

pattern-faced, breastless women. No, New York may magnetize back her own, but those of us who spring from a more rural region, where sky-scrapers are unknown and where great fortunes are still a little vulgar, we have further explanation to seek.

In England the autumn creeps on one gradually. In late August a few trees begin to turn russet. By October the countryside is framed in a soft golden brown. Imperceptibly the gold dries out of the leaves, and in November the trees stand shivering with only a few dried, dull leaves to clothe them. In New England it is different. One wakes up a morning in late September to find that the trees which yesterday were green are now all splashed with patches of red and yellow. And in another day or two, as the frost grows sharper, the whole landscape becomes a tapestry of colour. One can ride for miles down narrow, soft clay roads without meeting a human being, hedged in on either side by flaming maple trees with their jagged leaves, dark, magenta oaks, white virginal birches always a little shocked at finding their cool green leaves bleached so gaudy a blonde. And behind all the transitory flamboyance stand tall straight evergreens, secure in the consciousness of their permanence, but unable at the moment to calm the riot raging around them. Beyond a bend in the road lie the amethyst blue hills. It seems at first as though the trees on the hills (mountains they would be in England) had turned blue and mauve and purple because all the vermillion and yellow were exhausted. But one may reassure oneself by walking or even running along the paths which lead across the hills through meadows and orchards, glutting as one goes, like a satyr, on the most luscious fruits. For our apples do not grow on branches neatly tied to garden walls, nor even always in tidy rows in orchards. The trees spring up all over, in the midst of a wood, along roads, by deserted houses, like the love-children of some profligate but charming god. And grapes, too, hang down from tree-branches, delicious bastards who never knew the regularity of vineyard row. Blackberry and raspberry bushes cling to one and scratch, heavy with their sweet, overripe burden. Even a few huckleberries droop blue and sulky from their flaming bushes. It is all bacchanalian and extravagant and mad. A whole countryside with vine leaves in its hair!

That is what draws one back to America—the keen, double-edged pleasure of being for a short time part of a force, vivid and thrilling, beautiful and uncontrollable, of feeling perhaps something akin to the ecstasy of the Greeks in their festivals of Dionysus. But the impermanence of autumn, its very essence, is its tragedy. Were it not a dance, its poignance would not be so deep. Any morning in November one may wake up to find that the sly, silent snow has stolen all one's treasure in the night. The spell is broken, the colour gone. For six or seven months one must live a life of white and black and muddy grey.

The obvious question is, of course, "Why, if this extravagance of nature forces you back to America, does it fail to hold you there?" Perhaps if the autumn lasted all year we could never leave. Perhaps we could just see colour and eat fruit and smell the gentle, pungent odour of burning leaves without ever thinking a thought or saying a word. It is the thinking and the talking, or the absence of it, which makes America in winter so barren. How all the beauty and madness of autumn and spring keeps from going to the heads of men and making them poets and philosophers, I cannot tell. I only know it doesn't. The glorious fanaticism of nature translates itself into the inglorious fanaticism of man—the Ku Klux Klan, prohibition, Rotary Clubs for a hundred per cent. Americanism, organizations to annihilate, to level, to paint out natural differences, "A campaign to add 'moral training' to the curriculum of the schools of the United States has been

begun, and a plan for 'impressing the young mind with the fundamentals of what constitutes right and wrong' has received the support of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Churches. An attempt is being made to draw up a code of conduct which will be acceptable by everyone who is encouraging the scheme." Obviously no Americans—or very few—have time to think or express their thoughts. They are all too busy learning set speeches about "how to put things over" or "get things across" or "how to sell an idea." They have never been trained to see beauty, and in the places where it might force itself upon them they have hidden it behind signs which say, "Chesterfield—They satisfy," or "Camel—I'd walk a mile to get one," or "Fatima—what a whale of a difference just a few cents make," or, best of all, "See Dante's Inferno. Doré's Masterpiece of art faithfully reproduced in motion pictures. Sin! Hell! The Road to Happiness!" These signs which illuminate our every highway in brilliant parade are the most significant symbols of the æsthetic blindness which permeates America.

