

THE ACADEMY

AND

LITERATURE

No. 2019

[Registered as a
Newspaper.]

JANUARY 14, 1911

PRICE THREEPENCE



CONTINUOUS TESTIMONY.

The following are extracts from letters received, covering a period of two years, from an owner of a "Sheffield-Simplex" Car.—

COBHAM:

October, 1908.

"I am extremely pleased with the appearance of the car and the running of it. Everything connected with it seems to be most satisfactory. I congratulate myself on having decided to buy one of your cars."

August, 1909.

"I am sorry I cannot manage to meet you this week and discuss the merits of the 'Sheffield-Simplex' Cars with you, but I am glad to take this opportunity of letting you know that the car I had from you is going splendidly. The engine is running most smoothly and quietly; it is quite a treat to ride behind it. No change of speed is necessary for any of the hills in this part of the world, and evidently both the work and materials used in the car are of the best. I can, with the greatest confidence, say that I would not exchange my 'Sheffield-Simplex' for any of the different types of car I see on the road, and, living as I do on the main Portsmouth Road, I have plenty of opportunity of comparing them."

October 10, 1910.

"It may interest you to know that the 45 H.P. 'GEAR-BOX-LESS' Car fitted with a landaulette body which I bought of you has now run about 8,000 miles and has given me the greatest satisfaction. . . . I should like to say that I had the car in Devonshire and Cornwall this summer, and with only one or two exceptions it took every hill on top speed with six passengers and the heavy body, which speaks volumes for its hill-climbing capability; in fact, if one has to slow down for any reason going uphill it is marvellous how the engine picks up again without changing the gear. I also think the sliding pedal control on your cars is a most distinct improvement on the ordinary pedal; it is much less tiring, more easily worked and controlled, especially over rough roads, and I am convinced that any one having once tried it and experienced its advantages would never go back to the ordinary accelerator."

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London Depôt: c/o MULLINERS, Ltd., 132-135, LONG ACRE, W.C.

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Registered as a Newspaper in the United Kingdom, and at the New York Post Office as Second-class Mail Matter. Transmissible to Canada at the Canadian Magazine rate of Postage. Subscriptions: Inland 15s.; Foreign 17s. 6d. a year, post free.

All communications intended for the Editor should be sent to 63, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

THE ACADEMY is published by MESSRS. ODHAMS, LIMITED, 67, Long Acre, London, W.C., to whom all letters with reference to publication must be addressed.

Applications referring to Advertisements may be addressed to MESSRS. ODHAMS, as above.

The Editor cannot undertake to return unsolicited Manuscripts which are not accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The receipt of a proof does not imply the acceptance of an article.

THE ACADEMY is now obtainable at Messrs. W. H. Smith & Sons, Messrs. Wyman's, and Messrs. Willing's bookstalls and shops.

REVIEW OF THE WEEK

AMIDST the excitement of the Stepney affray recent developments in foreign politics have passed almost unnoticed by the large majority of the followers of current events in the Press; but now that the East End is happily returning to its normal state we hope some attention will be paid to the recent developments in the Near East. The great event of the week has been the Russo-German Agreement in regard to the Balkans and Persia. When we consider that less than two years ago Russia and Germany were on the verge of war over the question of Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this is a great triumph for diplomacy. It was only Germany's direct threat to Russia to stand by Austria which caused the Russian Government to withdraw its support from Servia and thus avert war. It was thought at the time that Russia would never forgive the pressure brought to bear on her at a time when she was weak from her struggle with Japan, and that she would not rest content until the insult had been wiped out in blood. But the memory of nations is proverbially short in these days. It really seems much easier for victor and vanquished to come to an agreement with one another before either has sustained defeat and humiliation. Witness the South African settlement after a war which lasted three years; witness the Russo-Japanese Agreement over Korea and Manchuria within four years of that deadly struggle in the Far East; and now we have Germany and Russia smoking the pipe of peace together within eighteen months of the time when they were ready to spring at each other's throats.

This understanding over the Balkans and Persia has been well received in France, and it should cause satisfaction

amongst ourselves—except for the fact that the feeling against Germany is so strong that we dislike to see any Power coquetting with her, even though it goes far to ensure a continuance of European peace. But it has not given unmixed satisfaction in Constantinople. Turkey, it appears, has not been consulted over the terms of the Agreement, and is naturally alarmed at this unexpected slight from the "Protector of the Mohammedan Peoples of the World," as they were gratefully calling the Kaiser two months ago. The German Ambassador has found it necessary to furnish explanations and assurances to the Grand Vizier, but we doubt whether these will go far to heal the breach. When old lovers quarrel no explanations will set the matter right, because love can never thrive when it has to be watered by explanations. The whole essence of love between nations, as between individuals, is a union of hearts which places misunderstandings outside the pale of possibility. We doubt very much whether the Agreement will strengthen Germany's position in Constantinople, and surely the time is ripe for a renewal of the traditional friendship between ourselves and the Ottoman Turks, which of late years has been seriously impaired by Germany's more skilful diplomacy.

