

but to strive and struggle to do what we cannot for an instant avoid doing."

Is it not so? Where do all those important words, motives, and the rest, come in if we are a mechanism and can only do what we must? The mechanistic explanation of life has fallen before the fire of new facts and the mechanist explanation of mind is going with it. It was the same Professor McDougall who delivered in his *Body and Mind* (a very remarkable work) the first great attack in recent years on the mechanist explanation. He jocularly alluded to the

fact that it was odd to find the doctrine of the soul defended as he was defending it, "outside the walls of a Roman Catholic seminary." It is not the only truth which has been habitually taught within such walls and to which science is now returning, with some reluctance no doubt, but none the less surely. It is well for us to recognize our place in this retreat, for science after all is coming back to us as Scholastics—a fact very little realized even by the multitudes of well-read men who are in lamentable ignorance of the teachings of that school of philosophy.

MEMOIRS OF A NOBODY

By HELEN WALKER

IT IS very pleasant to be a nobody. To begin with, there is the obvious advantage that nothing is expected of one. The world will not be disappointed if one remains commonplace and unsensational.

Then there is the realization that, as a nobody, one is filling a real need in the motion of the world. For the progress of civilization, the great must be encouraged to thrive and flourish, and if it weren't for the obscure, they would have a sorry time of it. For whence the spell-bound audiences, the acclaiming crowd, the huzzahing populace—but for the nobodies? They are the givers of banquets, the tenderers of floral tributes, the subscribers to memorials. They are the constituents, and the acceptors of theories. They really read *Who's Who* and the *Social Register*.

They leaven society, and form a sort of perpetual fire extinguisher to the incipient volcanic eruptions which threaten, where a fraction too many of the great are gathered together. For centuries the nobodies have struggled manfully to keep the lighted cigarette away from the open gasoline tank—to temper, by their presence, meetings between the Bernard Shaws and the Emersons, the Cooks and the Perrys, the Fiona Macleods and the Theodore Dreisers. Due to them, mammoth intellectual casualties have been averted. The great take comfort in them—soft, silent buffers against which their theories may bounce with abandon, unchallenged, uninjured.

On the other hand, the nobodies, secure in their obscurity, draw satisfaction from observing that they, the unfamed, share certain human qualities in common with the mighty ones of earth. Both react in a measure similarly to the gentle influences of affection, humor, and food—a pleasant observation that I have delighted in.

The great have always fascinated me, alive or dead. When they have been in the latter state, I have revelled in their personal memoirs, finding more of absorbing interest, I blush to state, in the discovery of their human qualities, than in their flashes of genius.

Napoleon poring over his *Dream Book* is far more thrilling to me than Napoleon directing the Italian campaign. (I have a *Dream Book*, but have never been to Italy.) I glow over the accounts of George Washington's butchers' and grocers' bills, while the winter at Valley Forge leaves me cold.

As for the living great, whenever chance has thrown me in their presence, I have reconciled the incongruity of the situation by remembering the maxim about the cat and the king, and have forthwith fallen to observing the very thrilling demonstration of their humanness.

Edward Penfield, the eminent illustrator, from whom colors have actually taken their names (you may either be an artist or a daughter of a President to have a color named for you—no one else is eligible) once observed of the shade of my new fall costume: "That will be the doggy color for autumn."

More than ever was I convinced of his eminence.

Sir Harry Johnston, author of delightful novels and serious scientific books on the fauna and flora of Africa, was host one sunny day at a small luncheon at his thirteenth century Priory home at Arundel in England. Someone asked him whether it was true that a certain variety of oysters "grew on trees." Sir Harry explained that there are oysters, which when the tide is high, fasten to the lower branches of trees—submerged for the time in water. When the tide recedes, it leaves them clinging to the branches.

"There they hang," he said, sympathetically, "having a nice, dry time."

Afterwards, on the seat under the long, low leaded window of his study, I gazed out into the most enchanting of rose gardens, intoxicating with its color and fragrance—a garden such as one sees only in England. Behind me, imbedded in the wall, stretched the long grave-stone of a crusader, with its simple cross hewn down its length. It had been dug up in the Priory grounds. Sir Harry took me over the lovely, winding passages of the house, showed me the exquisite ceiling of what had been the old chapel, and the little stone

holy water fount that the workmen had uncovered under layers and layers of walls.

