

is not a work of "fictive art." So far from agreeing, I am of opinion that infinitely more art went to the making of "Mr. Ingleside" than goes to the construction of a score of novels of the day.

That which is seemingly artless is often better art than that which is merely artificial. Your machine-made novels, with their "faked," forced, and artificial openings, crises, and climaxes, are, nine-tenths of them, infinitely inferior, either as art or as life, to such a work as "Mr. Ingleside." The characters of your conventional novelist often remind one of the mechanical toy figures we buy from the street hawker. The novelist takes his mechanical figure from the box where it is lying inert, winds it up and sets it going to walk, to caper, or to waltz, until such time as the machinery has run down, and it can be placed back in the box. Then he makes a bow of the kind which invites applause, and says: "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Art. Here you have the life-story of a human being, rounded and complete." Mr. Lucas makes no such pretence. He says in effect: "I am not an angel of Life and Death who proposes, while you wait, and in the time which it takes to re-sole a pair of boots, to show you the whole cycle of human existence, as astronomers show stars through a telescope. But if you are really interested in life as seen, not from a star, and in the company of an angel, but from its human and its humorous side, I will do my best to entertain you, and to introduce you to company which I hold to be pleasant."

If you take Mr. Lucas at his word, you will find that there is no better judge of good company than he, and when at last you reluctantly bid him good-bye, you will have seen more of life, seen it in truer perspective, and have made the acquaintance of more real women and men, than if you had read a score of novels patterned on the familiar lines. If, as Emerson says, a foolish consistency is the bugbear of little minds, an equally foolish conventionality appears to be the bugbear of little novelists. Why certain critics demand that the novels of any particular period should be constructed, like rifles, on one plan, I fail to see. On the contrary, the novelist who, like Mr. Lucas, has the courage and the originality to improve upon the old pattern, and to strike out a line of his own, is a benefactor to the reading public and to his art. All that we ask is that he have a story to tell, and that it be interesting. Mr. Lucas has a good story to tell, and a story which is not only interesting but fascinating. Were I writing as a cricketer, instead of as a critic, I should say that he has sent down a "maiden over," by which I mean that his book is as innocent of villainy, incident, murder, and intrigue as a "maiden" is innocent of runs. Yet just as by the excellence of his cricket, a bowler can send down an over which, if only for the reason that every ball is "dead on," is infinitely better worth watching than some fluke, flashy performance that may get an occasional wicket, but is more likely to prove a high factor in the piling up of runs, so Mr. Lucas by the sheer excellence of his cricket keeps every watchful sportsman tense and eager, and every skilled eye fixed upon the ball.

Deliberately to discard all adventitious aid in the shape of incident, sensation, and sentimentality; deliberately to elect to write of the everyday life of everyday people, depending for success entirely upon oneself, requires courage on the part of a craftsman. Yet that is what Mr. Lucas has attempted, and in his courageous and sportsmanlike attempt he has entirely succeeded.

To return to our cricket metaphor. "Every run is scored off Mr. Lucas's own bat." With the material at his disposal, not one novelist in fifty would have made anything but a dull tale. That there is not one dull page, not one dull line, in the whole of "Mr. Ingleside," is sufficient witness to the author's wit, humour, humanity, observation, and art.

I have compared Mr. Lucas to a bowler sending down a "maiden over." As a batsman he is hitting, and hitting

brilliantly all the time. It was my intention when I began this review to keep, for the purpose of quotation, a "score-sheet" in which to set down a record of these "hits," but, before I was half through, I was well on the way to compile another "Wisdom While you Wait" and so gave up the task in despair. It is a wonderful innings, this of Mr. Lucas. He has carried out his bat for another century, and never given so much as one chance to the men in the field—his critics—all the time.

COULSON KERNAHAN.