Germany's diplomatic activities seem inexhaustible at the present time. There are persistent rumours of a *rapprochement* with the Celestial Empire. China feels herself very isolated at the present day. England is allied with Japan, and now she sees those two former enemies Russia and Japan working in perfect harmony with one another at her expense. In despair, it appears, she turned towards the United States and sought an alliance in that quarter, but the United States Government, true to the spirit of its Constitution, which forbids alliances with foreign Powers, was unable to give her any encouragement beyond expressions of goodwill. This is not enough for China, and she is now said to be seeking an alliance with Germany as the only disinterested and unattached friend she has left in Europe. How much truth there is in the report it is difficult to say, but preparations are being made to receive the Crown Prince on a scale of unprecedented magnitude. Here, again, we have another excellent example of the instability of European and Asiatic politics. Fifteen years ago Prince Henry set out on his famous "Mailed Fist" expedition to annex portions of the Celestial Empire for the Fatherland, and now the robbed are anxious to lie down with the robbers in the same fold.

But what effect will a German-Chinese Alliance have on the recently concluded Russo-German Agreement? Surely both cannot give satisfaction. Have the rivals settled their disputes in the Near East in order that they may quarrel with the hope of greater commercial advantage in the Far East? Truly world politics are difficult to follow in days of such kaleidoscopic changes! On the outward surface only the old rivalries between ourselves and Germany seem likely to disturb the peace of Europe, but if these agreements and *rapprochements* are entered into so suddenly and unexpectedly, cannot they be broken with equal facility?

Captain Swinton's idea that the somewhat dreary district which we synthesise under the name of "South London" should become fashionable, is rather apt to inspire a smile. "There is something wrong," he says in a recent article. "Why are the palatial buildings all on the one bank? What is the matter with the other?" We fear that nothing short of a wholesale reconstruction of the congested locality could remedy the general atmosphere of dull poverty and depression which prevails on the

SOME NEW FRENCH BOOKS

THE Académie Goncourt has just awarded its annual prize. This year the fortunate laureate is M. Louis Pergaud, who certainly deserves the honour that has been conferred upon him, as his book "De Goupil à Margot: Histoires de Bêtes" ranks among the best animal stories ever written, and contains some very exact observation and delicate pathos. M. Pergaud has devoted his attention to the study of the wild beasts of the woods, and all the tales contained in "De Goupil à Margot" are delightful. We are alternately amused and saddened by the adventures they record. The book might appropriately bear as sub-title "The Animals' Martyrology." Man, as seen from the point of view of the author's furry and feathery heroes and heroines, certainly appears the most despicable animal in creation.

Of course, English readers of this book must not search for any affinity—except that of a deep love for our dumb brothers—between M. Louis Pergaud and some of the great English or American writers on animals—such as, for instance, Ernest Seton-Thompson or Rudyard Kipling. M. Pergaud's work is thoroughly French; it differs in thought, conception, and style from the English. It is, perhaps, less true to nature than Seton-Thompson's creations, but it is infinitely more tender; it is far less virile or beautiful than Kipling's Jungle-books, but in certain aspects is much more graceful. It is very personal, and for that reason interesting.

It is generally exceedingly painful to hear French or Continental people criticise England, and it occasionally becomes a positive suffering when they venture to publish a book containing the results of their misleading observations. It is, therefore, specially interesting to note M. André Chevrillon's last work, "Nouvelles Études Anglaises," which contains some of the best critical essays on England and English-speaking countries that we have seen. They are, moreover, expressed in beautiful French, and written in a sober and faultless style. That M. Chevrillon should thus understand and depict English life, thought, and psychology is not astonishing when we remember that he is the nephew of Taine—Taine who applied the positive method to literary criticism and history, and who also wrote that wonderful "Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise" and "Notes sur l'Angleterre," and in whom we find the strength, imagination, and humour which are also characteristic, though in a lesser degree, of M. Chevrillon's prose.

One of the finest of these "Nouvelles Études Anglaises" is that entitled "La Psychologie d'un Couronnement," written in 1902—a Frenchman's analysis of the various states of the English mind during the festivities of the Coronation of the late King. "La Jeunesse de Ruskin" is also another intensely interesting article, in which the author retraces with great conscientiousness and evident care for precision of detail the youth of the great critic. It is a delightful study, written with an undercurrent of complete sympathy with and understanding of the great man's personality and genius which considerably add to its charm. M. Chevrillon's serious but withal exceedingly captivating work contains several other essays; all are equally imbued with penetration and observation. In short, "Nouvelles Études Anglaises" should have a real success in England.

