

left rootless, unable to fit in with French or Europeanised Jew alike, finding no place for himself or his people in the Arab independence movement, preserving only a wounded sensitivity, a proud shyness, and an isolating intellectual integrity. He tries under the German occupation to reach his roots again by voluntarily going to a concentration camp, but he only learns that no self-conscious gesture can undo the exile of his education. He is left at the end a stranger in his native town whose only triumph can be an existentialist willed refusal of the life his superior intellect can claim for him. Mr. Memmi has constructed his dilemma beautifully and he succeeds in making his touchy, prickly

hero not only respectable but lovable. Unfortunately in his attention to the book's total statement he has neglected to prune the parts and there are long passages of distracting and lifeless detail.

Mr. Mopeli-Paulus, assisted by Mrs. Miriam Basner, writes of a mission-trained Basuto boy who returns to his native village and forsakes Christian culture in order to help his chief in keeping the tribe together. He is led by a well-told series of events to acquiescence in a ritual murder. *Turn to the Dark*, if no more than a well-told story on the artistic level, is a wholly absorbing, sympathetic, and convincing picture of the present African tragedy.

Angus Wilson

## QUESTIONS OF TIME

IN THIS centenary year of Sigmund Freud's birth I suggest that psychologists set themselves a practical task: to devise some means whereby the human mind can be set free from the effects of the crude teaching of history necessary to infancy. The names of sovereigns and of great movements and the numbers of centuries are an indispensable aid to our first footsteps in learning, but later in life we need to be deconditioned (if that is the word) from reliance on those crutches. Otherwise. . . . In 1453 the last Byzantine Emperor died and the Roman Empire came to an end, so that as the Ottomans walked into Constantinople by one gate, Greek scholars walked out by another and went to Italy where they started up the Renaissance a week or so later. Queen Anne died in 1714 and full brown wigs and Queen Anne furniture were put away to be replaced instantly by Georgian dress, Georgian furniture and houses, and Sir Robert Walpole's point of view. William IV's reign terminated in 1837 and everything from crinolines to the prevailing morality was Victorian from then on till 1901. . . . We claim to have a more intelligent grasp of man's progress on this planet, but that is how most of us think of it in unguarded moments. Pending a rescue from psychiatry, the two books\* under review may help to make historical gradualism a little more evident than usual to general readers.

Mr. Wingfield-Stratford's book is likely to become the classic on its neglected theme. His

title and a picture of the mentally defective Squire Osbaldestone on the jacket may give an idea of a nice woolly nostalgic browsing exercise with which readers of *Country Life* and *The Shooting Times* may fuddle themselves of a long evening, but the book itself is nothing of this kind; on the contrary, it is a very interesting and valuable (even if slightly misleading) contribution to sociology. Here is the history of squires, from the first one to appear in classic English literature to Lord Chaplin (whom I can remember when he was a man of eighty with dyed hair, an immovable eyeglass, and a ceaseless smile). It is a long stretch with great changes. When Chaucer described the young man "with lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse" as a squire, he meant something quite different from what affectionate countrymen meant when they called Osbaldestone and Henry Chaplin "the Squire" in the 19th century. Something resembling these later squires began to emerge at the end of the 15th century, and came into something like its own during the reigns of the Tudors. In the 17th century the evolution of squires entered the final phases, and these beings have remained an essential part of the English scene. With singular originality and courage the author shows that Shakespeare's Justice Shallow was not the ass his creator thought but an early example of the model country gentleman, and he takes his part, or rather Sir Thomas Lucy's, against the prince of poets. (I remain an anti-Lucean.)

