

His real troubles however will begin when he attempts to justify the Parisian crowd he has pictured on the eve of the taking of the Bastille. Mr. Griffith's is hateful, cruel, bent on destruction. The historical one was cheerful, buoyant, hopeful, fraternal, and as Michelet once said, shot through with an *élan d'amour*. All honor to the moving picture, but oh for a rationally critical audience, such as it has in Toulouse, 443 miles south by west of Paris!

An even better essay than this one is found in "La Dépêche" of October 30, written apropos of the opening, on the part of M. Gemier, of the old official Odéon in Paris to Max Reinhardt, and his company. The writer has no objection to Reinhardt on the ground that he is a German. He merely raises the question: Does France need Reinhardt's dramaturgic ideas as expressed in his stage settings and scenery? Agree with "La Dépêche" or not, its article is a veritable history of the continental theatre, based on facts, replete with penetrating observations, worthy indeed of translation.

But the most that I can do with regard to "La Dépêche" is to state that it is one of the greatest newspapers published in France — and it was founded fifty-three years ago. I cannot comment on all of its admirable features. I have no time, for example, to analyze the article written exclusively for it a few weeks ago by Guglielmo Ferrero on "The Riches of the World and War", in which the point is made that the world has been impoverished by the war immeasurably more than we fancy, because of the fact that it redistributed the wealth of the world, leaving the laborer about where he was but the middle class quite without economic hope, and shifting the power and

responsibility — in Germany — from those who were abettors of the crime in 1914 to those who, eight years ago, were without power and consequently without responsibility. What the noted Italian historian means is that those who have the power in Germany at present have not the means to carry their power into effect that were placed at the disposal of their predecessors, and that they are consequently doomed to a slow death. It is a big issue and a black outlook.

There is just one trouble with "La Dépêche": it is sent to me once a week in bundles of seven, so poorly wrapped that some numbers get lost and others irritate our sweated postal clerks. I get the "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten" also in weekly bundles of seven, so well wrapped that they could be remailed over the rest of the world and still be intact, whole, perfect. If France were only careful in such small matters as the tying of a string! If she were only Germany's equal in this respect!

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD

The New Italian Renaissance

FOR those who are pleased to dismiss intellectualism as a taxable luxury apart from the needs of everyday life, Italy may offer an illuminating lesson. Whether or not a new intellectual renaissance has come again to Italy in the full meaning of the word, the direct connection between her "bloodless revolution" and the intellectual movement invites consideration.

If there are still those who regard Premier Benito Mussolini either as a postwar opportunist, exploiting the

refusal of youthful ex-soldiers to see the country for which they fought disintegrate, or as a rowdy reactionary adopting red-revolutionary tactics, they should know the truth. Mussolini is an intellectualist. He is the political materialization of that intellectual protest against the old order of things which was crystallized in the magazine "La Voce" in 1908. Earlier, in the review "Leonardo", Giovanni Papini had made his tormented and rebellious cry heard through Italy. Under the guiding genius of Giuseppe Prezzolini, Papini as well as Mussolini made "La Voce" a vibrant forerunner of the renaissance, which was silenced temporarily by the war.

Today three names stand out vividly in the roster of Italian accomplishment — Mussolini, Papini, Pirandello. While Luigi Pirandello, a man of fifty-five, cannot be classed with the group of young thinkers who inspired "Leonardo" and "La Voce" he is, paradoxically enough, the most youthful and modern spirit in the new Italian renaissance. Pirandello is a consistent part of this trinity of important names for several reasons. Most noticeable is the fact that he too is one of the chosen lights, cherished by the intellectual sponsor of Italy — Giuseppe Prezzolini. And most interesting is the fact that Pirandello, the university professor, who never wrote a play until he was fifty, sprang into dramatic being as a protest against the old D'Annunzio influence in literature and drama, and, more to the point, against the French influence in the Italian drama.

This revolt against the D'Annunzio influence was one of the dominant movements of the "Voce" group. They strove to tear themselves free from the wordy bondage of D'Annunzio. They wanted to give the truth in con-

trast to D'Annunzio's grand gestures which do not correspond with life. They sought to be concrete in politics and always they were stirred by the fervent desire to renew Italy.