"La Vagabonde" is Mme. Colette Willy's latest novel, and was even proposed for the Prix Goncourt, which fell to Louis Pergaud. In it the author describes the tribulations of a young woman who, having divorced a most despicable husband, becomes a music-hall dancer and *mime*. The heroine, Renée Néré, manages to retain a certain distinction, and does not become *encauillée*, though she affects no prudery, which, be it said, would be sadly out of place in the smoky, dingy *couloisses* of the fourth-rate music-hall in

which she dances. One night a rich young man, a *cercleux* as is styled that particular kind of Parisian idler, presents himself at the door of her *loge*, after a representation during which she has mimicked a most violent and suggestive dance, and gives her to understand with a most brutal frankness the passionate admiration he feels for her, and the very unplatonic nature of his desires. Renée has him put out; but ultimately they meet again, and even become friends. Max, the young man, nearly succeeds in making himself loved. He ventures to propose marriage to Renée, who will not hear of it. She starts on a professional tour in the provinces, the last she will ever take before going to live with Max, but while travelling thus finds herself removed from the influence of her would-be lover. She realises that she is a vagabond, a stray, and the prospect of the comfortable, settled, and quiet life her existence with Max, even if irregular, would be, fills her with distress. This repulsion grows on her so that at the end of her tour, instead of returning to the man who is confidently waiting for her, she hides in a village, with Fossette, her dog, and Blondine, her maid, before starting on a long journey in South America. "La Vagabonde" is well written, and is flavoured with a certain ironical humour. There are some exquisite sketches of scenery, some amusing paintings of life behind the scenes of a popular Parisian *café-concert*; scattered here and there are some very true analyses of the sort of defiance and disdain the heroine feels for those belonging to the class of society she has voluntarily abandoned. "La Vagabonde" would have gained greatly however, if the author had shortened or even omitted some of the love-scenes, which are repeated rather too often in the course of the work.

M. Maurice de Waleffe, in his last study, "Héloïse, Amante et Dupe d'Abélard," has declared that his work constitutes the "end of a legend." Abélard is rather brutally deposed from the pedestal he occupied until now as type of the long-suffering lover. Héloïse, on the contrary, benefits by the author's deepest sympathy; she is presented to us as a beautiful, cultivated, and naïve damsel of seventeen, who fell an innocent prey to the machinations of a selfish, sensual pedant. If the affirmation made by M. de Waleffe is correct—and it is probably so, as it is based on the many documents of the time, such as, for example, some of Abélard's own letters—then Abélard's memory is in great danger of being regarded with something closely approaching to disgust! M. de Waleffe's book is written in the bright, clever style which characterises some of his earlier works, as "Les Paradis de l'Amérique Centrale"—which, by the way, is soon going to be published in an English translation. Though "Héloïse, Amante et Dupe d'Abélard" may not be precisely a book for young girls, it is almost certain that those who take an interest in medieval questions will read this captivating study with great pleasure, as it contains some exceedingly curious descriptions of the life, thought, morals, customs, and dress of the France of the *moyen-âge*.

MARC LOGÉ.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE was born in Paris in the year 1821. He has often been called the poet of decadence. If by this vague and much misused term we understand that instinct which leads men to wander into the realms of the artificial and the morbid, towards the antithesis of the simplicity and almost crude brutality of classical ideals, or to contemplate the beauties of a decaying civilisation for their inspiration, then Baudelaire has merited the title. For he took as his doctrine that the development of human intelligence and the constant wandering of man farther and farther from the primitive sources of nature, together with the complexity of

his insatiable desires, have rendered the naïve simplicity of classic art unsuitable to express his present sentiments and sense of beauty. Baudelaire has known how to penetrate ever deeper and deeper into the muddy, obscure haunts of modern life, and from the refuse-heap of humanity has picked a wonderful poetry of vice, crime, and decay. His style is complicated and ornamental, while his vocabulary is rich and varied. This is but a corollary of what we have already pointed out. For how could he paint, with the simple style and vocabulary of a classic poet, the mysterious complexity of the modern character, those poisoned cankers which eat into the virgin freshness of an over-civilised mind, or sound the multi-coloured chords of human fantasy raised by centuries of luxury and indulgence? It is this necessity which drove him to search among the unplucked blossoms of his language for fit words to express the paradoxical sentiments which he paints. He has himself declared that he preferred the florid Latin of the decaying Roman Empire and the wild adornments of the Byzantine Empire to the simplicity of the times of Greek and Roman greatness.