CAGLIOSTRO.*

The charlatan, though his fashion may vary from age to age, will reappear until the extinction of human credulity. Cagliostro did not greatly differ from other adventurers who have claimed the power of healing the sick or of transmuting lead into gold or of making diamonds. But he had the ill-luck to be involved in the portentous scandal of the "Queen's necklace"—the necklace the Queen never had and which she refused to have. This brought to Cagliostro an attention which would not otherwise have been bestowed upon him and made him the hero of Goethe's drama and Dumas's romance. For whilst he was basking in the patronage of the Cardinal de Rohan that marvellous prelate was being fooled to the top of his bent by pretended messages, letters, and even a pretended interview with the Queen of France, all manufactured by Madame Lamotte. That de Rohan, a member of the proudest family of France and a Prince of the Church—though an unworthy one—should have been deceived by such clumsy forgeries and devices is wonderful, and when the sordid swindle came to light the scandal was so exploited by the enemies of the monarchy that the trial of the Cardinal, of the Comtesse de Lamotte, and of Cagliostro became, as has been said, the Prologue of the Revolution.

Mr. Trowbridge claims, but surely without any just reason, to be the first who has treated the subject "honestly." Yet few who have waded through the welter of books and pamphlets about Cagliostro in English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Latin will think Carlyle's estimate dishonest or differ greatly from the judgment there

recorded. The new contention which Mr. Trowbridge brings into the discussion is a strong doubt as to the identity of Giuseppe Balsamo and Alexandre, Comte de Cagliostro. Although he does not absolutely assert their separate identities, the idea that they were not one and the same person runs through and colours the whole work. He has



Count Cagliostro.

From "Cagliostro," by W. R. H. Trowbridge.
(Chapman & Hall.)

* "Cagliostro: The Splendour and Misery of a Master of Magic." By W. R. H. Trowbridge. With numerous illustrations. 16s. net. (Chapman & Hall.)

against him the consensus of all the authorities. Giuseppe Balsamo's relatives at Palermo, the French police, an English law-court, the Italian biographer who is supposed to have written under the inspiration of the Roman Inquisition, all believed in his identity with Cagliostro. No doubt Theveneau de Morande, who in his newspaper mercilessly pursued Cagliostro, was a blackguard, but in the drama of the Queen's necklace the actors seem all to have been either knavish or foolish. Even Marie Antoinette's righteous indignation was so unwisely directed as to increase her own unpopularity and to shake the very throne.

There are some misprints, of which one may be named. Mr. Trowbridge rightly says, "dates are important factors in the evidence," and in the same sentence there is a date into which the printer's devil has inserted an error of nearly a century (p. 11). The bibliography is incomplete, and does not comply with the best rules of art.

Mr. Trowbridge has bestowed industry upon his task, and the illustrations he has selected are excellent. But he has not succeeded in modifying the unfavourable portrait of Cagliostro drawn by Carlyle and other historical artists.

WILLIAM E. A. AXON.

RECENT POETRY.*

Think clearly, express clearly, arrange well; these were Walter Headlam's golden rules for writing. Golden rules are usually a saddening deposit found shining in the refuse of experience; and every man must look for his own. Even the Ten Commandments are a warning rather than an aid. None the less, this life of a very rare scholar, and of a true, if somewhat restricted poet, besides giving the reader a very clear and delightful realisation of its subject, is full of really serviceable counsel and criticism. "Headlam's idea was to invade every province of knowledge." It was Napoleonic: but only by so doing did it seem possible to him to become master of any particular one. He had the scholar's piercing diligence and unshrinking patience. He could wait long for truth, and when at length truth came she was sure of an unwearied and vivid welcome. An ineradicable tendency to become separated from one's luggage, a theory of domestic coloration, a self-appalling intimacy with the gropings of obscure diseases, a horror of humbug, and a zest for riding, running water, and the Pianola, need none of them be actual hindrances to becoming a Bentley or a Porson. But great learning is not always endeared to the multitude by such humanity. All these things, besides Greek, were Headlam's holds on youthful life, and he died still young, still ardent, at forty-two.