"I don't like old houses," said his charming, quaint little Victorian sister, Miss Johnston, who also lives in the Priory, and who read our palms in the afternoon. She seemed to be looking past us at things unseen by us. We had heard before our visit, rumors of a "haunt" at the Priory—but Sir Harry only laughed when an ancient tapestry, stirred by we knew not what, fluttered on the wall.

It was during the same summer that P. D. Ouspensky, the Russian psychologist and mystic, author of *Tertium Organum*, was lecturing twice a week in London to a limited group. Of the literary great, it included Katherine Mansfield, A. R. Orage, Algernon Blackwood, and other well known writers. There was, in the group, a suitable leavening of nobodies. The lectures were preparatory to more advanced study at the Institute Gurdjieff at Fontainebleau, and thither, as everyone knows, Katherine Mansfield followed the teaching, only to meet her death there a few months later—the result of a prolonged illness. In the course of the work in London arose the need of an English-speaking person to help Mr. Ouspensky in his translations of certain things from the Russian. What an opportunity for a nobody! Thereafter I had the privilege on certain days of working alone with him. The first time, I was somewhat awed at his intellectual grandeur. Then suddenly into his library where we were working, walked a great gray cat.

"Vaska!" cried Mr. Ouspensky (or something that sounded exactly like that—he told me it was Russian for Pussy), and papers and pencils and books fluttered and fell, regardless, from his lap, as he delightedly stroked the soft, gray back rubbing against him. Immediately I was happy, for even as I have a *Dream Book* like Napoleon, so have I a pet cat like Ouspensky. Frequently when we were struggling for the proper English equivalent to some Russian term of mysticism or psychology, Ouspensky, glancing out of the window into the Kensington street, would jump up, papers flying like snow flakes, to dash for his camera. From the window, I would see Vaska poised gracefully on a fence, holding converse with another of his kind. If they scampered off before the camera was adjusted we would stand eagerly, patiently, waiting Vaska's return—psychology neglected and forgotten.

One of England's distinguished writers, John Ayscough, who, away from the backs of his books, is Monsignor Bickerstaffe-Drew, a venerable retired chaplain of the British army, has white hair that falls over a face illumined by the spiritual and the intellectual. Meeting him for the first time after he had delivered a lecture on English literature, I sought in my mind a proper way in which to express my appreciation of it. But before I had found it, I heard him exclaim, seriously:

"I say—What a smart hat you've got on!"

It dangled a long silver tassel, and while I was proud of it, I had never dared hope that it would excite the admiration of such an eminent ecclesiastic. However, the sympathy of the great for a pretty hat, immediately made the nobody beam, and we became friends.

This friendship was later irrevocably cemented. Travelers of that year remember that in England the children (and more grown-ups than will admit) played Beaver. For the uninitiated, the technique of the game consists in being the first one to shout irreverently "Beaver!" on the appearance of whiskers. Red whiskers are the mark of a Royal Beaver. Monsignor Bickerstaffe-Drew undertook to show me Salisbury Cathedral, near which his charming Queen Ann residence lies. Into its dim, glorious vastness we entered one summer day, and proceeded up the nave, examining the carved tombs of crusaders and nobility that stretch on either side—under some of which lie ancestors of the Monsignor.

"This," said the venerable author-ecclesiastic, pausing before one of the tombs, "is perhaps the most perfect piece of carving in the Cathedral. The delicate—Beaver!"

And my startled gaze rose to see a whiskered sight-seer peering at something opposite us. It was then I discovered, that alike to the great and the obscure, whiskers are humorous.

One evening I went to a dinner party at The Hill, the estate of Viscount Leverhulme, who began his brilliant career as untitled William Lever. When I was placed next to our delightful septuagenarian host—England's lord of commerce—at the table, I frankly told him I was perturbed.

"Why?" he asked.

"I come from America—a land shorn of titles—and though I've been told a letter addressed to you should read 'The Right Honorable the Viscount Leverhulme' [how do the English ever find envelopes wide enough?] frankly, I really don't know what to call you."

