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VOL. I, No. 1.

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To our Readers.

It is only the certainty that the Cosmopolitan Club has a special place to fill and supplies a real need that has given us the courage to start a new magazine in this already over-journalised University of ours. We ask for indulgence as we make our *début*, and hope that this paper will ultimately prove not wholly unworthy of its aims and the ideas it represents.

It will not be amiss to state briefly what the Cosmopolitan Club and its official organ, the Magazine, stand for. The Club was started just over a year ago by a few undergraduates of different nationalities, who thought that the unique opportunity Oxford afforded of making the acquaintance of men from all parts of the world, and of removing many a narrow national or racial prejudice by coming into contact with new ideas and ways of thought was often neglected. They endeavoured, therefore, to form a Club designed to bring together in a special way men of all countries and races, and the success of their venture proves that the want was real. After a year of uninterrupted growth and success, the Club numbers some seventy members from Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Norway, the United States, Egypt, India, China, Japan, South Africa; and can fairly be said to have made for itself a place among the recognised institutions of the University.

The immediate object of the Club, as stated in Rule 2, is: 'The reading of papers and holding of debates on subjects calculated to promote mutual knowledge and sympathy between members of the different nationalities

resident at Oxford.' The subjoined list of papers read since the formation of the Club is the best illustration of our aims.

It is proposed to publish terminally in the Magazine the whole or part of some of the papers read to the Society, and contributions of members on topics of Cosmopolitan interest. The Committee hope that a ready response will be forthcoming for the latter part of our paper.

List of Papers read.

MAY, 1907, TO JUNE, 1908.

1. 'Henrik Ibsen'—Mr. W. Morgenstierne, Wadham.
2. 'Heine: Buch der Leider'—Mr. E. Barker, M.A., Wadham.
3. 'Sakuntala and the Spirit of the Indian Drama'—Mr. L. Har Dayal, St. John's.
4. 'Tolstoy'—Mr. R. Biske, Wadham.
5. 'Toru Dutt, an Indian Poetess'—Mr. S. V. Mukerjea, Exeter.
6. 'Walt Whitman'—Mr. A. T. Edwards, B.A., Hertford.
7. 'Some Aspects of French Romantic Drama'—Mr. H. Berthon, M.A., Wadham.
8. 'Internationalism'—Mr. H. Aronson, Lincoln.
9. 'German University Life'—Mr. A. B. Gough, M.A., St. John's.
10. 'Thoreau'—Mr. P. J. Philip.
11. 'World Literature'—Professor H. G. Fielder, M.A.
12. 'Abraham Lincoln'—Mr. C. S. Downes, Merton.
13. 'The Bengali Novel: Bunkim'—Mr. S.V. Mukerjea, Exeter.
14. 'Outlines of Modern Norwegian Literature'—Mr. Burckhardt.
15. 'Turgueniev'—Professor W. R. Morfill, M.A.
16. 'Cosmopolitanism'—Mr. A. L. R. Locke, Hertford.

World Literature.

ON February 25th Professor Fielder, M.A., read a paper on 'World Literature.'

At the outset of his paper Professor Fielder said that the term 'world-literature' had first been used by Goethe. In a note on the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews*, in which he discussed the higher aims of such journals, the following passage occurred: 'As these journals win, step by step, a larger public, they will contribute in a most effectual way to what we hope for—a universal world literature. Nations must become aware of, and understand one another, and if they cannot attain to mutual love, they must at least learn to bear with one another.' Later, Goethe had returned again and again to this idea of his, working it out and becoming more and more fascinated by it; and in the closing years of his long life he had dimly divined the dawn of an age in which the civilized nations would form one great confederation, bound to joint action and working towards a common ideal; a confederation whose members, while continuing to live their separate national lives, would also live the larger life of mankind, sharing one another's thoughts and aspirations and possessing in addition to and above their several literatures of a purely national character, one literature in common, in which their larger common life would find its expression—a world literature.

The lecturer then proceeded to consider whether since Goethe's days we had come any nearer to the realization of such an ideal, and to discuss the obstacles in the way. Reviewing the various opinions held as to the importance of foreign criticism, he came to the conclusion that no man should be too confident that he could do absolute justice to poetry in a tongue he was not born to, and that one could not accept as final any critical opinion on a poem based on a knowledge of a translation only. Proceeding, he considered the various causes which worked together to make a book world-famed, pointing out that

they are often quite apart from the intrinsic value of the work.