Now as to Baudelaire himself, this great landmark on the threshold of modern art. His outward appearance was almost English in its pleasing simplicity; his mind never lost its mathematical balance even in its wildest wanderings among the tortuous paths of perverted human sentiments, and his poems are perfect in their form. He was in a sense the disciple of Théophile Gautier, the great founder of the doctrine of "l'art pour l'art," or Art for art's sake. Gautier had started life as a painter and afterwards became a poet. But the painter's instinct never deserted him, and he strove to make of poetry a plastic art. For Gautier and his disciples a poem which was written with a moral or doctrinal end in view lost its position as a work of art, as the one object of the poet should be the almost plastic portrayal of pure beauty. Baudelaire was in fact a disciple of Gautier, but his poems have a depth of feeling and analysis which is altogether lacking in the essentially superficial beauties of Théophile Gautier's creations. The great service which this school rendered to French poetry was the perfection of its form, and this is particularly noticeable in the works of Baudelaire. Baudelaire's was a great mind, which scorned the petty commonplaces and platitudes of every-day life. In an age of action his restless, ever-penetrating genius would have driven him to conquer continents and rush him ultimately to Napoleonic ruin. Forced to inaction, his mind wandered away from the trivial and the apparent to explore the dangerous channels of perverted human passions. He penetrated beyond the veil of hypocrisy, and dissected the human mind before an astonished world, laying bare all the sores and cankers of corruption which eat in to the soul of over-civilised man. He scorned the smiling bourgeois landscapes of Parisian suburbs; the homely gardens filled with the simple violet and forget-me-nots and conventional rows of trees. His spirit longed for great tropical landscapes; for forests strewn with rich-scented orchids, and hung with crimson, juice-filled fruit; for suns which burnt in cloudless, amethyst skies; for the long, oily swell of equatorial oceans, where no breath of wind disturbed the virgin freshness of the deep blue waters; for stretches of sand where the humming of countless insects and the monotonous boom of the ever-breaking waves served to lull the languorous repose of this dreamer of wild dreams. He loved those dark beauties who scarcely veiled their athletic charms beneath the folds of some brilliant-coloured cashmere. He loved those richly-scented Southern landscapes where the sun sets in a glorious blaze of crimson, copper, and gold, and where its last rays draw a trail of blood across the ever-deepening blue of the ocean.

His wild fantasy, with its grim, despairing reactions, drove his great mind to seek for satisfaction in that "artificial Paradise" which the fumes of hashish call up in the imagination. His poems themselves are like some wild mysterious, and fever-haunted dream. Baudelaire's predominating sense was that of smell. He said of himself:—"Mon âme voltige sur les parfums comme l'âme des autres voltige sur la musique." But here again to the delicate scent of the violet and the rose he preferred dangerous, feverish perfumes such as oliban, myrrh, and even the sickly, voluptuous musk—the perfume of crime and prostitution. He also had a great affection for cats. Their gentle, quiet mystery charmed him. He wondered at the calm, intelligent scorn in their eyes, and at the mysteries of their nightly roamings among the dim and horrible shades which haunt the dark. Of the poet's love affairs we know little, for he seldom talked about his feelings, and never of his life. But from his poems and the nature of his mind we can infer that the woman he loved must always have been an ideal—a vague and beautiful figure which floated in the ever-changing mists of his fantasy. Personal and individual love was hardly possible for this great searcher towards the mysterious and the vague. It savours too much of brutal definition. The atmosphere of mystery which he loved would have vanished had he concentrated all the rays of his affection and analysis on one living object. Paul Verlaine has expressed this type of idealistic, never-satisfied love in his poem which begins:—

Je fais souvent ce rêve étrange et pénétrant
D'une femme inconnue, et que j'aime, et qui m'aime,
Et qui n'est, chaque fois, ni tout à fait la même
Ni tout à fait une autre, et m'aime et me comprend.

Baudelaire in his tropical voyages had loved some dark Beatrice of the forests, and in his poems he constantly refers to this dark vision of his dreams.

When Baudelaire published his collection of poems entitled "Les Fleurs du Mal," they created little short of a sensation in the Parisian literary world. The poet introduces his bouquet of wild poisonous blossoms with a poem to the reader in which he penetrates into his inmost soul, and lays bare the wild, insatiable desires and hectic dreams which lie hidden beneath a veneer of hypocrisy and dissimulation. And then we enter on this wonderful collection of poetic gems. At one moment Baudelaire leads us through the mud and prostitution of a great city, and the next soars with us far above the clouds towards the realms of joy and light. Now he paints some woman full of beauty and life, and the next some poor, lost soul lying dead among the tawdry ruins of her splendour. Now he sees some poor forsaken, ill-fed beggar-maid, wandering among the haunts of drunkenness and vice; then in his imagination he clothes her in the silk of prosperity, and covers her with the kisses of admiring Paris. He describes in "Les petites vieilles" how he used to follow poorly-clad and wasted old women through the dusk of the streets, and used to mark the soul which still lived within these dilapidated forms; and how as he watched them he would weave beautiful dreams of the splendours which had once been theirs. In his poem "Le Masque" he paints a lovely woman, before whose beauty all the world bows down; then snatches from her face the disguise of smiles, and finds a visage bathed in tears beneath. He ends with the beautiful lines:—

Mais pourquoi pleure-t-elle? Elle, beauté parfaite
Qui mettrait à ses pieds le genre humain vaincu,
Quel mal mystérieux ronge son flanc d'athlète?
Elle pleure, insensée, parce qu'elle a vécu!
Et parce qu'elle vit! Mais ce qu'elle déplore
Surtout, ce qui la fait frémir jusqu'aux genoux,
C'est que demain, hélas! il faudra vivre encore!
Demain, après-demain et toujours!—Comme nous!

