

drawing queer, the topography of Whitehall imaginary, the figures "wooden." For a long time, having a sneaking preference for this little engraving, I felt extremely guilty. The fineness of the others was so palpable, the delicacy, the detail, the slickness, the "finish"; the one I liked was not a bit realistic, or skilful, or engaging. At last I arrived at the solution of this mystery. Without any art-jargon to help or hinder me, I realised it was the *shape* of the little engraving which gave me pleasure, the arrangement of the figures in relation to each other, of light and shade; that the likeness or otherwise to authentic portraits of the martyr king mattered not at all; that the architectural absurdities were irrelevant. The print was more interesting for its own sake than were the others, which depended for their appeal more considerably upon the subject.

Having grasped this point—that certain patterns upon paper or canvas have an intrinsic value, which has nothing at all to do with their value as representations of or comments upon facts, the reader turns to Mr. Fry, not necessarily secure from violent disagreement, but with the certainty of rich enjoyment. Indeed in the face of so strongly individual a point of view, disagreement is almost inevitable. Not without reason, many years ago, did Mr. Max Beerbohm make a caricature of this author gazing with rapture upon a traditional wooden soldier, whilst beneath was written: "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

Among the contents the most important is a long essay entitled "Some Questions in Æsthetics," which is complementary to the opening chapter in Mr. Fry's earlier work, "Vision and Design." This requires, but equally repays, a second reading. Other chapters are devoted to Chinese Art, Van Gogh, Seurat, the Seicento, Fra Bartolomeo, modern drawings and so forth. That on the subject of the Sargent Memorial Exhibition would be expected, one might even say that it is calculated, to arouse furious criticism. "Sargent has no psychological imagination," the author tells us, and goes on to say that he gave nothing of what lies behind the precise social aspect of his subjects. Sargent's art was "art applied to social requirements and social ambitions," and Mr. Fry denies the name of artist to the man he calls "our greatest practitioner in paint."

It does not need however a very "modern" or rebellious spirit to accept this critic's opinion of the Cavell monument, or of Luke Fildes's "The Doctor." On the other hand, the work of M. Rouault, of which an example is illustrated, does seem a little difficult to swallow. It would be easy to describe this picture of St. John the Baptist in flippancy terms, but that would not help anyone to form an estimate. The thing has to be seen to be believed. In a provocative discussion of London sculptors and sculptures Mr. Fry shows his disapprobation of Mr. Epstein's more recent work, but where that discussion narrows to a close view of the Rima in Hyde Park, as would be expected it is the Philistines of whom he principally disapproves.

Two other brief quotations will, by their implications, help the reader to understand something of the ground-work of Mr. Fry's artistic creed. "There is," he says, "almost inevitably a conflict between the decorative and plastic uses of colour. It is yet another aspect of the incessant tension between the organisation of a picture upon the surface and its organisation in space." Whilst complementing this remark and regarding art from another angle, he declares that the "co-operation . . . between the two experiences derived from the psychological and plastic aspects of a picture does not appear to be inevitable," which is almost as much as to say that while, for example, a certain amount of representation in a portrait is necessary on psychological grounds (as in the admirable caricatures by M. André Rouveyre reproduced in this book), it does not follow that this artistic psychology has any significance in the building up of a work to be judged on its own and unrelated merits.

"The Human Form in Art" sets out to be of practical use to the student. There are eighteen very short chapters discussing various aspects of figure drawing and painting,

and nearly two hundred illustrations from photographs, sculptures, drawings, etc. There are too a few anatomical diagrams exhibiting the muscles, which should be of considerable interest. Mr. Braun's advice is not always of the most original or stimulating kind. "One should draw intelligently," he says, "by concentrating one's mind on the subject to be drawn." In another place, "nothing in nature is ugly or inartistic," he tells us. Leaving ugliness out of the question, and remembering that Nature and Art are purely antithetical, we observe that Mr. Braun is using the word "inartistic" in a vaguely popular but wholly inaccurate sense. Apart from the illustrations there is little to recommend the book.

BOHUN LYNCH.

MR. ALDOUS HUXLEY AS ESSAYIST.*

Here is a book of much luxury, made out of Mr. Aldous Huxley, the essayist. Only 650 copies have been printed, and a note on the fly-leaf gives us to understand that the type has been cast to the winds. Collectors take notice. Each copy bears the signature of the author himself, done in a bold, legible hand.

But will Mr. Huxley, a man of vast common sense, be able to contemplate this elaborate and handsome book with a balanced mind? May it not fill him with emotions rather like those which afflicted Mrs. Kenwigs when she looked upon her heavenly children (all gathered together, sitting in a row)? May not Mr. Huxley, like Mrs. Kenwigs cry out (deep in his heart), "Too beautiful, much too beautiful"? For, to say the truth, some of the essays are scarcely nurslings of immortality; they were obviously born into the transitory world of journalism. "Where are the Movies Moving" gives us a delicious impression of Felix the Cat; a note on some book about Tibet is mildly interesting. But is the edition de luxe nowadays grown humble enough to accommodate the likes of the next fashionable periodical? ("Accommodated;" as Bardolph observes, "That is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is, being, whereby a' may be thought to be accommodated"). One or two of Mr. Huxley's essays are no better and no worse than average contributions provided every day for the newspaper on whose staff I happen to be engaged—contributions by young men who do not aspire to fastidious format and type, but who, on the contrary, are well content with "lead minion" and one cross-head.