"Call me Will," promptly said the Right Honorable, the Viscount Leverhulme.

Not long afterwards, a very great, very famous literary giant was invited to dinner in the house where I was visiting. I was suffering from a heavy cold, and when whiskey was brought after dinner, my hostess insisted that I partake, to cure my cold. The literary giant, though austere, had a smile in his eye. Therefore I said, eyeing the full bottle:

"Do you think there is enough here for both of us?"

"Not if you take the first drink," quoth he.

Yes, it is pleasant to be a nobody. There is the mind of genius and the commonplace mind; but pussy cats, and hats with silver tassels, and whiskers, and whiskey—recognize no distinction. They kindle the same spark in each.

SIX POEMS

Fuchsia Hedges in Connacht

I think some saint of Eirinn, wandering far,
Found you, and drew you here,
Damosels!
(For so I'll greet you in this alien air.)

And like those maidens who were only known
In their own land as Children of the King,
Daughters of Charlemagne,
You have, by following that pilgrim-saint
Become high votresses!
You've made your palace-beauty dedicate,
And your pomp serviceable!
You stand before our folds.

I think you came from some old Roman land:
Most alien, but most Catholic are you:
Your purple is the purple that enfolds
In Passion Week, the Shrine;
Your scarlet is the scarlet of the Wounds!

You stand beside the furzes in our fields,
You bring before our walls, before our doors,
Lamps of the Sanctuary!
And, in this stony place,
The time the robin sings,
Through your bells rings the Angelus!

PADRAIC COLUM.

The Oregon Trail

The grizzled trapper of the log stockade,
Gaudy in buckskin sewn with beads and bells,
Hawk-eyed, his ears still echoing the yells
Of fierce Dakotas riding on their raid;
The coulee's murmur in the willows' shade;
The glaring prairie; Indian village smells;
Dust of the bison herd; the miracles
Of hardihood whereby the West was made;

Half fabulous from page on page they rise,
Traced by an ailing hand, with failing eyes,
Till, dark upon a clear and golden sky,
The heroic Ogallallah lifts his lance
And hurls, where war plumes in the distance dance,
His doomed and unintelligible cry.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

The Turquoise Bowl

A bowl in the hand is the earth
A carved fragile thing that you hold—
Lacquer, turquoise and gold.
Oh, lift it and turn it and see
The winged sun sting its side like a bee.

KATHRYN WHITE RYAN.

To Alice Meynell, In Pace

There long shall stand adown the cypress paths
A vase of alabaster faintly scrolled
With Phidian dancers, wreathing in their hold
Thy name amid the sunset aftermaths.

Here snowy birds of love shall build their raths
By dawns and twilights, where thine eyes unfold
In calm on him whose beauty's rime is told
As lilies lift above their marshy baths.

Out on the blustery moors the merchant train
Shall breast the winters; soft behind the pane
New lamps shall start and warmer hearth fires glow;
Life's lodestone pluck fresh stars reflecting thine;
With years convening solemnly and slow
To nurse the flame upon thy deathless shrine.

THOMAS WALSH.

The Old Woman

She keeps her nook, sitting with folded hands
And looking abroad with dim unquestioning gaze,
Her heart grown strangely quiet and tolerant.
She has learned patience: those she loved are gone,
And youth is gone, and all the dreams of youth,
And grief itself hath found its natural ending,
And now she feels there is no more to learn.

Placid she sits in gnarled simplicity,
Not hills nor rocks more tranquil, and even as they
She bears Time's marks upon her patiently.
Hers is the sober wisdom of the years,
And now she waits for what she knows will come,
Breathing the calmness of all quiet things,
Twilight and silence and a heart at peace.

JOHN BUNKER.

Moon Cup

She holds a curvèd cup of dreams
Within her ash-white hands,
As midst her singing stars she moves
Above the darkling lands.

And thence with fingers fairy-light
She lifts them one by one,
Earth's parchéd minds besprinkling
Till all her dreams are gone.

Then followed by her waning stars,
She sinks to gentle rest,
In silver silence canopied
Upon the dawn's young breast.

ELEANOR ROGERS COX.