What all this has to do with cocktails I hardly remember, but I am quite sure that the sort of stimulation we wanderers seek in England has little to do with anything even remotely spirituous in its suggestion. If it is excitement at all that we desire, it is the warm, wine-like glow of companionship with those whose eyes are seldom closed to beauty and whose minds are accustomed to the exchange of ideas.

MINA KIRSTEIN.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

ONE drawback to the immense specialization to which all the arts have been subjected is that the ordinary person seldom dares formulate an opinion in public. He rarely gives vent to his disgust or his gratitude except in private, and then often stealthily, with a covert sneer or smirk. This is specially true of music, which is at once the most exciting and the most mysterious of the arts. Hundreds—we wish we could say thousands—of ordinary people are now going about London burdened with gratitude to that enterprising musician, Mr. Gerald Cooper, who has given them some of the pleasantest hours of their winter, without daring to express it for fear of making themselves ridiculous. Let the specialists praise these chamber concerts as specialists know how. But the ordinary person must be pardoned if he returns thanks, unprofessionally, first for being allowed to smoke; second for the lateness of the hour—half-past eight; thirdly for the music. No two concerts have had the same assortment of instruments. Harpsichords and violas have played together with pianos and cellos. These delightful instruments plundered the treasuries of Schubert and Mozart and Bach (the ordinary concert-goer is highly classical in his tastes); Purcell and other old English song writers have been sung. No two concerts have been alike, but each has seemed to be made up of things chosen by people who know them, and play them because they like playing them. One concert still remains, on the 30th, at the Æolian Hall. And then we shall go about London asking, in the manner of grateful people, why Mr. Cooper cannot give us concerts all the year round.

The pictures bequeathed to the National Gallery by the late Sir Claude Phillips have now been placed on view. They are arranged in the Vestibule, the majority at the entrance to the Spanish Rooms near the charming collection of Flemish, German, and Italian primitives presented recently by Mr. Henry Wagner, some on the opposite side at the entrance to the British and French Rooms. One—a Byzantine panel, "The Dormition of the Virgin," very beautiful in colour

* The "Times," September 9th, 1924.

—has been placed at the top of the stairs opposite the catalogue stall, near the other works of the same kind, one of which, a curious panel from Crete, is also a recent addition to the Gallery. Of the other pictures, the "Pietà" of Dosso Dossi is the most interesting; there are also a very attractive "Portrait of a Boy," by François Gérard; two very smooth, rather uninteresting, saints by Pordenone, from the ceiling of the Scuola di San Francesco ai Frari at Venice; portraits by Philippe Mercier and by Tilly Kettle, and a "Portrait of a Woman" ascribed to Hanneman.

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art gave a performance last Sunday evening of "Slipping on the Peel," by Mr. Roland Pertwee. The rather silly title is taken from a not very witty epigram—"The apple Eve ate was really an orange, and men have been slipping on the peel ever since,"—but the play, though not very witty either, and much too long drawn out, was certainly more amusing than the title would lead one to suppose. It is a comedy of an extremely realistic kind, so realistic as to be painful and uncomfortable at times, dealing with the life of small shopkeepers in a provincial town. It is much more amusing in its situations than in its jokes, and at moments was even invested with a certain charm, owing mainly to some really excellent acting. Mr. Guy Pelham-Boulton, especially, gave a very sympathetic rendering of the helpless and unbusinesslike stationer, widowed in the first act and subsequently a prey to a designing hussy, till rescued by his charming and efficient book-keeper. Both of these ladies were admirably played, by Miss Doris Gilmore and Miss Fabia Drake respectively: indeed, all the actors deserve praise for making tolerable a rather mechanical and not very original play.

When "Six-Cylinder Love" was first put on at 6 p.m. at the Garrick, it met with so much favour that it was honoured by transfer to the evening bill. The result has been catastrophic, and "Six-Cylinder Love" has already been withdrawn. Why is this? An interesting question of social history is raised which I am quite unable to answer. "Six-Cylinder Love" had very slight merits, though when the author became quite simple and serious and abandoned his fatal desire to be witty, it got rather better. But then jokes do not amuse me merely because they are about motor-cars. Why will everybody try to be funny? It is so much easier to be serious. "Six-Cylinder Love" was followed by a revival of "Me and My Diary," an amusing one-act sketch evidently suggested by Mrs. Asquith's Autobiography, though the diary in question bore no resemblance to its warm-hearted original. But, once more, why is the syrup of 6 the caviare of 8.30?