No poet has ever known better than Baudelaire how to sum up a whole age, a whole life and world of feeling, in a few lines. In his poem "L'homme et la Mer" he epitomises the relations of man and the ocean in the lines:—

Et cependant voilà des siècles innombrables
Que vous vous combattez sans pitié ni remords,
Tellement vous aimez le carnage et la mort,
O lutteurs éternels, ô frères implacables.

His "Don Juan aux Enfers" is one of the finest poems of all times. In five short verses he sums up all the figures in that great tragedy of almost superhuman cynicism. The sombre and proud beggars grip with joy the oars to row Don Juan towards the shades. The unhappy victims of his promises raise a cry of despair as he passes, and bare their breasts as if to show the life-blood flowing from their pierced hearts. Then comes the verse:—

Sganarelle en riant lui réclamait ses gages,
Tandis que Don Luis avec un doigt tremblant
Montrait à tous les morts en haut sur les rivages
Le fils audacieux qui raille son front blanc.

Doña Elvira seems even in death to smile with hopeful love at her destroyer:—

Frisonnant sous son deuil, la chaste et maigre Elvire,
Près de l'époux perfide et qui fut son amant
Semblait lui réclamer un suprême sourire
Où brillât la douceur de son premier serment.

But Don Juan preserves his cynical indifference even on his journey across the Styx, and the poem ends with the two lines:

Mais le calme héros, courbé sur sa rapière,
Regardait le sillage et ne daignait rien voir.

And now the varied genius of the poet shows a scene of modern life and crime. In "Une Martyre" he leads us to a haunt of luxury, where a table is spread with flowers and rich wine, and the air is filled with dangerous heavy perfumes which oppress. We penetrate beyond the arras, and there, decked out in all her splendour, the mistress of the feast lies dead in careless pose—the murdered victim of unquenchable desire.

S. A.-B.

(To be continued.)

THE AUTHOR OF THE MOST FAMOUS ENGLISH JOKE

By FRANK HARRIS.

EVERY one admits that *Punch's* advice to those about to be married is probably the most famous joke in English, and certainly the best known. It is quoted almost every day as the best joke that has appeared in *Punch*, and in some degree has made that paper's reputation for humour.

Again and again when I have asked who was the author of the *mat*, I obtained no satisfactory answer. It is a tradition of the *Punch* office, it appears, that some one on the staff sent in the joke; it was not accepted for some time, and then was inserted long after every one had forgotten who coined it. This story seemed incredible. I have always held the belief that the great phrases all come from great men, that all the beautiful images of our language, all the beautiful words in it, were made at some time or other by men of genius. And the other day I discovered that the

author of this memorable joke was Charles Reade, the writer of "The Cloister and the Hearth."

I do not know when the word first appeared in *Punch*, but a comedy by Charles Reade in which the phrase occurs was published in Paris in 1859. I feel certain that *Punch* borrowed without acknowledgment from Charles Reade, not Charles Reade from *Punch*.

Of course, if the joke had appeared in an English book of Reade's, in any of his novels or plays, it would be certain that he was the author of it. But it has not adorned any of his English works; it is to be found in a comedy written in French entitled "Le Faubourg Saint-Germain," a little piece in two acts which I have only just seen, through the courtesy of Charles Reade's niece; she is now in possession of all his famous note-books, and is perhaps the only person living who knew him intimately.

Very few people know that Reade was a first-rate French scholar. His style in French resembles his style in English, is excellently lucid and idiomatic, pointed with wit and epigram. In his lifetime Charles Reade admired the French even more than Meredith did. In spite of the brilliant language in which it is written, this little comedy could never be a success on the stage. The action is worse than slight; it is far-fetched and improbable.

The time is in 1792; the persons of the piece are the Duke de Lanzac and the Duchess de Lanzac; they live their lives in different apartments in the same house. The Duke is bored with everything, and the Duchess is unhappy because she loves her lord and master, who seeks to relieve his *ennui* by running after other women. The action of the piece is concerned with a M. Poitevin, a lawyer of Tours, cousin to the Duchess, who seeks to effect a reconciliation between the pair with the aid of a clever valet. M. Poitevin, who is not known to the Duchess, wins her confidence by feigning interest in her flowers, and then kisses her. She tells the Duke and asks him to turn the insolent visitor out of the house; jealousy lights up the dormant passion of the Duke, and brings about a reconciliation.