Having discussed the various lists of the world's best books compiled in different countries, he attempted such a list himself. He only admitted works of which it could be said that every educated man in our western world had become familiar, one way or other, with all that is most essential in them, with the characters they present, the leading ideas they contain, and of which he felt that they had contributed to the mental atmosphere in which he was living, he readily understanding allusions to any episode or character in them. Professor Fielder included the Bible, Homer, Æsop's Fables, Dante, the wealth of legendary lore bequeathed by the Middle Ages, Don Quixote, Shakespeare, Molière and Goethe, and dwelt on the fact that within the last thirty years voices from Russia, Scandinavia, Hungary and Poland had gained admission to the European concert of literature.

It might thus seem that, to a certain extent, we had attained to a world literature such as Goethe longed for. The greatest blessing, however, which Goethe had expected from it, namely, that there should spring up a real fellow-feeling among nations, had not yet been vouchsafed. He (the lecturer) had often wondered whether something could not be done towards removing international prejudice by a more comparative study of European literature in our schools and Universities. It would take the student beyond the limits of his own nationality, would lead him better to understand the ideals and aspirations of other nations and make him conscious of the solidarity of mankind; and as 'the progress of the world was not made by converting the old but by educating the young,' he did not think it was too much to hope that such understanding would be a pledge for the peace of the world and would make war more and more impossible.

Side Lights on Modern Norwegian Literature.

IN Norwegian literature the years about 1890, when a group of younger poets began to appear, may be said to signify the inauguration of a new movement. The 'problem-fiction,' which had been made by the efficiency of leading dramatists such as Ibsen and Björson the sole-prevailing style for more than twenty years, could not satisfy these enthusiastic nationalists. They intended to pioneer extraneous ways, to found a new poetry that was to be richer and more sterling than a sterile impersonal realism. In its first years it was also felt as a fresh breath passing through literature and art: lyrics, for a long time completely neglected, were again dignified by men such as Obstfelder, whose bizzare, thought-laden verses had a contemplative character; Collett-Vogt, who struck a bolder, more radical tone, though no less personal; and Krag, whose melodious stanzas betrayed a refined poetical talent. Though Krag was the last of the three to appear before the public, his poems proved in no way less successful: his delightful style, the exquisite elegant tone, having sometimes a touch of melancholy yearning and tenderness, sometimes revealing the light-hearted mood of the poet in merry, charming verses; perfect in its expression, pliant in its technique. All this rushed upon the public as a new romanticism, and fascinated them by its sonorousness and its rich half-decadent fancy.

At the same time prose was revived by a group of writers, amongst whom Knut Hamsun ranks as one of the most conspicuous. Like Krag's poems, Hamsun's first book, **Hunger*, denotes a transformation in our modern literature. Highly influenced by Russian novelists such as Turguenief and Dostojevskij, his aim was to bring in the psychological novel as a special branch of our literature. But far from endeavouring to explain

* Translated into English by George Egerton (London, Smithers, 1899).

psychological phenomena by investigating the elements and instincts of human soul-life, he is rather playing on the surface, giving free range to his vivid style, his brilliant wit and capricious humour, surprising and mystifying the reader with a variety of odd ideas, a chaos or daring whims and original fancies, interspersed with hot, fiery paradoxes In the last years the psychological tendency within Norwegian literature has claimed several votaries, few of which, however, can be said to have created works possessing any value of their own. The plastic powers of composing and deepening the subject have reached a more perfect—and incomparably a more original—development in those authors who are dealing mainly with the native environment. Hans Kinck started as an objective realistic painter of peasant life in the small remote districts of Western Norway, but soon revealed himself an enthusiastic lyrist of Nature with sound imaginative humour and keen powers of observation. Characters with abrupt, impervious dispositions, frequently with a touch of roughness and impetuosity, form the sphere of Kinck's delineating power, while in his descriptions he shows a profuseness of colour, a flow of words, a fervour of diction, which prove him the most original and national poet in Norwegian literature.

While this national-naturalistic tendency can rank among its adherents several distinguished poets who, although of course in a very different way, have developed their style to a high degree of clearness and elegance, the votaries of the social novel are comparatively few. The restless conditions of Norwegian politics were the real cause of bringing Johan Bojer to the front. He sees political antagonism as the great stumbling-block to a sound development of the people because it is just *the* point of distinction that breeds the most intense hatred and discord between factions. The descriptions in which he shows with slashing satire how political campaigns pass over the country with epidemic sweeps, destroying confidence and mutual esteem, are, however, highly exaggerated. Party-hatred in Norwegian politics, even if it has been inveterate, has never had consequences so far-reaching as those described by Bojer. But this

inclination for over-rating is closely connected with the disposition of his mind,—a very natural outcome of his character. For Bojer is a moral-philosopher who regards the development of the people from a critical and independent point of view. The defects and weaknesses of his times are the products of his own efforts; he writes on purpose to have them exhibited—to reveal and ridicule them—and is accordingly under the necessity of over-drawing.

