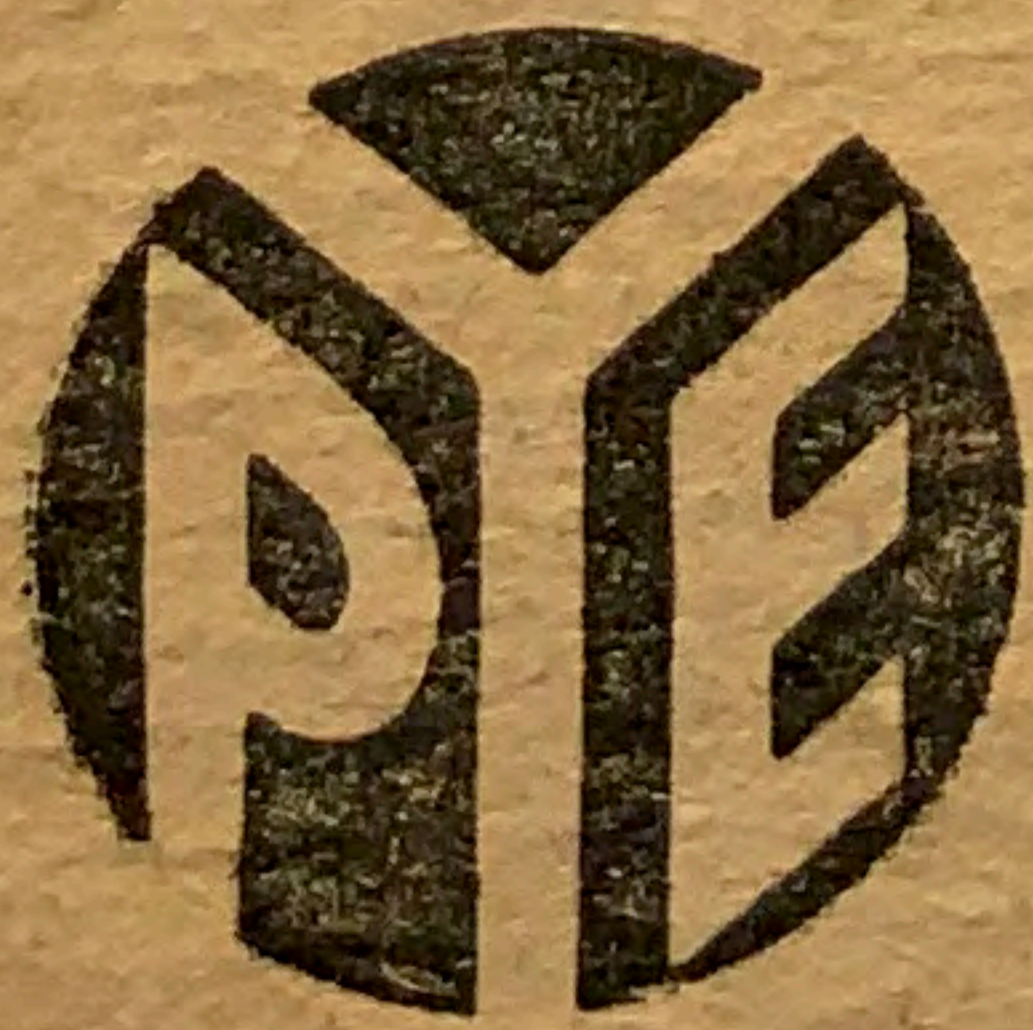
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