Mr. Wingfield-Stratford has a romantic streak which sometimes, I think, interferes with his judgment. He is not a Gothic revivalist, however, and his pictures of country-house life in the late Middle Ages and in Tudor times im-

\* *The Squire and his Relations*. By ESME WINGFIELD-STRATFORD. Cassell. 42s. *Before Victoria*. By MURIEL JAEGER. Chatto and Windus. 18s.

press the reader with their excellent and harsh realism. But romance sweeps in with Charles I, and though the author never argues the claims of Charles to be considered a selfless and thwarted benefactor of the humbler classes under his rule, we are given to understand that that well-painted tragedian was just such a man. Parliamentarists are given short shrift, and Hampden is dismissed as a "political wrecker." This ardent attachment, justifiable or not, to the good old cause cannot, in spite of its extremism, seriously embarrass Mr. Wingfield-Stratford's history, because the discords of the Parliamentary struggle and the Civil War did not seriously affect the fate of squirearchy. (It is interesting to remember that Wilton House was mainly built under the Commonwealth.) It is more arguable that Mr. Wingfield-Stratford allows his predilection for squires in general to lead him into giving a somewhat too pleasing account of squirearchy in the golden age which he rightly and incontrovertibly assigns to the 18th century. This is not to say that he shirks any issue or suppresses any of the darker facts of the case, but he gives a kindly summing-up. At the moment when "landed gentry" is a fashionable term of abuse in the jargon of political propaganda and cheap learning, it may be well that someone of education should draw attention to the great enrichment of England effected by the "landed interest" during the Whig heyday, and also to the fact that the squirearchical paternalism of the countryside in those times was to the taste of most people concerned; but I can imagine that another view of the scene could be drawn with equal force and equal justice. I doubt if this is the last word, but it is certainly a word that every sociologist should read.

WHERE most squireophils are most sentimental, Mr. Wingfield-Stratford is commendably dry-eyed and shows no sign at all of romantic leanings. Those aforementioned readers of *Country Life* and *The Shooting Times*, and let me add *The Field* (now alas no longer subtitled "The Country Gentleman's Weekly Newspaper") who may have been tempted to buy this book by the seductive portrait of Osbaldestone on the jacket, will be grievously disappointed, if not actively disgusted, by the author's attitude to sport. He seems to consider that the worst thing that happened to squires was their athleticisation: their gradual abandonment, at the end of the 18th century, of the rôle of agricultural pioneer for the easier and more popular one of sporting leader and hero. The villain of the story is Peter Beckford. I must confess that I have never read this famous squire's famous *Thoughts on Hunting*, but the quotations from these thoughts given by Mr. Wingfield-Stratford

are enough to turn the strongest stomach. I have for long had the suspicion that the real impulse behind blood-sport is bloody. Beckford had little settled public opinion to guide him, and in his book he showed himself as a man with an utterly merciless cruelty to animals in his composition, such as to anger his unsqueamish contemporaries when the "Thoughts" were published. In his successors, cruelty to certain animals has always been and remains obscured by maudlin affection for others. Mr. Wingate-Stratford's point is that from Beckford's time onward the squire must needs hunt and shoot to the neglect of his higher calling, so that by the mid-19th century, in the author's opinion, he had degenerated from his once great position into a big schoolboy, of whom Osbaldestone was the supreme type. This is the moment to consider Miss Jaeger's book.

It is eminently readable and deals with the change of manners from the 1780's to the accession of the Queen. It is really the story of the rise of Evangelicalism and the theme was once put into a single memorable sentence by Mr. G. M. Young. Speaking of the state of things in 1837 he said: "The Evangelical discipline, secularised as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation which without it might have broken up, as it had already broken loose." What Miss Jaeger sets herself to do is to trace the progress of the binding force from the moment when the breaking-loose began. She has a stern footnote on Lytton Strachey but her book suffers from too Stracheyan a tone. She does not go deep enough down into her fascinating period, and seems too sceptical and disdainful, too much occupied with its absurdity, to be able to do so. It is very easy to laugh at Hannah More who repels modern taste. Whatever I read about or by her makes me glad I live in a separate age to hers and cannot meet her here, but the fact remains that she was profoundly loved and admired by her contemporaries, and not only the foolish ones. I think one could only find out why this was so by studying Puritanism and the effect on it of the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. This Miss Jaeger has clearly not done. Her book would have been better perhaps if she could have abandoned all thought of Victoria and Victorianism, for they put her eye off-target. Her subject is really, though she may not have recognised it, the second spring of the Puritan genius. From various sources (which Gladstone confessed himself unable to identify in full) this second spring rose up during the 18th century, and at the turn of the century Puritanism was again on the scene, with all its horror and much of its greatness, and it strove for the soul of England against the violent hedonism born first of the

aggrandising and then of the epic years. What sealed the victory of the new Puritans was not, I believe, Victoria's accession but the meteoric impact on England from outside of Albert the Good. At the end of her book Miss Jaeger somewhat misleads her readers by falling into the habit to which I drew attention earlier: that of thinking in terms of separate time-blocks. Lord Melbourne and Peacock were by no means the last of the 18th century. The hunting and shooting squires, who were largely untouched by the essentially middle-class and urban character of Evangelicalism, went on with it till the end of King Edward's reign, beyond that indeed. I am not sure that many of them are not going on with it now. This is the place to return to Mr. Wingfield-Stratford and Sir Tatton Sykes.