Very like Bojer, Avne Garborg belongs to that group of modern Norwegian poets, who set before themselves more definite ends than to compose works of exclusively æsthetical or psychological value. Garborg is above all a debater of problems, an investigating and contemplative spirit to whom the profound enigmas of life have a strange mysterious attraction. There is in his very essence a never resting craving for the search into fundamentals and principles; leading and determining human life. Far from stopping, as most poets do, at the analysis of their own time, its nature and peculiarities, he goes far deeper, nay with his inclinations for explaining and solving the phenomena he has more in common with a philosopher than with a poet proper Garborg's development has never been homogenous, has never continued in a straight line; he has occupied the most different standpoints, and his views of life have been balanced between the extremes of atheism and fervid religiousness. Born and brought up among peasants religious to a fault, he became even as a precocious boy affected by serious doubts, and penetrated as he was by the horrors of the judgment of God, he was early inclined to meditation Years afterwards we find him in the metropolis—a radical novelist and critic with a reputation for satire and brilliancy, and we see him in 1885, the year when realism culminated in the crass naturalistic movement, unreservedly joining the extremists in their attack on present social conditions. Later, however, when the polemical problem-literature died out and the new group of poets appeared, Garborg's intellectual evolution was also brought into a new phase: a phase that signifies to a certain extent a return to the religious contemplation of his youth. But his opinions

had spontaneously gone through a profound and traceable growth: from the confusion and obscurity that characterise his early speculations he had gradually reached a more definite and comprehensive view of life in an intense but decidedly unconventional faith: a kind of undogmatical Christian idealism, whose fundamentals are earnest devotion, but also independent criticism. The religious life is comprehended as a direct intimate relation between the Godhead and human personality. To Garborg the *extrinsic* forms, the surface is quite valueless; it is the *divine mystery* by which he, or perhaps better his fancy is absorbed.

When one examines Garborg's conception of life and religion as it presents itself in his later works, one cannot but be struck by the extraordinary difference that appears between his present opinions and the challenging presumption which marks his actions in the naturalistic period from 1885 onwards. He has, as far as this literary rupture is concerned, followed the common current in modern Norwegian literature: leading away from the tendencies and ideas of naturalism, the period by which it has, however, been so greatly influenced. The naturalistic movement had been revolutionary at its very centre, and it is thus characteristic of its adherents, the *Bohemians*, as they were named, that their ideas were expressed in a radical social-philosophy the extreme tendencies of which should place them in opposition to all factions, and which should soon raise a violent controversy within literary camps. In this fight most authors took their part, among them Bj. Björnson as an energetic combatant of the 'Bohème.' The principles maintained by Björnson, as well as his whole attitude in the 'moral-debate,' claim a special interest, as they inspired our present ablest dramatist to make his first appearance as a satirical playwright.

Gunnar Heiberg betrays already in his earliest play the bold dauntlessness and cutting scorn which form the quintessence of his later productions, and very soon gave him an exceptional place in Norwegian literature. Since Heiberg made his witty but somewhat malicious attack on Björnson he has brought out a series of satirical works, all slashing caricatures of modern life written in

a spirit of frolicsome gaiety and sound goading humour. Heiberg's is the true satirical temperament: the keen critical mind, the free contentious temperament to whom the ostensible loftiness in human actions prove on a closer examination to be mean ambition and egoism. The qualities giving his plays throughout a stamp of independence and originality are his intimate knowledge of human nature, his critical sagacity and ability in the keen figuring of several dramatic situations. He never shows himself a more perfect satirist than in more or less detached and individual scenes scattered throughout his plays as a series of episodes—only loosely connected: brilliant whims, frequently bizarre and provoking; always caustic in their thrusts,—the dialogues sparkling with epigrammatic wit.... But ingenious and facetious as are many of these situations, the method is not without its danger: the composition easily becomes disintegrated, the action dissolved in a variety of brilliant effects. In his style Heiberg shows an appreciation of elegance and beauty: it is pervaded with acute accuracy of wording, the language is wreathed round with pliant subtlety and at the same time with an easy grace giving it a touch of intense vivacity; for in completed form, in versatile diction, and in the perfect modelling of the structure of the play this poet sees the paramount aim of his art. Although Heiberg's satiric comedy long ago obtained for him an eminent position, it is yet in quite a different direction that he has attained to his supreme achievement in Norwegian literature.