The whole comedy leads up to, and is indeed written for, the famous joke at the end. M. Poitevin comes down to the footlights with an air of profound reflection and announces: "Advice to those who are going to be married: Don't!"

I give the exact French words:—

"Avis à ceux qui vont se marier." (Pause.) "Ne le faites pas." (Il se retourne et remonte la scène, la Duchesse le suit, le reprend et le fait redescendre.)

LA DUCHESSE—Ah! traître! (Au public). Ne l'écoutez pas, au moins!

POITEVIN (s'avancant encore)—Avis à ceux qui se sont mariés!

LA DUCHESSE—A la bonne heure!

POITEVIN—Ne soyez qu'un. (Il joint leurs mains derrière son dos, puis arance deux pas.) C'est ce qu'il vous reste de mieux à faire, je vous le jure! (Il se retire auprès de la Duchesse.)

It is evident from the way it is put that Reade appreciated the whole force of the joke. He either took it from *Punch* and wrote his comedy on purpose to set it forth in French, or else his comedy was read by some one who took his joke and put it in *Punch*. I believe that *Punch* is the plagiarist and not Charles Reade. A comparison of dates will settle the matter. Reade's comedy was published in 1859; when did the famous joke appear in *Punch*? Perhaps the editor will supply that piece of information.

The whole question is one of interest, for Reade, in my opinion, was the greatest of English novelists, and the joke in *Punch* is perhaps the most famous *jeux d'esprit* in the language.

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[Registered as a
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JANUARY 21, 1911

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INDEPENDENT TESTIMONY.

The following query was published in the "Autocar," December 17th, 1910:—

No. 1593.—45 H.P. "SHEFFIELD-SIMPLEX."

"Will any private reader kindly give their experiences with above cars as to reliability, upkeep, &c.?—J. C. S." And elicited the following replies:—

December 31st, 1910.

"I have had a 45 H.P. 'Sheffield-Simplex' of the **GEAR-BOX-LESS** type in my possession for two years, and, apart from one or two trifling mishaps to start with, I have always found the car most reliable. If 'J. C. S.' wants a six-cylinder car in which power is not sacrificed for quite unnecessary silence, he could not do better than get a 'Sheffield-Simplex.' The car is as silent as any reasonable man who is not suffering from 'Silent-Knightis' can want, the engine being scarcely audible when the car is in motion. The **GEAR-BOX-LESS** system works perfectly, the emergency gear never being required except for starting and hills of about 1 in 8 or steeper gradient. Hills like Reigate, which cannot be rushed, offer no obstacle with a car weighing 34 cwt. and four passengers. The upkeep for a car of its size is most reasonable. I have done 6,000 miles on one pair of tyres, and 7,000 miles on another. The petrol consumption works out at about 15 miles to the gallon on a journey of over 100 miles give-and-take roads in the summer. I have always found the Company most obliging in every way. In conclusion, I am certain that there is no car on the road at present of the same cylinder capacity that can better it over a give-and-take road."—R. H. T.

December 31st, 1910.

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Registered as a Newspaper in the United Kingdom, and at the New York Post Office as Second-class Mail Matter. Transmissible to Canada at the Canadian Magazine rate of Postage. Subscriptions: Inland 15s.; Foreign 17s. 6d. a year, post free.

All communications intended for the Editor should be sent to 63, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

THE ACADEMY is published by MESSRS. ODHAMS, LIMITED, 67, Long Acre, London, W.C., to whom all letters with reference to publication must be addressed.

Applications referring to Advertisements may be addressed to MESSRS. ODHAMS, as above.

The Editor cannot undertake to return unsolicited Manuscripts which are not accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The receipt of a proof does not imply the acceptance of an article.

THE ACADEMY is now obtainable at Messrs. W. H. Smith & Sons, Messrs. Wyman's, and Messrs. Willing's bookstalls and shops.

REVIEW OF THE WEEK

THE narrow escape of M. Briand, the French Premier, from the revolver of an assassin on Tuesday last reminds us that there are some dangers due to publicity which no care can possibly avert, unless, as a matter of precaution, all "persons of weak intellect" are permanently incarcerated. The plea of incomplete mental equipment has been used before, and seems hardly solid enough to bear the blame which must attach to such deliberate attempts at the taking of human life; the criminal was sufficiently sensible, at any rate, to obtain a good vantage-point for his operations, to bring his revolver, and to select his man. It seems that he had previously attacked a public functionary, yet was allowed to go free, and to obtain firearms. Here, however, we must not throw stones, since, in the light of recent events, our glass houses are none too safe on this side of the Channel. We may note, however, while congratulating M. Briand upon his fortunate escape, and expressing our pleasure that no serious injuries resulted to his confrères, that of late a much stronger tone has prevailed in French politics. Not so very long ago it was customary to quote France to all students of national and social affairs as a reprehensible "moral example," an object-lesson of retrogression; her influence was supposed to be nearing a stage when it would become practically negligible. Now all that talk is out of date. France, under the more vigorous tutelage of M. Briand and M. Pichon, can claim that the dangerous period of her decline—which undoubtedly existed—is arrested; she takes her place once again in spheres more robust than those of literature and art. The Chamber of Deputies may still on occasion be