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER was much revered in his time and after as the model of all squires, better than his contemporary Osbaldestone though without the latter's glamorous lunacy. He deserved what men said of him, if the athletic squire is to be accorded reverence. He personally hunted a "country" in Yorkshire which today, with modern transport and so on, is hunted by three different packs of hounds. He occupied a position in the North not unlike that of the late Lord Lonsdale throughout sporting England before World War Two, and I think the "Yellow Earl" modelled himself to some extent on "Tat." They wore exactly the same shape of whisker. Great-grandpapa was a merry old soul and he is still much esteemed in the East Riding. It is said that historians repeat each other too freely. The real trouble, I think, is that they add too much to each other. Historian A says that George IV was fat; B says George IV was so fat that he walked with difficulty; C says that George IV had asthma from fatness and lack of exercise because he was unable to walk; D says George IV was condemned by his fatness and asthma to spend most of his life gasping in a chair, and when he tried to walk had to be pushed by several courtiers through any door in Windsor or Carlton House. I fear that Mr. Wingfield-Stratford has been guilty of this weakness, and in the case of my ancestor I am the "historian" to whom he has added. The worst thing about Sir Tatton was his cruelty to his sons. I said this in my "history," but I did not say that he was a species of landed Squeers, and that is the accusation which has been appended to my own. I may have misled sociologists, for I must own to having only shown, in what I wrote, Tat's bad side, a thing which appears to the fore when

working on a biographical sketch of his son. In truth he was 18th century not only in the imbecile fox-hunting Regency sense, but also in being an authentic agriculturist. He continued the work of his father in enclosing wold land and bringing it into cultivation for the first time, and his agricultural prowess appears in another way. His elder son (my grandfather) reacted strongly against his early sporting environment and he never hunted or shot in his adult life, but he had learned husbandry from his father and he became one of the most notable agriculturists in the North. He was not only a first-rate breeder but a pioneer in the shamefully neglected field of labourers' dwellings. As a post-script to this Tatton-paragraph I should add that my great-grandfather was not the total boor Mr. Wingfield-Stratford makes out, and that though he liked to act the bumpkin he was not a stranger to cultivation of the mind. He committed an intolerable folly in breaking up his brother's collection of books and pictures (through pique it appears), but he liked music and played well on the organ. So much for my family quarrel with Mr. Wingfield-Stratford. To the conclusion.

I have rarely read a book of social history that I have enjoyed more than this one. I am left with two questions to ask. When the author talks about the nations of the continent "tearing out each others entrails" during the 19th century, is he not exaggerating the sum total of the revolutions and the wars? I suggest that the English peace, (so much preserved because revolutionary ardour was diverted to Evangelical enthusiasm, a point Miss Jaeger might have been more conscious of), was not an isolated peace but part of a general reaction from great wars. My second question is to do with land-hunger. Whoever studies the political or sociological history of any other country but England meets the problem of land-hunger early on. It was and remains a live question in Ireland where the good old English squire never made his effect: he had to become a Parnell or a Carson or a Henry Wilson, and could never become a Squire Western or a Mr. Allworthy, and could have no Tom Jones to go with him. In the matter of land-hunger, Ireland conforms with Europe and the world. Why does England not do so? Did the Whig magnates break this passion? Gray's lines about a "village Hampden" ring distant with us, for all our Welfare-State social conscience. But if the Whig magnates did it, and thus gave it to the squire to fill a vacuum, why did they succeed where every other magnate failed? I do not know, and hope Mr. Wingfield-Stratford will tell us. I am sure he can.

*Christopher Sykes*



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