In the two works: *The Balcony* and *Love's Tragedy* he is far above the mere play of scorn and irony. He has here treated seriously the development of the tragic controversy between human character and passion, the latter apprehended as the ever active natural impulse when suddenly in unrestrained force it breaks upon human life: overruling volition, subverting sympathy and confidence. . . . In these two dramas Heiberg proves to be the successor of Ibsen; and in the clear lines and absolute logical consistency of the action there is an indubitable resemblance to our greatest dramatist. Like him Heiberg concentrates the evolution of the plot round the psychological conflict arising when human existence has

to face the inevitable and inexorable reality of life.—It is the struggle in its gigantic greatness: all the elements working within it, latent powers coming into play in the very situations by which they feel enchained. But while in Ibsen the drama is constructed on '*the idea*,' '*passion*' is the animating force in the plays of Heiberg, creating the conflict and determining the dramatic issue.

In the present phase of Norwegian literature different tendencies are perceptible: there is a tendency towards the creating of an independent *psychological novel*, though this cannot still be said to have reached any versatile development—while the efforts of the *national novel* betray a high degree of perfection in the vivid, original descriptions of the typical life of the people and clear realistic scenery-delineations. Most poets belong to this branch, while those who seek their subjects in a more positive sphere are few. This article has touched upon the social political character of Bojer's fiction: the religious-philosophic investigation of Garborg: and finally the critical tendency in Heiberg's satirical plays, as alike significant phases of modern Norwegian thought.

D. B. BURCHARDT.

Conclusion of a Paper on Bankim and the Bengali Novel.

To conclude. An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages to evoke an interest in Bankim, not only as the great exponent in Bengali literature of the novel form the novel of romance idealizing and recalling the national past of India as well as the problem novel of contemporary life and social criticism, but also as a representative and significant figure of the Indian Renaissance. I consider the period in which he lived,—that which began in 1830 with the inauguration by Râjâ Râm Mohan Rai,

of the modern Indian theistic movement, and which closed in 1894 with the death of the great novelist—I consider it as having a distinct importance of its own from the point of view of world-literature. I regard it as nothing short of a tremendous intellectual revolution, which cannot fail to have a widespread influence on the future, not only of India, but also of that vast Asiatic world over which she still wields her intellectual empire. What was it that happened during that time? An aged race—hitherto stagnant and unprogressive—was galvanised as it were into an extraordinary literary and reforming activity by the mere contact with a young and vigorous civilization. The process of fusion has not been unattended with grave portents and alarms. The ancient traditions of Brahmanism were being scattered to the winds, and the system itself was called upon to justify the inherent strength of its position before the newer order. The Great Revolt of 1857 was historically the last great resistance of Mediaeval Conservatism to the forces of the modern world. What the ultimate result of this struggle between the old and new will be, whether the new ideals can be grafted on to the old, and, helped on by the tenacious vitality which all old civilizations possess, can rear up a higher and nobler culture; or whether the bitter strife between differing ideals—the clash between hot thought and hot thought—will cause a cataclysm that would throw our country back into all the chaos and reeking horrors of mediæval anarchy—it is not possible for any of us to say. But if Bankim's work be taken as at all an index of what the future will be, it teaches us that the progressive movement in India, with its inevitable advance from political servitude towards national freedom, is to be resolutely met, not with fear or doubt, but with hope, not with the pessimism of despair, but in a firm faith in those eternal elements that underlie all human growth and development.

SATYA V. MUKERJEA.

Thoreau's Experiment.

THE value of an experiment in the Art of Life such as that of Henry Thoreau seems to me never to have been fully appreciated, and it is not so much with a view to propagating the doctrines of the simple life as to advocating absolute independence from tradition and from convention in the choice of his career by every individual, that as much as follows of my paper on Thoreau is printed in the *Cosmopolitan Club Magazine*.

At the outset of his career Thoreau was met by the common enough problem of how he was to maintain himself, and although at first he was unwilling to bind himself definitely to the service of Admetus, he adopted various of the usual methods of young men who are faced by a similar problem. Having tried at least a dozen such methods he quickly concluded that though they may content the majority of men they did not in any measure reach up to his standard of life, which he desired to live 'as tenderly and daintily as one would pick a flower.' In all his various trades he had found his expenses far outweighed his income, the amount of liberty he sacrificed to gain his livelihood was out of all proportion to his return in the value of his life. This feeling of the inadequacy of the returns to the sacrifice of our liberty and the sweat of our souls comes, I am certain, to every young man who has been stretched bare on the altar of life; but the majority, I fear, are of the order who swallow the universe like a pill and listen to sage advice from the chimney-corner. They become resigned: Thoreau was not of that order, and he dismisses them with contempt. 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism, is the chief end of man and what are the necessities and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose

clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me—it does not avail me that others have tried it. What elder people say you cannot do you try and find that you can.'