lively with the light-heartedness which to our somewhat serious minds is hardly compatible with the gravity of large issues, but the work there accomplished is of a firmer and more lasting texture and of greater national value than has appeared for sometime. With a good Army and a smartly-organised Navy France has little to fear from the developments of European international politics which may occur during the next few years.

It is high time that a word of protest be entered against the impertinent details—devoid of any attribute except that of imagination—which are set forth, with a great show of authority, in the "Society" columns of various newspapers. The journalist—often lady-journalist—whose metier it is to supply "facts" relating to noble or prominent families is no doubt often hard pushed for material for copy. Peerages and various handbooks are the common property of the fraternity. Where then is new ground to be broken? Clearly the realm of imagination must be drawn upon. Various details as to pedigrees of the most inaccurate and impertinent character are dogmatically set out. Estimates of incomes or of acreage, the figures differing to a ludicrous extent according as the particular contributor is of a lavish or a parsimonious disposition, are laid down as if they were derived from a secret view of Income-tax returns, or confidences exchanged with the Yorkshire blacksmith on the returns made to him under Form 4, or a vision of what may some day be recorded in the New Domesday Book. The person whose family and private affairs are thus handled at so much a line is, in all probability, the only person who could furnish accurate information, and he is the person who is never, by any chance, consulted. A request for his permission to allow intrusion into his private relations is never made. Journalism of this description has nothing to recommend it. It is usually supplied by persons who pretend to inner knowledge of great houses, when their entrance has, no doubt, been barred on the front-door step, leaving no alternative but the area. Editors would, we think, render their productions far more popular if they would cease to be, by special appointment, purveyors to the Snobocracy.

We refer in another column to methods of excluding Anarchists from our shores. The power of expulsion is somewhat more in doubt, doubt which we hope will be dispelled, if necessary, by an amendment of the law. The interesting letter of a high authority on the possibility of using sulphurous fumes to dislodge desperadoes such as those of Sidney Street deserves careful attention. If some such method had been adopted most valuable documents might now be in the hands of the police, and the criminals on conviction would have graced the gallows. There is nothing ludicrous in the suggestion that sulphurous fumes might have been used in the recent siege. Naval officers who have served in the China Seas are well acquainted with the efficacy of the "stinkpot." The Chinese pirate, who is not usually an over-sensitive person, and who is not habitually accustomed to live in an atmosphere sweetened by all the perfumes of Arabia, metaphorically throws up the sponge, and actually flings himself into the sea as soon as the "stinkpot" arrives on board. This admirable engine for enforcing surrender might, it is contended, have been introduced into the Sidney Street room propelled from an air-gun, or in the shape of a grenade either through the window or through an aperture in the door. Its effect would have been instantaneous. If in any quarter such a suggestion is thought to be incongruous, it must be remembered that chemicals play a prominent part in modern warfare, and it is quite reasonable to meet picric with sulphur.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.—II.

It is impossible to consider the whole work of a poet of such original and diverse talent as Charles Baudelaire in the course of two short articles, and he stands too close for us to be able to adjust properly our mental perspective in a consideration of his genius. His influence is still a living factor in modern poetry and art, and has not as yet been worked out to its logical conclusion. He stands on the threshold of an age of art in which we live, and it must remain for future generations to analyse his works with the calm gaze of a disinterested age. And it is hard to classify Baudelaire's poetry, as he stands more or less alone. Some of his poems resemble beautiful, richly-coloured pictures. They rather evoke an image in our minds than play upon our emotions. Here, of course, we see the influence of the "l'Art pour l'Art" school, with its founder, the painter-poet, Théophile Gautier. Yet Baudelaire cannot definitely be classed as one of this master's disciples. For the dim haze of mysticism creeps into his work, and from time to time veils the architectural definition of his pictures: while the poems of Gautier are like fair landscapes and palaces of rose-coloured marble standing in the full rays of the sun. Baudelaire has sometimes been called a "Réaliste," one of the school of Auguste Comte, the philosopher, and Flaubert, the author of that grimly realistic novel, "Madame Flaubert." True, Baudelaire, by his unblushing precision in the description of the horrors and evils of modern life seems to belong to this school. But the richness of his phantasy to a great extent marks him as a figure apart. Baudelaire has had a considerable influence on modern English poetry; traces of this are to be seen in the works of Oscar Wilde, and to an even greater extent in those of Swinburne. One of Swinburne's choicest works, indeed, is his "Ave atque Vale," a poem which breathes genuine sympathy and devotion; a worthy memorial erected in memory of the dead French poet on the highway of English literature. This beautiful verse—

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us:
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other,
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
 The hidden harvests of luxurious time,
 Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
 Seeing as men sow men reap—

is an admirable epitome of Baudelaire's strange genius.