At his best of course Mr. Huxley is amongst our most distinguished essayists. This collection is made rich by the paper on Breughel, that on Chaucer, that on Rimini and Alberti, that called "Views of Holland." Yet even at his best, Mr. Huxley does not suggest "precious" binding and printing. For he is far from being an aesthete—though one of his best critics has named him as such. Mr. Huxley's mind is too restless, too curious, ever to give itself over to æsthetic contemplation; he is interested not so much in his own delighted sense of life and fact as in life and fact themselves. The artist, the poet, the æsthete, loves to linger on a single aspect of the passing show, to hail the flying moment, like Faust, and say, "Stay yet awhile, thou art so fair," to suffuse that isolated aspect with his own personal emotion. Mr. Huxley has no time for all this; his mind flits here and there, eager not to miss a sight of any object as in itself it really is. If he is a poet, he also is a biologist; his genius must always be sighing, "How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away." He is himself the best critic of the artist in Mr. Huxley. He confesses to an "excessive curiosity." He longs to hear what everybody is saying in any assembly in which he happens to find himself:

"Scandal, motors, quanta, Irish bulls, love and politics seem to me incomparably more interesting than Henry James; and each of these is at the same time more interesting than all the others. Inquisitiveness flutters hopelessly this way and that, like a bird in a glass house. And the net result is that, not

* "Essays New and Old." By Aldous Huxley. 42s. (Chatto & Windus.)

hearing what he says and being too much distracted to answer coherently, I make myself appear an idiot to my interlocutor, while the very number of my illicit curiosities renders it impossible for me to satisfy any single one of them."

Mr. Huxley then goes on to say that this "excessive and promiscuous inquisitiveness, so fatal to a man who desires to mix in society, is a valuable asset to the one who merely looks on, without participating in the actions of his fellows." Perhaps so; but the living spirit of places and peoples makes itself known quickest to the good-mixers of the world. Mr. Huxley is a marvel of common sense. Wherever he goes, whatever he sees, he remains aloof; he is not to be "taken in." And here I am reminded of a passage in Mr. Chesterton: "To be taken in everywhere is to see the inside of everything." To be a poet is to be a sort of trusting greenhorn; Mr. Huxley occasionally gives us cause to think it is only his incessant curiosity that saves him from the boredom of immense sophistication. "Alas," he writes, "the objects of one's curiosity prove, once one has made their acquaintance, to be, almost invariably, quite unworthy of any further interest"—a sentence, by the way, which does not represent Mr. Huxley's prose style at its finest. It is one of the best prose styles extant at the present time; astringent, precise, and in this loose adjectival age, economical.

NEVILLE CARDUS.

Novel Notes.

A SERVANT OF THE MIGHTIEST. By Mrs. Alfred Wingate. 7s. 6d. (Crosby Lockwood.)

There are few flights of fancy in this absorbing book, and these are clearly defined in the Preface. By piecing together an enormous chronicle of facts, and interspersing them with brilliant touches of the atmosphere and life of those far-off days, Mrs. Wingate has recreated the adventurous life of Chingiz Khan, known in his struggling days as Temudjin, the political founder of the Mongul dynasty in China and that of the Mo(n)gols in India. To those in particular who are watching with keenness the great struggle now going on, in that vast area which was the Chinese Empire, this book should be of great interest. To get any fair estimate of a man or a people, one must study the conditions and traditions under which he or they lived, and this book, by sticking as closely to the truth as it can be proved, opens up the way to a better understanding of the seeds sown in the past which have their bearing on the conditions of to-day. It carries us right through Temudjin's amazing career, and gives a vivid picture of that bloodthirsty, ambitious man, who was yet capable of inspiring such loyalty and undying friendship, and such generous treatment of his foes.

MIDSUMMER MUSIC. By Stephen Graham. 7s. 6d. (Hurst & Blackett.)

Plot, characters and scene of this latest novel of Stephen Graham are romantic and picturesque enough to have wandered straight out of a beautiful and wonderful musical comedy, full of song and dancing and lovely midnights, of picnics by summer seas, with charming Adams and Eves. But the author writes of real places and people, and most wittily does he contrast Bohemia true and false. It is an unusual story with the scene set in a little village in Dalmatia. Professor Spandin, a cosmopolitan and exceedingly clever Slav, was so enthusiastic in praise of the natural and unspoiled beauty of his beloved Dalmatia that he persuaded a party of English artists to come (babies and all) and spend a summer there. Spandin would arrange everything in the way of transit and accommodation. Being a Slav he did neither, and disillusion began *en route*. Then Katelli was primitive as regards sanitation, water, food and cleanliness, and the natives were definitely hostile. Felix Morrison, an unsociable bachelor, expert on things

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