Discarding all experience as impertinant to his case, he began to transvalue and reconstruct life for himself from an economic and hygienic point of view, and especially to economise his expenditure of life itself. To reduce that expenditure to the lowest limit and cultivate the broad margin of his life was his ambition, 'to be a philosopher and solve the problems of life, not only theoretically but practically—so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity and trust.'

In March, 1845, he borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, two miles from Concord, and began to build a house. At the expense of four months' labour and £5 17s. 2½d. for material, he cheated Admetus and secured for as long as he cared to occupy it a house 'fit to entertain a travelling god and where a goddess might trail her garments.' To secure the other three necessities, food, clothing and fuel, by the labour of his hands was a recreation rather than a hardship, and now his vacation from humbler toil had commenced and he was in a position to venture on life itself. But though he had so well succeeded, it was not merely to cheat Admetus that he had come to the woods; it was to follow his genius and pursue his gospel of self-improvement practically, 'to front the essential facts of life and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not when I came to die discover that I had not lived. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why, then, to get the whole and genuine meanness of it and publish it to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men it appears to me are in a strange uncertainty

about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily said that it is the chief aim of man here "to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever."

His second purpose is more obscure, probably because he recognised how few could rightly understand it. 'In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time and notch it on my stick too; to stand at the meeting of two eternities, the past and the future, which is precisely the present moment, to toe that line.'

I cannot in this short paper touch on any of the sides of his philosophy which lay consistently toward the goal of self-improvement, nor do more than mention those two dramatic episodes of his life which throw such a flood of light upon him: his imprisonment for refusing his allegiance to a State which sanctioned slavery, and his instant unequivocal indorsement of the action of John Brown at Harper's Ferry in the face of the most overwhelming public opinion.

Of the latter action John Burroughs has said, 'It is the most significant act of his life. It clinches him. It makes the colours fast. He has been so often misrepresented as a cynical misanthrope who set himself in opposition to the opinions of his townsmen that it is necessary to obtain any true knowledge of his character to pay specially close attention to the second of these acts. It shows him rather a man of humaner sympathies, of larger aspirations, and of more fearless courage than any of his contemporaries.'

His deductions from his own experiment are startling in their direct truth. 'I am convinced,' he says, 'that to maintain oneself on this earth it not a hardship but a pastime, if we live simply and wisely; as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial.' Again of the value of a life so earnestly lived he has no doubt. 'How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living? Methinks that would exercise their minds as much as mathematics. Even the poor student studies and is taught political economy while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges.' Though I feel that I have

quoted too freely already from his writings, the only fitting conclusion to this paper is his conclusion. 'I learned this at least by my experiment that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined for himself, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded and interpreted in his favour in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty, poverty, nor weakness, weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. But put the foundations under them.'

P. J. PHILIP.

Epilogue.

IF ideas were worth anything, said a cynic, Cosmopolitanism would have put the world into intellectual bankruptcy long ago. But it is an innocent and enlightened gaming, this pastime of eclectic societies: where in the name of cosmopolitan culture they play their sweepstakes of the imagination, lending each other their mental vices and borrowing each others ideas; but what serious man will chide them! 'Tis innocent as child's play and no economic waste at that. And some such idea might easily occur to any who have been led an intellectual steeplechase through these few pages of *Cosmopolitan* clippings.

Cosmopolitanism as professed by few and yet practised by many is, after all, a sort of exercise of more or less

pure disciplinary value. There are certain honest people who think otherwise, but they seem to be misled by a false analogy much after the fashion of the man who travels to 'enlarge his horizon.' It is all a shifting of the attention and interest, a juggling with the centre of a pre-determined but movable circle, and most of us are convinced and some of us perplexed on finding that we carry our horizons with us and are unable to see through any other eyes than our own. It is the pathetic fallacy of the sympathetic temperament to think otherwise.

Cosmopolitan culture, then, if it is to be truly cultivating, is a sense of value contrasts and a heightened and rationalized self-centralization. Few men without much travel can discover the hill just outside their own town from which the horizon-line is as unbroken as in mid-ocean. And few Cosmopolitans have been able to escape the exchange-formula of the simple proposition: As x is to you, so is y to me. The beautiful law of this cosmopolitan equation is that each unknown is or ought to be well known on its side of the equation. The only possible solution is an enforced respect and interest for one's own tradition, and a more or less accurate appreciation of its contrast values with other traditions.



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