While these younger spirits of the new renaissance were patriotically inspired, and while their literature and their philosophy breathed national betterment, Pirandello always remained within the purely philosophical boundaries. To arrive at one's self through autobiography was the aim of these young intellectualists. And just that is a dominant note in Pirandello. Ruthless analysis now as before the war is the keynote of modern Italian literature.

To be sure, the forerunners of the renaissance, breathing their hopes in "La Voce", have not found those hopes realized by war's great adventure. But just as with Papini — who began by writing against Christ and who has now become a pro-Christ writer — war has to some extent affected the flowering of the seeds sown in pre-war days. The analytical quality has become decidedly more constructive. Mussolini, the political expression of the new intellectual renaissance, analyzing relentlessly in order to upbuild an economic structure, is no more significant of the movement than Pirandello, with his unanswered analysis of reality and unreality or Papini with his literary vivisectionist methods.

Of the new writers, Papini has established the widest reputation outside of Italy, although Pirandello's vogue has commenced with a decided impetus. "The Pirandello conscience", the "cerebral drama", have become known through the stage production of "Six Characters in Search of an Author" and the publication by Dutton of a volume of plays including, besides "Six Characters", "Henry IV"

and "Right You Are!" (If You Think So). Pirandello's influence on modern Italian writers has been largely through his novel "The Late Matteo Pascal" which inspired the grotesque movement in Italian letters. Pirandello is a Sicilian, and his strongest influence on the younger writers of the hour is upon a fellow Sicilian.

Rosso di San Secondo, writer of books and plays, is one of the most modern of the moderns. With him human beings are but symbols of life forces, helpless manikins, caught in the grip of some controlling fate, doomed to live and love, smile and despair as mere expressions of unalterable forces. "La Bella Addormentata" (The Sleeping Beauty) is one of the most exquisite creations of the new school, just as "Marionette Che Passione!" is one of the most tragically hopeless.

Rosso di San Secondo is younger than the group fostered by Prezzolini, Italy's literary impresario, who is really responsible for the fact that Italy's rebirth has not perished in an embryonic state. It has been said that Benedetto Croce is the spiritual parent of the Italians. Prezzolini has performed a more comprehensive rôle. He has reared and nurtured and inspired with courage and belief the newborn sensitive literary souls.

Of course the greatest gift of this ever self-effacing intellectual was his early realization of the coming new order. For Prezzolini is still a young man. Just what he meant to a super-sensitive mind like Giovanni Papini may be imagined. For to the seeming chameleon-like philosophy of Papini, Prezzolini responded with deep understanding. His recognition of newborn genius was of the constructive sort that opened the gates of publication when the big publishers,

bound to the tradition of established names, shut their doors in the faces of the new arrivals. His sympathetic and analytical recognition of worth has encouraged not only Papini but many others figures in the new Italian literature — Panzini, Govons, Soffici, Renato — all of whom were given expression in "La Voce". (Of course we must not forget Mussolini.) A keen appraiser of values and a writer of clarity on all subjects, an intellectual patriot, Prezzolini, least known of the figures in the new renaissance, is almost the most important.

Knowing the mind behind the intellectual revolt in Italy, it is not difficult to regard the "bloodless revolution" of Mussolini against the old political régime and the literary rebellion against old forms merely as two expressions of the new Italian renaissance.

ALICE ROHE

Notes from France

THERE are two inexhaustible subjects for Parisian literary talk — one, the quarrels, the other, the prizes.

We are now supplied with a quarrel about Maurice Barrès and his last novel, "Le Jardin sur l'Oronte". The book was briefly commented upon in these notes. Curiously enough, the opposition came from what one should have expected to be the friendly side. Devout and sincere Catholics were shocked by the complacent, skilful, sometimes enchanting ways of Barrès in mixing the sacred and the profane. His heroine was both pagan and irresistible — and this provoked revolt. Whenever he portrays a hero that is both patriotic and faultless, the revolt bursts out on the other side of the political fence.