The enterprising "Cave of Harmony" gave a full evening bill at the Court Theatre on Sunday. Though most of the seats were sold to two or three different sets of people, the audience contrived to enjoy itself greatly, which says a good deal for the talent of the company. The two most important features of the very varied programme were Pirandello's magnificent sketch "The Man with a Flower in his Mouth," in its small way, one of the most perfect of that great writer's achievements; and "Happy Families," in which Mr. Aldous Huxley plays the sedulous ape to Pirandello with much wit and cunning. Other enjoyable numbers were some excellent renderings of our old music-hall songs and a spirited performance of "Box and Cox," which I had never had the pleasure of seeing before. It is to be hoped that this entertainment will make the excellent work of the "Cave of Harmony" known to a wider public.

There is "always something new out of Egypt." A correspondent sends me the following "cutting" which he found some time ago in the "Egyptian Mail":—

"Is Troy in Asia Minor or East Anglia? Théophile Cailleux (who has just died in Paris) held the latter view—to the scandal of his fellow savants and classicists—and produced a wealth of erudition to prove it. The

city of the ten years' siege by the Greeks has been identified by M. Cailleux with the ruins of the citadel of Gogmagog, outside Cambridge! According to him, the Cam and Ouse are Homeric rivers, which tumble into the Wash—so called, because it was required to cleanse the Greeks for their pollution and pillage of Apollo's temple. Even Fleam's Dyke is associated with Hector's flight, and the Devil's Dyke is Homer's High Wall, the abode of spirits."

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, Jan. 24.—"The Thief," at the Strand.
The Savoy Orpheans Concert, at 8.15, at Queen's Hall.
Sunday, Jan. 25.—"The Assignment," Phoenix Society, at the Aldwych.
Monday, Jan. 26.—"The Monkey House," at the New Oxford.
"Jitta's Atonement," at the Grand, Fulham.
Achille Rivarde, Violin Recital, at 8.30, at Queen's Hall.
Sidney Harrison, Pianoforte Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.
Tuesday, Jan. 27.—"Lightnin'," at the Shaftesbury.
Stephen Gwynn, Six Point Group Lecture, at 5.15, at 92, Victoria Street, on "Poets of my Day."
Prof. G. Elliot Smith on "The Evolution of Man," at 5.30, at University College, London.
Thursday, Jan. 29.—"Love's Prisoner," at the Adelphi.
Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, at 8, at Queen's Hall.
Lilias Mackinnon, Pianoforte Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.
Friday, Jan. 30.—Gerald Cooper, Chamber Concert, at 8.30, at Æolian Hall.

OMICRON.

MOORLAND NIGHT.

My face is against the grass—the moorland grass is wet—
My eyes are shut against the grass, against my lips there
are the little blades,

Over my head the curlews call,
And now there is the night wind in my hair;
My heart is against the grass and the sweet earth;—it
has gone still, at last;

It does not want to beat any more,
And why should it beat?
This is the end of the journey;
The Thing is found.

This is the end of all the roads—
Over the grass there is the night-dew
And the wind that drives up from the sea along the
moorland road;

I hear a curlew start out from the heath
And fly off, calling through the dusk,
The wild, long, rippling call:—

The Thing is found and I am quiet with the
earth;

Perhaps the earth will hold it, or the wind, or that bird's
cry,
But it is not for long in any life I know. This cannot
stay,
Not now, not yet, not in a dying world, with me, for
very long;

I leave it here:
And one day the wet grass may give it
back—

One day the quiet earth may give it back—
The calling birds may give it back as they go
by—

To someone walking on the moor who starves for love
and will not know

Who gave it to all these to give away;
Or, if I come and ask for it again,
Oh! then, to me.

CHARLOTTE MEW.

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