An opinion is expressed in this book that had Headlam devoted more of his life to poetry and less to Greek scholarship, he would have written better even than he did. It is a debatable question. His was a natural as well as a practised love for reticence and restraint. Every line of his poems has been under the file of mind and eye and ear. They have many a rare turn of phrase, a quiet beauty, a quiet intensity of feeling, and occasionally a cadence that is the more charming for being rather seldom present in English verse. But rarer yet is that last fine fragrance, touch, music, passion, whose presence alone can lift the most exquisite verse into poetry. Shelley and Campion echo in Headlam's poems. And now and then, simply because both Headlam and she arrived at a

finished art, though by different paths, we recall in reading them Christina Rossetti. But these are never more than echoes. It is their lucidity, their "brain-work," and their restraint that are the chief delight of his poems. And to turn from reading them to Oscar Wilde's early poem, "The Sphinx," is obviously to turn from art to artifice.

Wilde's poem tells of an erotic series of might-have-beens in the history of the Sphinx. And one needs to be adolescent really to enjoy such things. Her amours will move the middle-aged little more than the loves of the triangles.

"Lift up your large black satin eyes which are like cushions where one sinks!

Fawn at my feet, fantastic Sphinx! and sing me all your memories! . . .

"Who were your lovers? who were they who wrestled for you, in the dust?

Which was the vessel of your Lust? What Leman had you every day? . . ."

Sphinx and monsters alike were once the offspring of man's wonder and imagination. Here they are the rather languid sport of an ingenious, skilful, and conscious fancy. Wilde's heart, his whole mind, could not possibly have been in such verses. The marvel is that he could have had the patience and have spared the pains to "polish and improve" the poem, as Mr. Ross tells us he had, when he was of the comparatively mature age of thirty-four. The imaginary bear under the little boy's bed is a monster that could devour this adult menagerie of horrors at one mouthful!

Mr. Aleister Crowley's "Ambergris" and Matthew Johnson's poems have little of Headlam's punctilious restraint and nothing like Wilde's craft and dexterity. Mr. Crowley is in a sense *hors concours*. This is his twentieth published volume; none the less it is only, as he describes it in his ultra-modern preface, "an unrepresentative selection"—a remark that cannot be else than intended to silence his critics. Matthew Johnson, says Mr. Robert Elliot in an interesting Introductory Note, "was quite prepared to admit his sentimentalism." Sentimentalism, however, is the last charge one would think of bringing against the author of "A Poet of Words." His work can be extravagant, inarticulate, and careless, but there is life and vigour and reality in it, and a personality sincerely expressed in spite of what appear to be wilful eccentricities.

Mr. W. W. Gibson's little volumes, entitled "Daily Bread," contain a series of "dramatic poems," most of which present a tragic crisis, rather than a dramatic climax, in the lives of men and women whose existence at first sight seems to be little else than an enslaved struggle to live. But in the eyes of the imagination as well as in the eyes of charity all men alike are the sport and adversaries of fate. Pierce deep enough into any life, and beneath the ceremonies of circumstance lies concealed a humanity old as Nineveh, new as daybreak, which only sympathy, true humour, and insight can understand and portray. In this sense we are all poor sailors in an old ship tossed on an unknown sea, and whether turtle or weevils be our lot, the mystery of the deep, the fear of shipwreck, the reiterated irony of "Land ho!" haunt every heart. The poet must indifferently search out the whole truth if poetry is his aim. Mr. Gibson, feeling deeply, has allowed feeling to load the dice. His portrayal of the poor is, we think, heroic, a little too much in the literary sense. In very few of these poems is the calamity or tragedy other than what may happen to all mortals alike—sickness and death, slander, brooding care and failure, loss of lover, child and husband, hated toil. But ennui, sourness and blindness, too, are evils. Stone-breaker, fisherman, pitman, slum-dweller—all those with whom Mr. Gibson sympathises so deeply and keenly are not so reiteratedly the rather monotonously long-suffering, too-patient, overwhelmed, tragic figures these poems have

* "Walter Headlam, Life and Poems." By Cecil Headlam. 7s. 6d. net. (Duckworth.)—"The Sphinx." By Oscar Wilde. 2s. 6d. net. (Lane.)—"Ambergris." By Aleister Crowley. 3s. 6d. net. (Elkin Mathews.)—"Matthew Johnson, Poet, 1888-1898." With Introduction and Notes by Robert Elliot. 2s. 6d. net. (Maunsell.)—"Daily Bread," Books I., II. and III.; "Akra, the Slave." By Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. 1s. net each. (Elkin Mathews.)