Baudelaire's philosophy consists in a sort of restless pessimism; a sense of the impotence of man's petty struggles to escape from the folds of the black shroud of "ennui." His beautiful poem entitled "Le Voyage," and itself included in a series called "La Mort," expresses the grim, despairing world-weariness and melancholy of his restless soul. In the first verse he grasps the vagaries of human phantasy, and the power of illusion in the two wonderful lines:—

Ah! que le monde est grand à la clarté des lampes!
 Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit!

He then proceeds to sketch, in the language of disillusioned melancholy, illumined by flashes of scenic beauty, the voyage through the world. Some to fly a country which disowns them; others a home which has become hateful; others, maddened by the scorn in a woman's eyes, to drown their sorrow with the intoxicating draught of light and space. Then come the two verses:—

Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent
 Pour partir; cœurs légers, semblables aux ballons,
 De leur fatalité jamais ils ne s'écarterent,
 Et sans savoir pourquoi, disent toujours; allons!

Ceux-là dont les désirs ont la forme des nues,
 Et qui rêvent, ainsi qu'un concertit le canon,
 Des vastes voluptés, changeantes, inconnues,
 Et dont l'esprit humain n'a jamais su le nom!

These verses show the poet's love of dreams, his realisation that only the realms of phantasy are beautiful. We may call it the philosophy of dreams. Then come the matchless verses in which the travellers through the world, the seekers of distraction in unknown lands, describe their voyages:—

. Nous avons vu des astres
 Et des flots: nous avons vu des sables aussi;
 Et malgré bien des chocs et d'impie ou désastres,
 Nous nous sommes souvent ennuyé, comme ici.
 La gloire du soleil sur la mer violette,
 La gloire des cités dans le soleil couchant,
 Allumaient dans nos cœurs une ardeur inquiète
 De plonger dans un ciel au reflet alléchant.
 Les plus riches cités, les plus grands paysages,
 Jamais ne contenaient l'attrait mystérieux
 De ceux que le hasard fait avec les nuages,
 Et toujours le désir nous rendait soucieux!

The centre verse is a perfect picture. The last two lines of the third verse describe in wonderful precision the illusionary nature of all hope. The poem ends with the two verses—

O mort vieux capitaine, il est temps! levons l'ancre!
 Ce pays nous ennuie, Ô Mort! Appareillons!
 Si le ciel et la mer sont noirs comme de l'encre
 Nos cœurs que tu connais sont remplis de rayons!
 Verse nous ton poison pour qu'il nous reconforte
 Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
 Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou ciel, qu'importe?
 Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!

Here again we see his restless burning passion for novelty and sensation, a longing to be rid of a life which held no further secrets or hopes for his penetrating mind. All through his works we find death considered as a longed-for consummation, as a great comforter. "La Mort des Pauvres" runs:—

C'est la mort qui console, hélas et qui fait vivre,
 C'est le but de la vie, et c'est le seul espoir.

In "La Mort des Amants" his lovers mingle in their phantasy the mystery of death with the perfumed luxury of their marriage couch, and dream of death as a sort of consummation of their insatiable love:—

Nous aurons des lits pleins d'odeurs légères,
 Des Divans profonds comme des tombeaux,
 Et d'étrange fleurs sur des étagères,
 Éclores pour nous sous des cieus plus beaux.

There is one poem of Baudelaire, "La Danse Maccabre" in which death masquerades at the ball, beautiful in the lean horror of its charm. It reminds us of an engraving by Felicien Rops, entitled "La Mort au Bal Masqué." Another where he describes all the terrible surroundings of a gambling-hell: the faded cushions; the brilliant glare of the lights falling on the haggard, careworn faces of the players; women who, on the verge of the grave, cannot tear themselves from the tables, and poets who dissipate the fruit of their labours in an hour. Space will not permit us to describe more of the genius of Baudelaire's poetry and his prose poems, and the greater portion of that bouquet of rich blossoms, "Les Fleurs du Mal," must remain for the present unmentioned. In conclusion, we may, perhaps, be permitted to apply a verse of his own poetry to a description of his talent and mission in life:—

. . . Il descend dans les villes,
 Il ennoblit le sort des choses les plus viles,
 Et s'introduit en roi, sans bruit et sans valets,
 Dans tous les hôpitaux et dans tous les palais.

S. A.-B.